

## **EDITORIAL: All-day kindergarten**

### **More details on school district study**

Last month, the Clark County School District released a study to demonstrate the effectiveness of all-day kindergarten in improving academic performance.

Testing of second graders showed those who had attended all-day kindergarten scored an average 3 percentage points higher on standardized tests than kids who attended only a half-day of kindergarten, the district said.

And the improvement was even more striking among "at-risk" kids. (State Sen. Bob Beers says the term means those are kids from lower-income households. The school district disagrees, saying they're kids who fared poorly on a "literacy assessment.")

Those "at-risk" kids showed an 8 percentage point improvement over kids who had gone only to half-day kindergarten, district officials said.

But Sen. Bob Beers, R-Las Vegas, an accountant by trade, noticed a number missing from the report.

"I immediately set the legislative staff to work finding out from the school district what the 'improvement' was amongst the rest of the second-graders in the full-day kindergarten group who were not labeled 'at-risk' -- essentially, those from lower-middle class homes and wealthier," Sen. Beers explained. "The district stonewalled.

"Finally, after a month of mounting pressure, the district lifted its veil of secrecy ... and confirmed what common sense was telling me," Sen. Beers reported last week. "Second-graders not 'at-risk' who attended full-day kindergarten performed 3 percent" (presumably, 3 percentage points) "worse on standardized tests compared to the half-day kindergarten group.

"The district offered no theories as to why this was true, nor any reason for refusing to provide the rest of the study results until now," Sen. Beers reports.

The most significant fact here is not that a large group of second-graders turned out to do worse on standardized tests after attending all-day kindergarten as 5-year-olds, when compared with a control group of second graders who attended only a half-day kindergarten.

Given the expense of mandating all-day kindergarten on top of the vast treasure we already pour into the public schools -- and the increasingly feeble results -- this finding merits further debate. Lots of it.

But the most important fact here is that the Clark County School District is now revealed to be not an objective and reliable judge and arbiter when it comes to measuring the efficacy of all-day kindergarten, but rather a lobbyist for said program, willing and able to massage and manipulate facts and findings to get this endeavor approved.

Committee on Ways & Means

Date: 5-3-07 Exhibit: K

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