

Parent Perceptions of All-Day Kindergarten in a Parochial School

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A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Gretta Merwin

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Education

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Parent Perceptions of All-Day Kindergarten in a Parochial School

Approved for the Faculty

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not an all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of students and their families. Parents who had had children in both programs, an all-day Kindergarten and a half-day Kindergarten, filled out a survey that compared the two programs in the areas of academic and social readiness, how the length of the day affected the student academically and emotionally, affordability, convenience, and overall satisfaction. The data showed that the parents believed that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten. Furthermore, the data showed that all the parents were very satisfied or satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Background for the Project

In a small elementary parochial school located in the Mid-Columbia Valley of Washington State, the school had a half-day Kindergarten program from 1964-2005. The school began an all-day Kindergarten program in 2005. When the school decided to make the change, they sent out a parent survey to all of the current preschool families. Families reported that this change was very positive. The school changed to all-day Kindergarten to help better prepare the students for first grade as well as to compete with local parochial schools that were already offering an all-day Kindergarten. In the first two years of the program, there were two full Kindergarten classes. Since then the enrollment of the Kindergarten classes had slowly declined. This had raised several questions. Why the decline in enrollment? Was the decline due to a poor economy, all-day Kindergarten being offered in some local public schools, or were parents at the school not satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program?

#### Statement of the Problem

The question that the researcher wanted to investigate was whether or not the all-day Kindergarten was meeting the needs of the students. Did

the parents find that their children were better prepared academically and socially for first grade than their children who attended the half-day Kindergarten program? Furthermore, did the all-day Kindergarten better meet the needs of the families in regards to childcare and transportation?

#### Purpose of the Project

The project investigated whether the parents were satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. More specifically, the project wanted to compare whether or not there was a higher level of satisfaction with the full-day program in comparison to the half-day program. What, if anything, could the staff do to improve parent support for the all-day Kindergarten program? Without parent support, the all-day Kindergarten program could not continue.

#### Delimitations

This study was performed using the parents of a parochial school. The study consisted of a survey mailed to 21 families that have had children in both the half-day Kindergarten program and the all-day Kindergarten program. The survey questions explored parents' perceptions in the areas of overall satisfaction, preferred program, academic and social readiness, emotional impact on length of school day, affordability, and convenience.

The researcher used the results of the surveys to evaluate whether or not the parents at the parochial school believed that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program versus a half-day Kindergarten program.

### Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all the parents being surveyed had knowledge of their children's progress in Kindergarten. The researcher assumed that all 21 families received a survey, had ample time to fill it out, and that the questions were completely understood. The researcher assumed that all the parents filled out the survey honestly and to the best of their ability.

### Research Question

Did parents perceive that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program or a half-day Kindergarten program in the same parochial school?

### Significance of the Project

At a private school, it was very important that quality programs were provided for the students. At a private school, the parents paid tuition for their child's education. If quality programs were not being provided, families would not stay at the school. Since private schools were unable to obtain government funding, tuition was very important to maintain the

operation of the school. When enrollment went down, teachers lost their jobs and the class sizes went up. Sometimes private schools shut down because of a drop in enrollment. One of the most important aspects of an all-day Kindergarten program was that the program did a good job of preparing the students for first grade. The school parents were a great resource to assess the effectiveness of the all-day Kindergarten program.

### Procedure

The researcher mailed out a survey to the 21 families from the parochial school that have had children attend both the half-day Kindergarten and the all-day Kindergarten. The parents were asked to compare the two experiences as well as to rate their overall satisfaction in different areas of the all-day Kindergarten program. The parents had 4 weeks to complete and return the survey. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents. Furthermore, it determined whether or not the parents were satisfied with the program. The surveys were examined, data was collected and organized, and conclusions were drawn.

### Definition of Terms

all-day alternating day Kindergarten. All-day alternating day Kindergarten was a Kindergarten program that was in session the same

school hours as a typical primary grade, approximately 7 hours a day, usually 2 days a week and an alternating third day a week.

all-day/full-day Kindergarten. All-day/full-day Kindergarten was a Kindergarten program that was in session the same school hours as a typical primary grade, approximately 7 hours a day, 5 days a week.

half-day Kindergarten. Half-day Kindergarten was a Kindergarten program that was in session half as long as a typical primary grade, approximately 3 hours a day.

#### Acronyms

CTBS. Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

HESB. Hahnemann Elementary School Behavior Rating Scale.

TEMA. Test of Early Reading 2.

