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STUDY FINDS RESULTS REMAIN STABLE AS FIVE-YEAR-OLDS ENTER KINDERGARTEN

Report highlights need to provide continued support to at-risk children

Roseville – A Minnesota Department of Education report found that the majority of Minnesota children are gaining proficiency or fully proficient with basic skills and knowledge at kindergarten entrance. The report also highlighted the need to improve school readiness for those children most at-risk of entering kindergarten unprepared.

“We are focused on improving programs and services that help prepare our most at-risk children,” Education Commissioner Alice Seagren said. “We will continue to work with parents, educators and policymakers, including the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, to prepare every Minnesota kindergartner for success in school.”

The Minnesota School Readiness Study found that between 91 percent and 97 percent of Minnesota five-year-olds were In Process or Proficient in five developmental areas necessary for school success: physical development, the arts, personal and social development, language and literacy, and mathematical thinking. This compares to last year’s study with numbers between 87 percent and 96 percent. The increases are within the margin of error between the two years.

The report examines how child and family characteristics may affect children’s ratings. Poverty level, gender, parent level of education and race and ethnicity were shown to be related to proficiency levels.

The report found that children from low-income families were less likely to be rated as Proficient and In Process across multiple domains.

This year’s study involved 6,392 kindergartners from 105 randomly selected elementary schools across the state representing just over ten percent of students entering kindergarten in the fall of 2009. The study rates a child’s performance as Proficient, In Process or Not Yet on key indicators in the five developmental areas.

Beginning in 2002, MDE initiated a series of yearly studies focused on obtaining a picture of the school readiness of Minnesota kindergartners as they enter school in the fall. The studies were well-received by the public and the legislature, which appropriated funding for the study to continue on an annual basis.

This year’s report found the following proficiency levels by area:

Domain/Result	Not Yet	In Process	Proficient
Physical Development	3%	32%	65%
The Arts	6%	42%	53%
Personal and Social	8%	39%	53%

Development			
Mathematical Thinking	10%	40%	51%
Language and Literacy	9%	42%	49%

Note that categories may not add to 100% due to rounding and are adjusted for stratified cluster sampling.

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