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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
FOR ALL-DAY ALTERNATE DAY KINDERGARTEN
SCHEDULES IN MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Kenneth G. Drenth

A Dissertation
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Faculty of The Graduate College
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Western Michigan University
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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
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SCHEDULES IN MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kenneth G. Drenth, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1995

This research project was initiated and designed to gather data on the decision making, implementation, and evaluative processes being used in Michigan schools implementing all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules.

The major issues of concern were an assessment of preplanning activities transpiring prior to implementation, staff development preparations, parental involvement in the decision-making process, and evaluative data collected.

Data were collected during the fall of 1994 via a questionnaire sent to 68 Michigan school districts that had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten. The same questionnaire was also sent to five Michigan school districts that had implemented the all-day alternate day schedule and subsequently discontinued it.

Analysis of the data revealed the following findings:

1. Potential financial savings provide the impetus for investigation of all-day alternate day schedules.
2. Financial savings range from 0.5% to 20% of transportation budgets.
3. While teachers were always included on preplanning

committees, other major stakeholders were often omitted.

4. The most important reason for recommending implementation was for the perceived instructional benefits.

5. Approximately 50% of implementing districts initiated staff development activities prior to implementation.

6. Staff development needs were identified as scheduling for a longer day, providing developmentally appropriate curriculum, and visiting existing all-day alternate day programs.

7. Apprehensions about length of day, inconsistency of alternate days, curriculum development, and staffing patterns almost always dissipate after implementation.

8. Parental involvement was crucial throughout the decision process.

9. Approximately one third of the districts have collected achievement data that generally reflect other studies that academic achievement is either equal to or higher than students attending half-day schedules.

10. Parental satisfaction is the most persuasive evidence for success of the schedule.

11. Less than 10% of the districts return to a half-day schedule once they have adopted an all-day alternate day schedule.

This study is the only study that has been conducted in Michigan on all-day alternate day kindergartens. It also confirms previous research that indicating such a schedule provides both social and educational advantages for families and children as well as financial savings for school districts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is presently a national debate occurring over which policies and practices are most appropriate for the education of kindergarten children (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1991).

The issues included in the debate are the appropriateness of the curriculum in the early childhood classroom, appropriate screening and assessment, school entry age, class size, and the length and scheduling of the school day (Puleo, 1988; Siegel & Hanson, 1991).

For many years kindergarten was viewed as a time for fun and games, milk and cookies, and an introduction to an organized social structure. But as society has changed and additional research has focused on how young children learn, the educator's perception of the importance of early childhood educational experiences has changed. Kindergarten is, in many ways, the single most important year of any child's life (Vann, 1991). This recognition is reflected in the presence of public school kindergarten programs in all 50 states (Elkind, 1988).

Professional educators want kindergarten to be a positive experience for both the child and the parent. However, educators have not been listening to the researchers or adapting policies to reflect what is happening in society in general (Bloom, 1981; Elkind, 1986).

Further evidence of this was provided by Siegel and Hanson

(1991). They identified five guiding philosophies and assumptions in many present day kindergartens which conflict with current research evidence. While these assumptions appear to be reflected in many of today's local kindergarten programs, Siegel and Hanson called them into question. These five assumptions are interwoven as they all address philosophies or traditions relating to kindergarten practices.

This research project focused on the third assumption, being:

A half-day kindergarten curriculum is both adequate and appropriate for the majority of five to six year old children since the primary concern is for the introduction of school life and activities rather than for formal learning and skill development. (Siegel & Hanson, 1991, p. 8)

Is this assumption still valid today in present society? It is possible that the socioeconomic conditions present during the formation of this assumption were far different than those of today. With these changes in societal conditions, this assumption doesn't seem to hold true.

Considerable research already exists which indicates that implementation of full-day kindergarten schedules is becoming very prevalent around the country (Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi, 1979; Gullo, 1990; Schuman, 1989/ 1990).

Gullo (1990) identified both a societal need and an educational need for full-day kindergartens. Divorce rates are near 50%. Even where families are intact it is estimated that in the 1990s around 90% of mothers are in the work force (McCormick, 1986). As mothers, for one reason or another, return to the work force, children are either in school or are in an extended day care facility. From a societal need standpoint, a full-day kindergarten should assist families in providing the

necessary child care an all-day schedule offers.