TERA-2. Test of Early Reading 2.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Selected Literature

#### Introduction

Nationwide, the percentage of full-day programs had grown from about 25% in 1984 to 60% in 2001, and likely more by now (Reno, 2008). Half-day Kindergarten was so unpopular in some areas that parents were pulling their children out of public schools and putting them in private schools that offered all-day Kindergarten. Districts across the country were focusing on closing the achievement gap between different socioeconomic and ethnic groups. At least 10 states had begun expanding their Kindergarten programs from half day to full day as a key strategy for leveling the academic field (Villegas, 2005). Several studies were conducted on the benefits and drawbacks of children attending all-day Kindergarten. Research showed that, by and large, parent's responses about their children attending all-day Kindergarten had been positive. Some parents, educators, and policymakers still preferred half-day Kindergarten. Research also showed that parents and teachers believed that children benefited academically and socially from attending all-day Kindergarten and were better prepared for first grade. Research showed reading scores were higher for children attending all-day Kindergarten.

However, there was little evidence that students scored higher on other academic areas. Students from all-day Kindergarten seemed to have more off-task behavior than students that attended half-day Kindergarten, but they were engaged in more child-to-child interactions. Research showed little evidence that all-day Kindergarten benefited students beyond the second grade.

#### Attitudes and Beliefs

The Office of Educational Research (1997) found that the length of the school day was not as important as making sure that all Kindergarteners were provided with developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments. Furthermore, while many children seemed to benefit academically and behaviorally from all-day Kindergarten, it was only one dimension of the Kindergarten experience. Other important issues included the nature of the Kindergarten curriculum and the quality of the teaching.

Chmelynski (1998) found that single-parent and dual-employment families especially liked all-day Kindergarten because it eliminated a need for childcare during the day. Schools liked it because it eliminated the need to provide buses and crossing guards mid-day. Some parents, educators, and policymakers preferred half-days because it was less expensive and provided adequate educational and social experiences for

young children. A Kindergarten teacher in Bellevue, Washington, said, “It is harder to take field trips, work on ambitious art projects, or learn the names and sounds of letters when the school day lasts less than three hours” (Chmelynski, 1998, p.3).

Towers (1991) presented parents and teachers in Minnesota with a questionnaire about their attitudes about the switch to all-day Kindergarten. Towers suggested that, by and large, responses from the parents about the all-day program were positive. Over half of the parents strongly agreed that they were generally satisfied with the program. Eighty-five percent overall said they were satisfied. Parents were also very supportive of the students easing into the all-day program, meaning initially attending Kindergarten half-days, then some full-days, and finally all-day everyday.

A few parents were opposed to the all-day everyday approach. When parents were asked if their child was better prepared for first grade, 83% said they were. Seventy-five percent of the parents thought that their child benefited socially from all-day Kindergarten. The teachers polled all said that the all-day program was a more effective means to prepare the children for the primary grades than half-day. They all agreed that all-day Kindergarten benefited the children socially more than a half-day Kindergarten program.

Good (1996) surveyed Kindergarten teachers that changed from a half-day Kindergarten program to an all-day alternating day Kindergarten program. Some of the concerns that teachers had were poorer children's social skills because of increased fatigue, irritability and aggression, lengthened adjustment for students with separation anxiety, decreased children's social and academic competence and increased stress level. Furthermore, concerns were voiced about lack of school meals for disadvantaged children, negative role models in the lunch room, and problems in meeting the needs of children who were disadvantaged or had special needs because of consistency, routine, repetition, and continuity. Most teachers reported fatigue and irritability because of dealing with the same group of children all day, lack of planning time, and inconsistent scheduling of special activities. They said that parents often were confused by the schedule and communicating with parents was more difficult.

Herman (1984) stated that children were different than they were a decade or two ago. Social factors such as television, working mothers, and single-parent homes had contributed to young children's social maturity, self-awareness, independence, and a sophistication not known a decade ago. In the past, Kindergarten's role was to prepare children socially and emotionally for their first school experience. However, that function had been fulfilled by pre-Kindergarten, Head Start, nursery school, and

daycare centers. For the majority of children the function of Kindergarten needed to change. Teachers believed that all-day Kindergarten allowed for longer blocks of uninterrupted time for learning, more time to diagnose children's needs and interests and more time for students that need remedial help. Furthermore teachers believed that all-day Kindergarten provided more time to develop stronger social relationships with other children, more time for small group instruction, and more time for teaching readiness in language arts, reading, and mathematics. Many parents believed that the all-day Kindergarten class provided a more structured and well-balanced day program for kids. Many parents believed that because their children were in daycare in the afternoon, there were too many interruptions and too many different people involved with young children. Another fear that parents had was that when their children were in half-day Kindergarten they were being left home alone unsupervised. Many early childhood experts, school social workers, and psychologists felt that most five-year-olds were ready for all-day Kindergarten.

