



### Pre-kindergarten

Texas currently offers a limited funding program for half-day pre-kindergarten. Numerous studies suggest that full-day pre-K substantially increases the literacy rate by third grade. Additionally, pre-K provides many direct and indirect benefits to students, families, and taxpayers.

#### Pre-K sets up children for success.

Neuroscientists and other experts say that the brain grows the most during the first few years of life. By age 3, most children's brains reach approximately 80 percent of their ultimate adult volume. <sup>1</sup> Many studies conducted on pre-kindergarten have found that children who attend publicly funded pre-K consistently outperform their peers who have not participated in such a program and are better prepared for kindergarten. In several studies, adults who attended such programs as children had higher earnings, less criminal activity, and better health. <sup>2</sup>

#### Pre-K helps to close the gaps.

Studies also show that students with low socioeconomic status are provided better instruction and structure through publicly funded pre-K programs. These programs provide rich stimulation for children who otherwise would have little to no access to structured instructional environments with effective curricula. Pre-K programs that include a diverse array of races, income-levels, and dual-language learners benefit all students. Their immersion in a program improves acquired language skills and fosters socially inclusive attitudes. <sup>3</sup>

#### Pre-K provides a return on the investment.

Students who benefit from pre-K provide a return on the state's investment both directly and indirectly. Students who attend pre-K save taxpayers by having fewer needs for repeating grades or using special education services. <sup>4</sup> People who have participated in a pre-K program also tend to earn higher wages in adult life, leading to more revenue from taxation on earnings and a reduction of welfare benefits. <sup>5</sup> At times, the return on investment may

not occur for a decade or longer. Consequently, a reduction in crime, which lowers the costs to law enforcement and the judicial system, will not provide immediate justification for an increase in pre-K funding, but is still vitally important. <sup>6</sup>

#### Pre-K is an important part of the SBOE's Long-Range Plan for Education in Texas.

In November 2018, after several years of collaborative work with stakeholders, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted a new Long-Range Plan for Public Education that establishes goals through 2030. The plan includes this vision statement: "Quality early learning programs through third grade, including formula-funded full-day pre-kindergarten, will be fully funded, supported, and recognized as the building blocks to future academic and social success, including the goal of reading and math on grade-level by third grade." To achieve this vision, the SBOE includes this recommendation: "The legislature will expand high-quality early learning opportunities for children, including formula-funded full-day prekindergarten that furthers the goal of closing any gaps in educational proficiency by third grade."<sup>7</sup> With the backing of research in early education, the Texas Commission on Public School Finance, and the SBOE, the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature is primed to consider formula-funded full-day pre-K for Texas students as a sage investment.

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<sup>1</sup> Chaundry, A., & Datta, A. R. (17, April 4). [The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., . . . Weiland, C. (17, April 4). [Puzzling It Out: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects.](#)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Karoly, L. A. (17, April 4). [The Costs and Benefits of Scaled-Up Pre-Kindergarten Programs.](#)

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> <https://goo.gl/kBt3E1>