From the educational need viewpoint, children coming to kindergarten today reflect wide developmental spans in their maturity. In half-day programs teachers may have 20 or more students in each section. For a teacher to meet the developmental needs of 40 children or more per day is an overwhelming task (Gullo, 1990). All-day kindergartens provide a logical alternative, allowing time for the teacher to address the different developmental needs of the children.

Statement of Problem

When switching from a traditional half-day schedule to a full-day schedule, various issues need to be addressed. An overview of the literature identified four important issues when making the change in kindergarten schedules. Why those issues were identified and included in this research project is examined in the following sections. Included are finances, parental involvement, professional development, and the collection of evaluative information.

Finances

Financial concerns for school administrators have been a major factor providing the impetus for change in some schools (Menser, 1983/1984; Minnesota State Department of Education, 1972; Mouw, 1976). As many school boards and administrators looked for places to cut their budgets, they found that changing their kindergarten program from a half-day program to an alternate full-day program could cut their mid-day transportation expenses. In many school districts this was a significant

amount of money. Definitive savings are hard to substantiate and seemingly depend on the geographic size of the school district (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1972).

For the 1993-1994 school year the Michigan Department of Education, Early Childhood Education Officials (Sitterson, 1994), indicated that 112 school districts were continuing an all-day alternate day schedule for kindergarten. There is evidence that this is happening in many places across the United States (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988a). As the financial burden faced by taxpayers continues to escalate, coupled with voter reluctance to approve additional taxes, it is likely that many school districts will look at alternative kindergarten schedules as one method of saving revenues.

Parental Involvement

The social forces affecting families can no longer be ignored in the schools. Zimiles (1986) described the increased divorce rate, the two-employed-parent families, teenage pregnancies, and the decreasing influence of extended families as the "diminishing mothers" (p. 6) factor. Others indicate that education and care are inseparable at ages 4 and 5 and conclude that both must be perceived as present in early childhood education programs (Cadwell, 1986; Day, 1988). Gullo (1990) discussed the familial benefits for all-day kindergartens as being both social and educational. By social, they meet the full-day child care needs in one location for the family. By educational, assuming they are implemented appropriately, a full-day schedule is better equipped to meet the educational needs of the child and the teachers.

As school decision makers study the issues surrounding a schedule change of this nature, it seems important that parents are involved in the decision-making process. The Early Childhood Standards of Quality in Michigan (Michigan State Board of Education, 1992) indicate that family members should be participants in determining the nature, scope, and direction of the early childhood program and in the evaluation of program responsiveness in the delivery of educational and other services to children and their families.

Many districts have found that it pays off to involve all of the players in the planning process. This means including parents and other community members, as well as educators. The reason that some districts make a smooth transition from half-day to all-day kindergarten can usually be summed up in a single word--planning (Cruikshank, 1986b).

Planning/Professional Development

There are two different kinds of planning that may be considered when a possible transition to an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule is being proposed. The first may be the planning for the decision of whether or not to make the transition and the second would consider the professional preparation of a staff required to implement any new or innovative program. The degree of planning in these two important areas may very well determine the success or failure of the all-day alternate day scheduled kindergarten program. Cruikshank (1986b) said that while there is no right way to make the transition from a half-day program to a full-day program, the most successful situations are those in which there has been ample time devoted to planning. Helmich

(1986) indicated that a poorly planned full-day program is not likely to provide the benefits suggested by research, but a poorly planned half-day or alternate day program won't either. Herein may lie the secret as to whether or not an all-day alternate day kindergarten program will be met with community and staff support.

The first stage of planning deals with the process of decision making. The way in which a recommendation to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule was reached could easily have laid the foundation of support or nonsupport. Was the decision arbitrarily made by an administrator or by a board of education? Or was the decision to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule made after considerable investigation and input from the various stakeholders? Was the decision unanimous or did one group of stakeholders make the decision? These are important questions and could easily relate to overall acceptance.