#### Academic Achievement

Several researchers conducted a two- year study that looked at the effects of half-day and all-day Kindergarten programs on children's academic success in school (Elicker & Mathur, 1997). In the first phase of

the study, data was collected on 8,290 children from 27 school districts; the second phase included nearly 6,000 children.

The researchers found that participation in all-day Kindergarten was related positively to subsequent school performance. Children who attended all-day Kindergarten scored higher on standardized tests, had fewer grade retentions, and had fewer Chapter 1 placements. Hough & Bryde (1996) looked at student achievement data for 511 children enrolled in half-day and all-day Kindergarten programs in 25 classrooms. Children in the all-day programs scored higher on the achievement test than those in half-day programs on every item tested.

A study conducted by Hildebrand (1997), found that children in all-day Kindergarten vs. children in half-day Kindergarten scored significantly higher in reading, with no significant difference in Math or Writing. Participating in the study were 47 children attending all-day Kindergarten and 44 attending half-day Kindergarten. The test that was administered to assess reading was the Test of Early Reading-2 (TERA-2). The test was administered in October and April to assess the student's ability to attribute meaning to printed symbols, the knowledge of the alphabet and its function, and their understanding of the conventions of print. The test that was administered to assess Math was the Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA). The test also was administered in October

and April to assess the student's knowledge in the areas of concepts of relative magnitude, counting skills, and calculation skills. The test used both pictures and manipulatives to conduct the assessment.

A study conducted by the Newark Board of Education (Koopmans, 1991) found that students in grade 1 who had attended the all-day Kindergarten program had a significant advantage over students who had attended a traditional half-day program. A 3-year assessment was made for two cohorts of students, one that started in grade 1 in 1987 and one that started in grade 1 in 1988. Elementary school achievement test scores were compared with scores of students who had attended the full-day program and students who had attended a half-day program. The study also found that all-day attendance was particularly beneficial to children from minority groups. Achievement among children in both cohorts was evaluated in the areas of word attack, vocabulary, reading comprehension, math computation, and math concepts and application. The standardized test, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), was used in all the analysis. The all-day children scored higher than the half-day children regardless of the cognitive domain considered, the age difference within grades, and the degree of school readiness at the beginning of the Kindergarten year (Koopmans, 1991).

A study conducted by the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (Smith, Straw, & Zakaluk, 2005) compared students in all-day Kindergarten vs. students in half-day Kindergarten. They compiled data over a three year period. Beginning-of-the-year and end-of-the-year performance measures were used. For Kindergarten to second grade, the tasks from the Marie Clay Observation Survey were used to evaluate literacy performance gains. Tasks were administered by classroom teachers and included the areas of letter identification, concepts about print, their knowledge of such concepts as a word, a letter, a sentence, the function of punctuation marks, and print directionality- from left to right and return to the next line from left to right again, words in isolation, writing vocabulary, and dictation. For grades second to third grade, the Nelson Thompson-Benchmark Kit-2001 was used to compile the student's reading achievement levels. In 2002-2003, no statistically significant differences were found between the performances of students in the two groups, except on reading ability, in which case the reading performance of the full-day students was superior. Half-day students had increased performance levels on letter identification and dictation. In 2003-2004, the letter naming ability of the half-day students surpassed that of the full-day students. In the year 2003-2004, the performance of the all-day students exceeded that of the half-day students at statistically significant levels on

three important measures: word identification, concepts about print, and actual book reading. Overall, across all the years, findings revealed statistically significant performance levels on all reading measures. The performance of the full-day students surpassed that of the half-day students (Smith et al., 2005).

#### Social and Behavioral Effects

Cryan and others (1992) asked teachers to rate half-day and all-day Kindergarten children on fourteen dimensions of classroom behavior. Teachers rated children in all-day Kindergarten programs higher on nine of the fourteen dimensions; there were no significant differences on the other five dimensions. Other researchers who had studied social and behavioral outcomes found that children in all-day Kindergarten programs were engaged in more child-to-child interactions (Hough & Bryde, 1996) and that they made significantly greater progress in learning social skills (Elicker & Mathur, 1997).

A study conducted by Hildebrand (1997) found that children in half-day Kindergarten exhibited higher scores on classroom behaviors that facilitated learning and lower scores on negative behaviors. The Hahnemann Elementary School Behavior Rating Scale (HESB) was used to analyze the two groups of students. The results showed significant differences between the groups. The half-day group was rated significantly

higher on: originality, independent learning, involvement, productive with peers, intellectual dependency, failure anxiety, approach to teacher, inattention, and academic achievement. The data implied that children in half-day Kindergarten schedules exhibited greater prosocial competence and fewer negative classroom behaviors than the children from all-day programs.

