

IF YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT COULD HAVE ONLY ONE... WHICH ONE WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

A Comprehensive College Readiness & Leadership Skills Program, a Universal Pre-School Program or a Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Program?



Making quality pre-school and full-day kindergarten programs available to all children from all socioeconomic backgrounds is an idea with widespread support today in many parts of the United States, and for good reason. A host of studies have shown both initiatives provide highly valuable and important developmental benefits, while also helping raise local education standards and performance levels.

Yet, when 200 randomly-selected parents were asked in 2008 by members of The Leadership Capital Group LLC to consider three high-value education initiatives (*universal pre-school, full-day kindergarten and comprehensive college readiness and leadership*

skills training) and then choose the one that they considered the most important and the most valuable to their local public school system, the results were as instructive as they were compelling. **Over 70% said a college readiness and leadership skills program would be the most valuable and important addition to their local K-12 curriculum.**

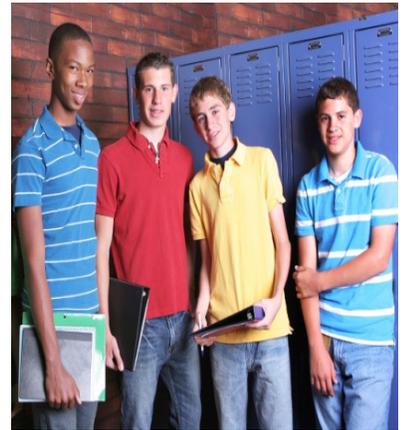
Despite the immense value and benefit of early childhood education, the LCG survey results are consistent with similar studies by, among others, *The National Association for College Admission Counseling* and *The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*; and raise important questions about how resources devoted to improving American public education are best invested. All survey respondents participated voluntarily in the LCG study and were provided with a detailed description of all three options prior to making their selections. Questions from participants were answered in advance by the moderator, but no effort was made to influence the voting. Respondents were predominantly middle-class working men and women with at least one school-age child. All lived in communities with a public (K-12) school system. 200 surveys were selected randomly from a pool of 222.

OPTIONS	TOTAL RESPONSES	MOST VALUABLE & IMPORTANT	SECOND MOST VALUABLE & IMPORTANT	THIRD MOST VALUABLE & IMPORTANT
A Quality College Readiness & Leadership Skills Program From Grade 7 Through Grade 12	200	147 (73.5%)	47 (23.5%)	06 (3.0%)
A Quality Pre-School Program for all Children in the District Beginning at Age 2	200	22 (11.0%)	74 (37.0%)	104 (52.0%)
A Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Program for All Children in the School District	200	31 (15.5%)	79 (39.5%)	90 (45.0%)

Why Parents Made The Choices They Did: An informal discussion followed the collecting of surveys at each survey site. The purpose of each discussion was to gain insight into the reasoning used by respondents when making their selections.

In the view of the LCG members conducting the surveys, the following is a description of the 12 most-commonly expressed reasons survey participants doing so selected “a quality college readiness and leadership skills program” as their #1 choice among the three options:

1. Because it provides the most value to the district (i.e. it is the “greatest good”).
2. Because of the “urgent need” (to improve college readiness) created by the lack of a properly comprehensive and rigorous approach in local school curriculums.
3. Because of the “huge” sacrifice and investment involved in sending a son or daughter to college.
4. Because of the perceived long-term and career-related benefits of leadership training and college readiness training.
5. Because of the expense of quality leadership training and college readiness programs in the private sector.
6. Out of concern for college “drop-out rates”, and the possibility their child might not complete his or her degree.
7. Out of support for bringing better balance to the acquiring of critical *knowledge* and the acquiring of critical *skills* during middle school and high school.
8. Because of their interest in strengthening and modernizing their local curriculums and reducing the time spent in “meaningless” courses (particularly during the senior year of high school.)
9. Out of interest in reducing college tuition costs via the possibility of multiple college transfer credits.
10. To strengthen the reputation of the school district and boost local property values.
11. To keep pace with schools already offering comprehensive college readiness and leadership skills training as a part of their mission.
12. Out of concern for putting their son or daughter at a competitive *disadvantage* when applying to college.



In the view of the LCG members conducting the surveys, the following is a description of the 6 most-commonly expressed reasons survey participants doing so selected “a quality pre-school program” as their #1 choice:

1. Because of research showing a strong link between quality pre-school education and high academic achievement later in life.
2. To provide an early introduction to a structured learning environment and help encourage a “love of learning.”
3. Because of the expense of quality pre-school education in the private sector.
4. Because having a district-financed program would eliminate the expense of child daycare services.
5. To help speed the developing of good socializing skills and other key developmental skills.
6. To help bolster local property values.

In the view of the LCG members conducting the surveys, the following is a description of the 6 most-commonly expressed reasons survey participants doing so selected “a quality full-day kindergarten program” as their #1 choice:

1. To provide a higher quality elementary education in the community.
2. To help keep pace with the educational opportunities provided to children in other areas.
3. To further speed the development of intellectual curiosity and other key learning skills.
4. To help foster more mature behaviors, and ease separation anxiety and the transition to first grade.
5. To eliminate the need for after-school care and babysitting services.
6. To improve the reputation of the school district and strengthen local property values.

CONTACT

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