The second level of preparation relates to the professional preparation of the implementing staff. As schools go through the transition from a half-day program to a full-day program the quality of the kindergarten curriculum becomes more of an issue. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (1988a), as well as numerous early childhood experts, Egertson (1980), Elkind (1986), and Cummings (1991) has recognized that young children learn differently and that the education of the young child must be in keeping with their unique modes of learning. Egertson (1980) said that it is not the length of the day or consistency of the schedule that is important, it is what happens to the children in their learning environment. If half-day kindergarten programs

reflect strong academic preparation, then changing the schedule to a full day without adapting the curriculum to accommodate the full child will just multiply the negative effects. The teachers will need time and assistance to develop curriculum and instructional methodology necessary to assist 5-year-old children in an all-day setting.

Confronting another issue in teaching young children, the Michigan State Board of Education ruled that those individuals teaching in state-funded preschool programs must possess an early childhood education endorsement on their teaching certificate. They further recommended this same standard for all early childhood teachers, preschool through Grade 2 (Michigan State Board of Education, 1992); but to date that recommendation has not been mandated. Entitled the ZA endorsement, it requires teachers to complete 18 graduate credit hours in order to qualify to teach preschool courses in the public schools by 1993. Fromberg (1989) indicated that public policy concerning early childhood teacher certification is ragged and inadequate, despite findings by researchers that teacher training in early childhood education and child development were significant factors in children's school achievement. However, since the recommendation to include existing teachers in the requirement for the ZA endorsement has not been implemented, many practicing kindergarten teachers, who still constitute the majority of early childhood teachers, are not aware of the research and how that research relates to practice and methodology. Consequently, some districts desiring to change from a half-day every day schedule to an all-day alternate day schedule may find practicing teachers fearful and even opposed to the change.

Because planning and staff preparation may be established as vital in the overall success of a new initiative, it should be considered when examining the implementation process. How have implementing districts made the decision to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule? What have implementing districts done to help prepare their staffs for the transition? Can these two planning issues, different but important in their own contexts, be identified as contributing factors in the successful transition from a traditional half-day program to the all-day alternate day schedule?

Evaluation

It may be natural that all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules are compared with every day half-day schedules in the area of academic achievement. Educational Research Service (1989) reported that of the 14 studies comparing all-day alternate day and half-day every day kindergarten schedules, 12 (86%) also examined academic achievement scores.

From this information, one may deduct that educators and parents are asking for assurance that students will not be placed at an educational disadvantage by participating in an all-day alternate day kindergarten program. However, evaluating a kindergarten program and assessing academic achievement of 5- and 6-year-olds is not easy and may not even be desirable. Addressing academic achievement is difficult because (a) it implies a primarily academic purpose for kindergarten and (b) it doesn't recognize the questionable validity of standardized test scores of 5- and 6-year-old children.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1988a) and state departments of education have emphasized that the kindergarten curriculum cannot be singularly evaluated via academic performance.

While academic goals do have a place in the kindergarten curriculum, the problem of testing young children lies in the unreliability and poor validity of the test results. Kamii (1990) indicated that standardized tests are not valid measures of children's learning or of teachers' accountability, and the pressure for higher test scores is resulting in classroom practices that are harmful to young children's development. Gold (1988) and Shepard and Smith (1989) indicated that the error rate of the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT) is about 30% when used as a readiness test for 5-year-olds. But the MRT is frequently used as can be seen in the academic comparison section of Chapter II. The NAEYC (1991) indicated:

The national obsession with standardized testing is a major reason for the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Guidelines. NAEYC and NAECs/SDE, like numerous other organizations, object to the overuse, misuse, and abuse of formal, standardized testing, epitomized by the standardized achievement tests that are unrelated to the ongoing activities of classrooms (p. 44)

The academic component of the kindergarten curriculum is only one small portion of what is needed in a total program, so placing emphasis on it would be at the cost of deemphasizing the other components and creating a skewed picture of what is important.

Discussions with Michigan Department of Education officials indicated that Michigan does not have a standard evaluative format that can be offered to administrators and school boards to assess any aspect

of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs. The Michigan State Board of Education (1992) developed Early Childhood Standards of Quality criteria with the intent of identifying curriculum criteria as well as individual and group assessment criteria. Its intent is not to establish criteria to measure the effectiveness of one particular schedule over another.