#### Longitudinal Effects

A study conducted by Koopmans (1991) found that children who attended all-day Kindergarten had significant advantages over the students that attended half-day Kindergarten. A 3-year longitudinal assessment was made for two cohorts of students, one that started in grade 1 in 1987 and one that started in grade 1 in 1988. Achievement scores were compared with full-day students and half-day students. The achievement difference between the groups lost significance after the first year of elementary school for the 1987 cohort. The difference remained significant for the 1988 cohort in the second year. Achievement among the children in both cohorts were evaluated in the area of word attack, vocabulary, reading comprehension, math computation, and math concepts and applications. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) was used in all the analysis.

A 3-year study done by the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (Smith et al., 2005) compared students that attended all-day Kindergarten to students that attended half-day Kindergarten. The study followed the students through the end of third grade to look at the long term effects of Kindergarten attendance. The study found that, by the end of grade 1, the all-day students' reading achievement scores were significantly higher than their half-day peers in 2002-2003. These differences were not apparent in the 2003-2004 groups. By the end of grade 2, the all-day students and the half-day students in 2002-2003 showed no statistically significant differences in reading ability. However, the 2003-2004 group's reading performance approached statistical significance. By the end of grade 3, there were no statistically significant differences between the all-day Kindergarten students and the half-day Kindergarten students. The reading performance between the groups was approximately equal. The study did find that, at the end of third grade, the students from less affluent areas that attended all-day Kindergarten were reading at grade level four and matching approximately the performance levels of their peers from more affluent neighborhoods. The tasks from the Marie Clay Observation Survey were used to evaluate reading performance in the areas of letter identification, concepts about print, words in isolation, writing vocabulary, and dictation (Smith et al, 2005).

## Summary

Did children in all-day Kindergarten have advantages over children that attended half-day Kindergarten? Research showed that children from less affluent areas and students from minority groups benefited the most from an all-day Kindergarten program. Research showed reading scores were higher from children attending all-day Kindergarten. However, research did not show that students scored higher in other academic areas. Students from all-day Kindergarten seemed to have more off-task behaviors than students that attended half-day Kindergarten, but they were engaged in more child-to-child interactions and made significantly greater progress in learning social skills. Research showed little evidence that all-day Kindergarten benefited students beyond the second grade.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology and Treatment of Data

#### Introduction

In a small elementary parochial school located in the Mid-Columbia Valley of Washington State, the school had a half-day Kindergarten program from 1964 to 2005. The school began an all-day Kindergarten program in 2005. The school switched to all-day Kindergarten to help better prepare the students for the first grade as well as to compete with local parochial schools that were already offering an all-day Kindergarten program. In the first two years that the program began, there were two full Kindergarten classes. Since then the enrollment of the Kindergarten classes had slowly declined. Why the decline in enrollment? Was the decline due to a poor economy, all-day Kindergarten being offered in some local public schools, or were parents at the school not satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program.

A survey was mailed home to 21 families. These 21 families were families that have had children attend both half-day and all-day Kindergarten with the same teacher at the same parochial school. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents and if the

parents were satisfied with the program. The surveys were examined, data was collected and organized, and conclusions were drawn.

### Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive design to gather data. The research was conducted using a qualitative method (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). The project investigated whether the parents were more satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program compared to the half-day Kindergarten program. The researcher focused the survey on the parents at the parochial school.

### Participants

A survey was mailed to 21 families from the parochial school. These 21 families were families that had children who attended both half-day and all-day Kindergarten with the same teacher.

### Instruments

The instrument used in the study was a survey prepared by the researcher which consisted of 12 questions that ranged from topics that included academic and social readiness, how the length of the day affected the student academically and emotionally, affordability, convenience, and overall satisfaction with the program. Answers were determined using a yes, no, or don't know scale and very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, and not satisfied scale.

## Design

The researcher used a descriptive design. Descriptive research, also referred to as survey research, determined and described the way things were (Gay et al., 2006). Research was collected using a survey. Before beginning the research, the researcher chose a specific topic to be examined and determined who the participants for the survey would be. Each participant was given the same questions to answer.

## Procedure

The researcher mailed out a survey to 21 families from the parochial school. These families were chosen based on the fact that they had children who attended both half-day and all-day Kindergarten with the same teacher at the same parochial school. The parents were asked to compare the two experiences as well as to rate their overall satisfaction in different areas of the all-day Kindergarten program. The parents had 4 weeks to complete and return the survey. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with the survey to encourage a high return rate. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents and if the parents were satisfied with the program. The surveys were examined, data was collected and organized, and conclusions were drawn.

