



For Immediate Release
May 22, 2015

Contact: Dr. Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director
Guinn Center for Policy Priorities; (702) 522-2178; nbrune@guinncenter.org

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Guinn Center Releases Policy Brief on Health Impact of Full Day Kindergarten

LAS VEGAS, NV— As the Legislature considers whether to expand full-day kindergarten to all schools, it is important to consider the potential impact on health. Drawing on a recent study, *Full-Day Kindergarten in Nevada: A Health Impact Assessment*, the Guinn Center has released a policy brief tying the recommendations of the study to legislation pending before the 2015 Legislature.

“The Health Impact Assessment found that expansion of full-day kindergarten has the potential to increase academic achievement, which in turn can lead to improved future health outcomes,” said Dr. Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director of the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. “Access to full-day kindergarten also improves access to services in schools that can improve future health outcomes, such as school meals, nutrition education, and physical activity. There are several bills pending before the Legislature that can help maximize the health impact of full-day kindergarten.”

Recommendations and related Legislation include:

1. Expand full-day kindergarten: Prioritize allocation of new funds for full-day kindergarten for schools with the highest rates of low-income students and English Language Learners and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. *Related legislation*: Governor’s budget, which proposes expansion of full-day kindergarten to all schools; and SB 508, which funds kindergarten students at the same rate as other students beginning in FY 2018.
2. Increase access to school meals: Ensure kindergarten students in full-day programs receive access to both school breakfast and lunch, and increase participation by implementing strategies such as Breakfast after the Bell. *Related legislation*: SB 503, which implements Breakfast After the Bell
3. Increase access to health services in schools: Collect a representative sample of height and weight information of all students (including kindergarteners), track changes over time, and provide public reports of data. *Related legislation*: SB 402, which removes the sunset on requiring Clark and Washoe School Districts to conduct a sample of height and weight for students in 4th, 7th, and 10th grades.
4. Increase access to physical activity: School districts could ensure that kindergarten students receive the minimum minutes of physical activity included in each school district’s or school’s Wellness Policy through a combination of recess, physical education, and physical activity integrated into academic instruction. *Related legislation*: SB 178, which requires students to take at least 30 minutes of physical education per day.

The Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, bipartisan, policy center focused on providing independent and data-driven analysis of critical policy issues facing Nevada and the Intermountain West. The Guinn Center engages policy-makers, experts, and the public with innovative, fact-based research and analysis to advance policy solutions and inform debate.

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6795 Edmond Street, Suite 300, Las Vegas, NV 89118; phone (702) 522-2178; www.guinncenter.org