It is because of this information that this researcher has chosen to include the criteria used by local schools to determine program success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine, in light of the escalating numbers of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs in Michigan, what rationale schools were using to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten, examine the process of implementation, and determine the evaluative measures being utilized. The specific research questions that were addressed are:

1. What was the origin, purpose, and content of any preplanning activities that took place prior to implementation?
2. What staff development preparations were made in light of changing to a full-day program?
3. To what degree were parental concerns identified and addressed during the decision-making/implementation process?
4. What evaluative data is being collected to substantiate claims that programs are successful?

Schools wishing to implement all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules may benefit from these data. The data may provide the

justification and the assistance in the successful implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. If Michigan's 10-year trend of escalating implementation continues, these data could provide a research base where there is none.

Rationale

The trend in Michigan is toward all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. Jackie Thompson (1994), chairperson of the Early Childhood Education Office within the Michigan Department of Education, indicated that in the 1983-84 school year there were two school districts in Michigan that had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. For the 1993-94 school year the number reached 112, a 5,500% increase in 11 years (see Appendix D and Figure 1).

In light of this increase it would seem that parents and teachers would openly endorse full-day kindergarten schedules in one form or another. But many school administrators have faced serious questions and opposition from parents and teachers when attempts were made to change the half-day every day schedule to full days or full-alternate days (Robertson, 1984). In other cases school administrators have changed from half-day every day schedules to all-day alternate day schedules with community and parent endorsement. What happened in those communities where the implementation of an all-day alternate day program relieved the concerns of parents and received positive evaluations?

This research project examined several factors involved in making the transition from a half-day kindergarten schedule to an all-day alternate day schedule. By identifying the issues and making a determination

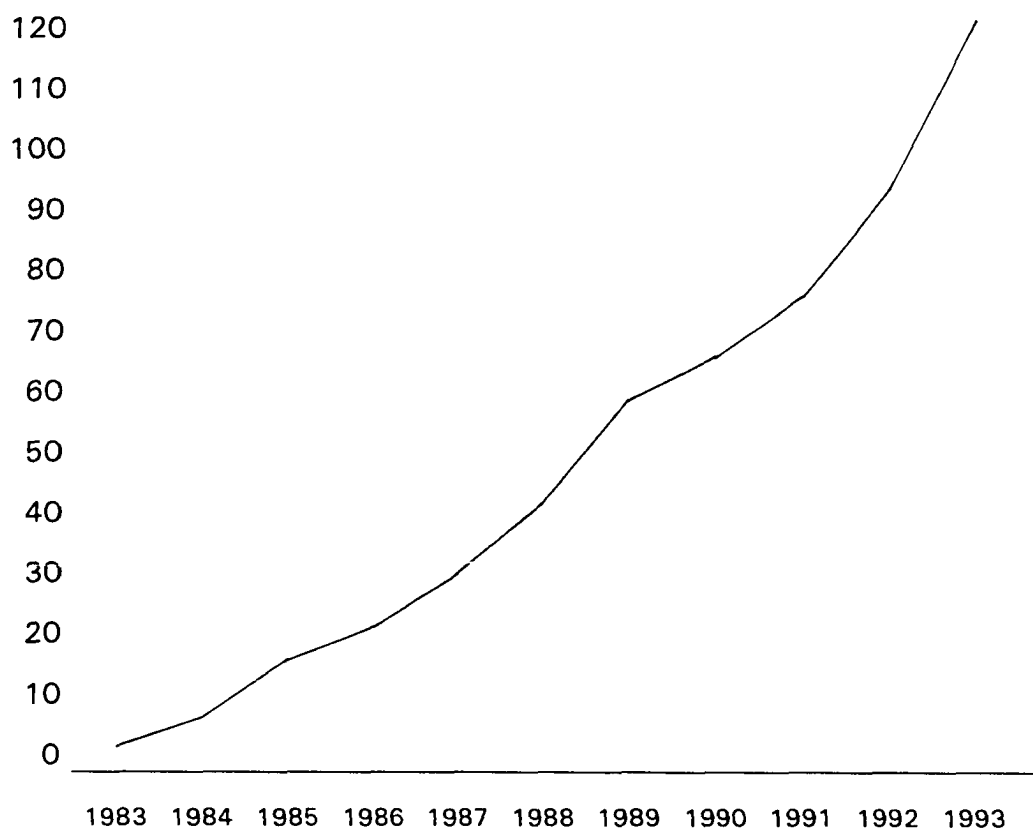


Figure 1. Number of Schools Implementing All-Day Alternate Day Kindergarten, 1982-1993.