### Treatment of the Data

In order to analyze the data the researcher looked at one section of the survey and compared the yes, no and don't know answers. The researcher looked at the other section and compared the very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied answers. The number of each was tallied by the researcher and percentiles were tabulated and displayed.

### Summary

Surveys were mailed to 21 families whose children attended both half-day Kindergarten and all-day Kindergarten at a parochial school located in the Mid-Columbia Valley of Washington state. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents and if the parents were satisfied with the program. The survey consisted of 12 questions that ranged from topics that included academic and social readiness, how the length of the day affected the student academically and emotionally, affordability, convenience, and overall satisfaction with the program. The researcher used a descriptive design to gather data. The research was conducted using a qualitative method (Gay et al., 2006). The researcher looked at each survey and compared the number of yes, no, and don't know answers and the very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied answers to each of the questions given in the survey. The

number of each was tallied by the researcher and percentiles were tabulated. The surveys were examined, data was collected and organized, and conclusions were drawn.

## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis of the Data

#### Introduction

A small parochial school changed from a half-day Kindergarten program to an all-day Kindergarten program to help better prepare the students for first grade as well as to compete with local parochial schools that were already offering all-day Kindergarten. In the first two years of the program, there were two full Kindergarten classes. Since then the enrollment of the Kindergarten classes had slowly declined. This had raised several questions. Why the decline in enrollment? Was the decline due to a poor economy, all-day Kindergarten being offered in some local public schools, or were parents at the school not satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program? This study was important so that the school could answer these questions and raise enrollment numbers.

The researcher used a survey as a way to analyze the data that had been collected. A survey was mailed home to 21 families in a small parochial school in Washington State. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents and if the parents were satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. The researcher analyzed the surveys by

comparing the amount of yes, no and don't know answers as well as comparing very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, and not satisfied.

### Description of the Environment

This study was performed using the parents of a parochial school. The study consisted of a survey mailed to 21 families that had had children in both the half-day Kindergarten program and the all-day Kindergarten program with the same teacher at the same parochial school. The survey questions explored parents' perceptions in the areas of academic and social readiness, emotional impact on length of school day, affordability and convenience. The parents had 4 weeks to complete and return the survey.

The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents. Furthermore, it determined whether or not the parents were satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program.

### Research Question

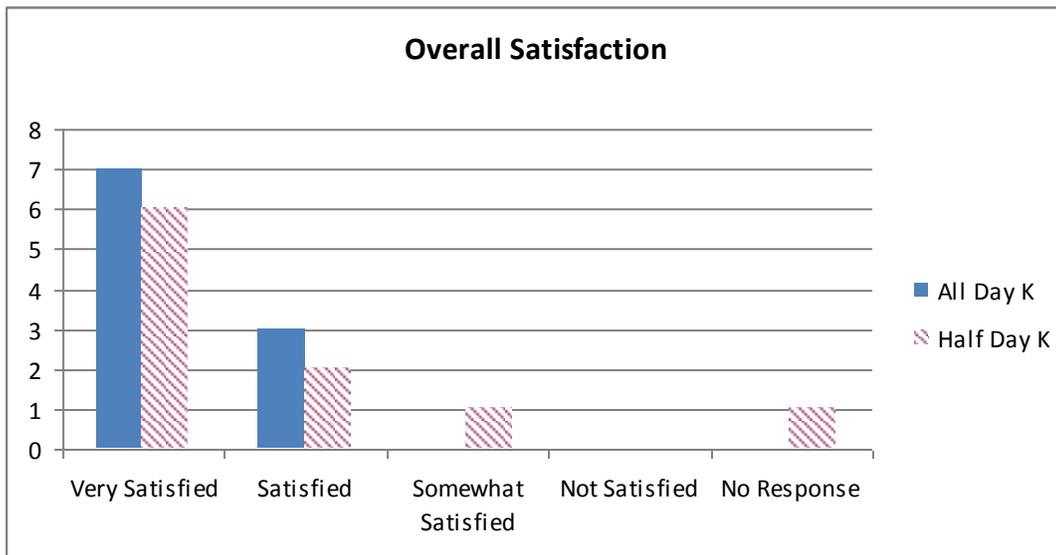
Did parents perceive that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program or a half-day Kindergarten program in the same parochial school?

## Results of the Study

Question number one on the survey asked parents to share their overall satisfaction with the current all-day Kindergarten program. Seventy percent of the parents were very satisfied with the program and thirty percent of the parents were satisfied with the program.

Question number two on the survey asked parents to share their overall satisfaction with the previous half-day Kindergarten program. Sixty percent of the parents were very satisfied with the program, twenty percent were satisfied with the program and ten percent were somewhat satisfied with the program. One parent did not mark anything for question number two.

