

I attended Jeffco schools from 4th grade through high school, graduating from as valedictorian from Lakewood HS . I graduated from college summa cum laude with a Bachelors of Science in Accounting. I have held various financial positions including Vice President and Treasurer and currently own my own risk management consulting company.

I have two children that both that attended Kindergarten at South Lakewood Elementary in Jefferson County, both are on an Advanced Learning Plan in several areas. Our son is currently pre-IB at Lakewood High School and our daughter is in the gifted and talented program at Creighton Middle School.

Our son went to half day Kindergarten and our daughter went to full day kindergarten two years later. SLE had received a grant to offer full day kindergarten starting with our daughter's class. As a result of this grant South Lakewood has seen dramatic improvement in test scores over the years. In fact, the CDE studied the school as a result of their improved test scores, especially since more than 50% of the school is free and reduced lunch. I believe a strong factor in their success starts with full day kindergarten for all students.

With our son, half day K was 2.5 hours long and included 2 recesses, a snack, and at least 2 organized bathroom breaks which left limited time for the social and academic instruction kindergarteners need. Additionally, Colin's class had almost 30 children. There is no science or social studies. Only full day has time allotted for science and social studies. Reading consisted mostly of letter and sound recognition and barely touched reading fluency or comprehension. Math was very limited as well with a focus on counting to 100 and the bare beginnings of what numbers represent (for example what 10 items look like versus 5 items which lays the foundation for beginning addition).

As I would help in their classrooms the next few years I was very surprised to see the differences in not only their level of reading fluency and comprehension but also their classmates. The kids that had been in full day kindergarten were more confident and strong in their abilities to read out loud and enjoyed reading books. Chaperoning at field trips I noticed that my son's classmates that were in half day kindergarten had substantially poorer reading comprehension and very limited fluency even into 3rd grade.

In my opinion it took our son several years to get to the same level of reading fluency and comprehension. Additionally, his test taking abilities were impacted until at least 4th grade.

Our daughter's interest in science and social studies is also more intense. I believe our daughter's strength in these areas started because she had dedicated time for science and social studies in kindergarten. With increased focus on testing in the areas of science and social studies in later grades I feel it is a disservice to not start out children with this foundation as soon as possible.

If you want to start testing as early as 1st grade and want to hold teachers accountable for test results we need to ensure that students and teachers are provided as many resources as possible. In order to allow children of 5 years old time to also learn appropriate social skills and have adequate time for play based learning and recess (both very important for development of their minds as well), they need to be allowed to attend school all day. By requiring families pay \$300 a month or \$2,700 a school year for public full day kindergarten you are automatically creating a schism in their class between the have and have nots. This leads to poorer test scores and a general drag on the school system as it tries to manage the differences for several years.

Education Week recently published a report that indicated Colorado has one of the worst poverty gaps in terms of educational achievement. We are given a grade of D on the Early Education Index since only half of our students attend preschool. As a result of lack of free full day kindergarten only 60% our students attend full day kindergarten compared to over 75% of the students nationwide. We are starting our kids off with a disadvantage so we shouldn't be surprised at the lower results later on in their elementary years.

Thank you for your consideration.