



**NJPSA Testimony in Support of A-1016 (Jasey, DeCroce, Caputo, Singleton)
Task Force on Full-Day Kindergarten
February 8, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to share the thoughts of the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association and its statewide membership on A-1016, legislation establishing a task force to study issues related to the establishment of full-day kindergarten.

NJPSA is pleased to support this legislation as an important step in enhancing proven learning opportunities for our youngest students and thereby increasing the academic achievement of all students.

Common sense and a strong body of educational research clearly show that investments in early childhood education pay off. For example, research shows that children who attend full-day kindergarten learn more in reading and math over the kindergarten year than those in half-day programs. * More instructional time in full-day kindergarten allows for increased learning activities and strategies such as: group read-aloud, peer tutoring, mixed-ability grouping, and child-initiated activities.** But, learning gains are not the only benefit - research shows that full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers and reflectiveness than half-day kindergarteners.*^ Moreover, at-risk students who receive full-day kindergarten make significantly greater progress in language proficiency than comparable children in half-day kindergarten.

With such clear benefits, why don't all New Jersey schools offer this option? Despite the widespread belief in the important of full day kindergarten, it comes down to economics. As many of you know, when the State and the nation took a financial downturn several years ago, one of the tough choices districts had to make was how to absorb significant losses in state funding for education. In addition to cutting staff and programs, many districts were forced to move from full to half-day kindergarten. Others who had planned to move toward this educational goal had to drop their plans full day kindergarten.

With New Jersey's fiscal situation still on unsteady ground, NJPSA believes this Task Force legislation is more important than ever. Districts need financial assistance and innovative strategies to achieve their goals of expanded kindergarten.

With its broad stakeholder composition, and clear focus, NJPSA believes that the Task Force on Full Day Kindergarten will help our school districts address the needs of our young students in a practical and comprehensive way. NJPSA thanks the bill sponsors and this Committee for your support of A-1016.

Resources

* See Lee, Valerie E., Burkam, David T., Honigman, Joann & Meisels, Samuel, *"Full-Day vs. Half-day Kindergarten: Which Children Learn More in Which Program,"* American Journal of Education, (2006).

** See Plucker, J.A. et al. *"The Effects of Full Day Versus Half Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data"* Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (2004).

*^ See Cryan, John R.; Sheehan, Robert; Wiechel, Jane; & Bandy-Hedden, Irene G. *"Success Outcomes of Full-Day Kindergarten: More Positive Behavior and Increased Achievement in the Years After,"* Early Childhood Research Quarterly 7, (2): 187-203, (June 1992).