Table 1



Question number three on the survey asked the parents if they would like the school to switch back to a half-day program. Eighty percent of the parents said no and twenty percent said they didn't know.

Question number four on the survey asked parents if they would like the school to offer both an all-day Kindergarten program and a half-day Kindergarten program. Forty percent of the parents said yes and forty percent of the parents said no. One parent did not mark anything for question number four.

Question number five asked parents if they felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was too difficult for their child emotionally. One hundred percent of the parents said no.

Question number six asked parents if they felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was too difficult for their child academically. One hundred percent of the parents said no.

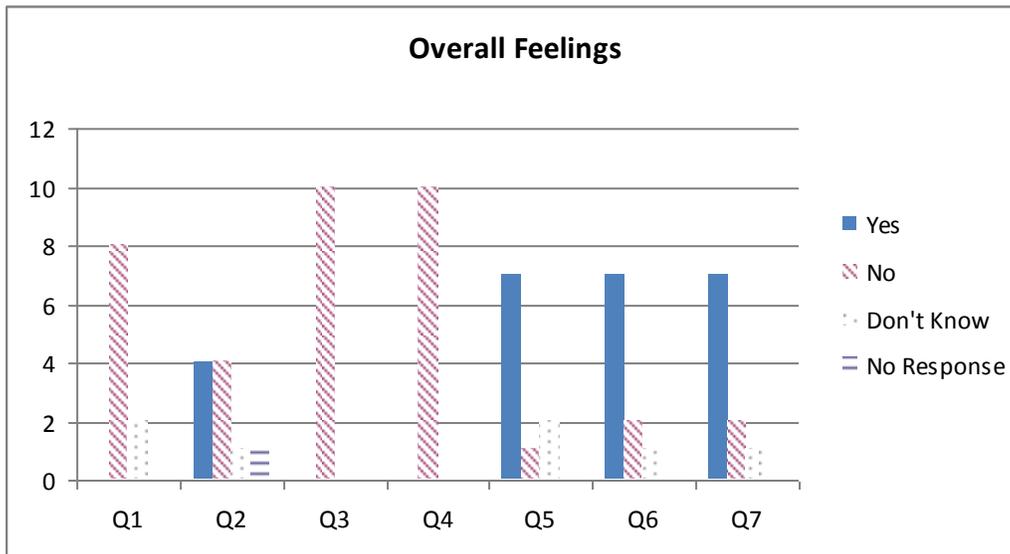
Question number seven asked parents if they felt that the all-day Kindergarten program better prepared their child for first grade than the half-day Kindergarten program. Seventy percent of the parents said yes, 10 percent of the parents said no and 20 percent of the parents said they didn't know.

Question number eight asked parents if they felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was more beneficial for their family financially.

Seventy percent of the parents said yes, twenty percent of the parents said no and one parent said they didn't know.

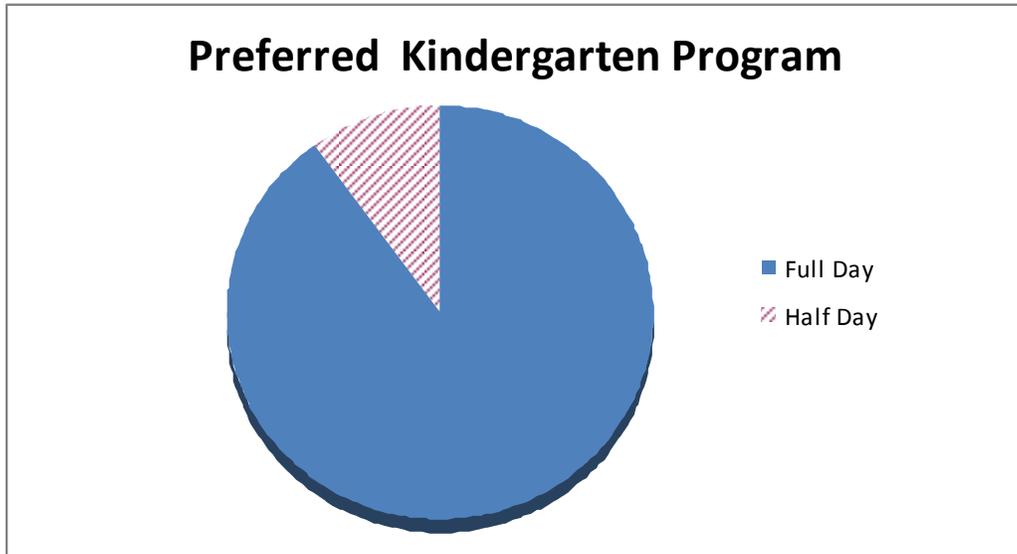
Question number nine asked parents if they felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was more convenient for their family. Seventy percent of the parents said yes, twenty percent of the parents said no and one parent said they didn't know.

Table 2



Question number ten on the survey asked the parents if they preferred the all-day Kindergarten program or the half-day Kindergarten program. Ninety percent of the parents said that they preferred the all-day Kindergarten program and ten percent of the parents said that they preferred the half-day Kindergarten program.

Table 3



Question number eleven on the survey asked the parents to share some things that they liked about the all-day Kindergarten program. The parents' responses were varied: The kids are involved in learning activities instead of going to daycare, my child was more prepared for first grade, the all-day Kindergarten is less expensive, all-day Kindergarten is a more relaxed environment and I don't have to pick up my child from school midday. Three parents said that they liked that there was more playtime and social time.

Question number twelve on the survey asked parents to share some things that they did not like about the all-day Kindergarten program.

Again, the parents' responses were varied: My child was tired after the long day, some of the kids were at a disadvantage as they didn't attend preschool, the all-day program didn't begin until a couple of months into the school year, my child missed his afternoons at home to just be a kid and it forced him into all-day school a year earlier than was really needed. Six parents said that there was nothing they didn't like about the all-day Kindergarten program.

### Findings

By analyzing the surveys filled out by the parents at a small parochial school in Washington State, the conclusion was drawn that the parents were satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. Surveys showed that the parents agreed with the school's decision to change to the all-day Kindergarten program. However, forty percent of parents would like the school to offer both a half-day and an all-day option. Seventy percent of the parents believed that their child was better prepared for first grade after attending all-day Kindergarten. Furthermore, some parents believed that the same things were taught in both programs. Therefore, the researcher found that the parents did perceive that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program.

## Discussion

Once the surveys were returned to the researcher, the surveys were reviewed and a comparison was drawn from the answers. The researcher noted that many of the parents felt a similar way about the all-day Kindergarten program. The parents were all very satisfied or satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. Also, parents were all very satisfied, satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the half-day Kindergarten program.

Eight out of ten parents that were surveyed did not want the school to go back to a half-day Kindergarten program. However, four out of ten parents would like to see the school offer both a half-day Kindergarten and an all-day Kindergarten.

One hundred percent of the parents felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was not too difficult for their child emotionally or academically. These findings contradict research that has found that children have decreased social and academic competence and increased stress levels in an all-day Kindergarten program (Good, 1996).

Seven out of ten parents believed that the all-day Kindergarten better prepared their child for first grade than the half-day Kindergarten program. This finding was consistent with research that showed that children that attended all-day Kindergarten had significant academic

advantages over students who had attended a traditional half-day program (Newark Board of Education, 1991).

Seven out of ten parents felt that the all-day Kindergarten program was more convenient for their family and more beneficial financially. Parents said that they liked that they didn't have to pay for daycare for their child and they didn't have to pick up their child from school mid-day. This finding was consistent with research that showed that both parents and schools liked the all-day program because it eliminated a need for childcare during the day and it eliminated a need to provide buses and crossing guards mid-day (Chmelynski, 1998; Herman, 1984).

Nine out of ten parents preferred the all-day Kindergarten program over the half-day Kindergarten program. This finding was consistent with research that showed that most parents preferred all-day Kindergarten (Chmelynski, 1998; Towers, 1991; Herman, 1984).

### Summary

The researcher investigated if parents perceived that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program or a half-day Kindergarten program. The researcher used a survey as a way to analyze the data that had been collected. A survey was mailed home to 21 families in a small parochial school in Washington State. These families had had children attend both half-day Kindergarten and all-day Kindergarten at the

same school. The survey was used to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students and their parents and if the parents were satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. The survey found that all the parents were very satisfied or satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program. Also, the survey found that forty percent of the parents would like to see the school offer both a half-day and an all-day Kindergarten program. One hundred percent of parents felt that the all-day program was not too difficult emotionally and academically for their child. Seventy percent of the parents felt that the all-day Kindergarten program better prepared their child for first grade than the half-day Kindergarten program. Ninety percent of the parents preferred the all-day Kindergarten over the half-day Kindergarten. Therefore, the researcher found that the parents did perceive that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program.

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Introduction

In a small parochial school in Washington State, the school changed from a half-day Kindergarten program to an all-day Kindergarten program in 2005. Families seemed very happy about the switch. In the first two years of the program, there were two full Kindergarten classes. Since then the enrollment had slowly declined. The purpose of this research project was to determine whether or not the all-day Kindergarten program was meeting the needs of the students. Furthermore, did the parents perceive that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program or a half-day Kindergarten program in the parochial school? Were the parents satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten? Did the parents feel that their children were better prepared academically and socially for first grade than their children who attended the half-day Kindergarten program?

#### Summary

The researcher investigated whether or not the parents perceived that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten or a half-day Kindergarten. This study was performed using the parents of a parochial school. The study consisted of a survey mailed to 21 families

that had children in both the half-day Kindergarten program and the all-day Kindergarten program with the same teacher at the same parochial school. The survey questions explored parents' perceptions in the areas of overall satisfaction, preferred program, academic and social readiness, emotional impact on length of school day, affordability and convenience.

The researcher used the results of the surveys to evaluate whether or not the parents at the parochial school believed that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten program versus a half-day Kindergarten program. Once the surveys were returned, all of the answers were compared and a data graph was constructed. Data was reviewed for each question. The responses from the surveys allowed the author to come to a conclusion about whether or not the parents believed that the all-day Kindergarten program was better meeting the needs of their children.

### Conclusions

The findings of the research project allowed the researcher to come to a clearer conclusion about whether or not the parents perceived that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten than a half-day Kindergarten at the small parochial school. By using the surveys given to each parent and analyzing the answers given on each question, the researcher determined that the parents believed that their children were better served in an all-day Kindergarten. Furthermore, the data showed

that all the parents were very satisfied or satisfied with the all-day Kindergarten program.

None of parents surveyed wanted to see the parochial school go back to a half-day Kindergarten program only. However, some of the parents would like to see the school offer both all-day and half-day Kindergarten. All of the parents surveyed felt that the all-day Kindergarten was not too difficult for their child emotionally or academically.

Furthermore, many of the parents surveyed felt that all-day Kindergarten better prepared their child for first grade, was financially beneficial and was more convenient for their family. Due to the fact that each of the questions on the survey specifically related to the all-day Kindergarten experience of the parents and their children, the researcher concluded that the all-day Kindergarten program at the parochial school was doing a good job of educating the students and should remain in place.

### Recommendations

The research was limited to a small sample size due to a select amount of parents that had children in both Kindergarten programs. The researcher eliminated parents whose children were no longer at the parochial school. The researcher did not have access to records to find those parents. The researcher also eliminated parents that had children who had different teachers. This allowed the researcher to compare the

Kindergarten programs and not the Kindergarten teachers. Future research could use all the parents who had a child in half-day Kindergarten and all-day Kindergarten at the parochial school. This would give the researcher a much larger sample size.

The parents had 4 weeks to complete and return the survey. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with the survey to encourage a high return rate. The surveys were filled out anonymously to encourage more honest answers. Two weeks after the survey was mailed, a reminder letter was mailed to the parents with another copy of the survey. Only ten surveys were returned to the researcher out of the twenty-one surveys that were mailed. Future research could have the surveys filled out at the school during open house, back-to-school night or school registration to ensure a greater response.

The data collected from the surveys did not answer the question as to why Kindergarten enrollment was down. Further data would need to be collected in other areas of the school environment to determine why enrollment had dropped.

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APPENDIX

**Please circle very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied for each question.**

1. Overall, how satisfied were you with the all-day Kindergarten program at St. Joseph's School?

Very satisfied      Satisfied      Somewhat Satisfied      Not Satisfied

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the half-day Kindergarten program at St. Joseph's School?

Very satisfied      Satisfied      Somewhat Satisfied      Not Satisfied

**Please circle yes, no or don't know for each question.**

3. Would you like St. Joseph's School to go back to only a half-day Kindergarten program?

Yes                  No                  Don't Know

4. Would you like St. Joseph's school to offer both an all-day Kindergarten program and a half-day Kindergarten program?

Yes                  No                  Don't Know

5. Did you feel that the all-day Kindergarten program was too difficult for your child emotionally?

Yes                  No                  Don't Know

6. Did you feel that the all-day Kindergarten program was too difficult for your child academically?

Yes                      No                      Don't Know

7. Did you feel that the all-day Kindergarten program better prepared your child for first grade than the half-day Kindergarten program?

Yes                      No                      Don't Know

8. Did you feel that the all-day Kindergarten program was more beneficial for your family financially?

Yes                      No                      Don't Know

9. Did you feel that the all-day Kindergarten program was more convenient for your family?

Yes                      No                      Don't Know

10. Which Kindergarten program did you prefer? **Circle one.**

All-day                      Half-day

11. What are some things that you like about our all-day Kindergarten program?

12. What are some things that you did not like about our all-day Kindergarten program?