Source. Data from personal communication from Evelyn Sitterson, Department of Education, Lansing, MI.

of the implementation process and the evaluation data being used to determine success, school districts desiring to make this same transition could benefit.

Definition of Terms

Half-day every day kindergarten (HDED): A kindergarten class that meets 5 days a week, 180 days a year, for 2.5 hours to 3 hours each day, 12.5 to 15 hours per week (Schuman, 1989/1990).

All-day alternate day kindergarten (ADAD): A kindergarten class that meets 2 full alternating days one week and 3 full alternating days the next week or some minor variation of this schedule (Schuman, 1989/1990).

Developmentally appropriate: This term refers to experiences, activities, materials, and instructional strategies that match the child's level of development and for which the child is ready. These are not only to be age appropriate for a group but individually appropriate for each child (Urban Education Alliance, Inc., 1994).

Summary

The literature suggests that a quality kindergarten curriculum includes the development of the total child. Emerging consensus suggests that a quality kindergarten curriculum should contain areas for cognitive development (language), social/emotional development, and physical development (Michigan State Board of Education, 1992). Vann (1991) indicated that the work of the kindergarten child should be language experiences, listening to stories, discussing them, and acting them out. They need more time to play and to talk, to explore with other children and the teacher.

With accumulated pressures of finance, changing family patterns, increased professional development requirements, and the increased knowledge of how young children learn, school administrators are being forced to make changes. Parental and public perceptions of why those changes are being made and their benefit to young children are of concern to all stakeholders.

Based upon the above information it was decided that any evaluative process that sought to explore the factors involved in the implementation process of an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule in Michigan should include several different components. It should include the reason schools were choosing all-day alternate day schedules, what preplanning activities were being conducted, what staff development measures were undertaken, how parents are involved in the decision making, and what criteria local schools were using to indicate the success of the all-day alternate day schedule.

Chapter II contains an examination of what research has already been conducted relative to the implementation process of all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. The methodology that was used to carry out this research project is outlined in Chapter III. Shown in Chapter IV are the results of the data that were collected, and Chapter V contains conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine, in light of the escalating numbers of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs in Michigan, what rationale schools were using to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten, examine the process of implementation, and determine the evaluative data being utilized to determine success.

The previous chapter identified finances, professional development of staff, parental involvement in decision making, and general evaluative concerns as the main issues involved in the implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. While finances may be a prime motivator in making the transition, the additional issues of professional development of staff, parental involvement, and general evaluative concerns soon become important issues of implementation (Cruikshank, 1986c; Elkind, 1986; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1991). How those issues are addressed during the implementation process is the theme of this research study. The existing literature related to those issues is reviewed in this chapter.

There were four issues identified from the literature which were outlined in Chapter I as being important considerations in making the transition from a half-day every day kindergarten schedule to a full-day alternate day schedule. Those were finances, professional development

of staff, parental involvement, and general evaluative concerns (Cruikshank, 1986a; Elkind, 1986; NAEYC, 1991; Schuman, 1989/1990). A preliminary review of literature related to general evaluative concerns, that is, academic comparisons, nonacademic comparisons, students' social adjustment toward school, and parental attitudes was completed and resulted in a limited number of studies being identified. Based on this preliminary survey of literature, it was decided that studies completed in the 1970s would be included. This provided an historical perspective of the topic and may also reflect a change in family patterns over the past 23 years.

Educational Research Service (ERS, 1989) indicated that between 1980 and 1989 there were approximately 40 studies published comparing the effects of every day full-day and alternate day versus the traditional half-day kindergarten. Stinard (1982), Leonard and McIntire (1983), McConnell and Tesch (1986), Peskin (1987), Karweit (1988), Puleo (1988), and Schuman (1989/1990) are among the researchers who examined length of day, academic growth, parental satisfaction, and so forth related to the kindergarten programs. This research review concentrated on those issues within the context of half-day every day versus alternate full-day schedules. The reason for this specific concentration was that these appear to be the most preferred schedules in Michigan.

For example, during the 1983-84 school year only 2 school districts had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, while for the 1993-94 school year over 112 local schools had implemented an all-day alternate day schedule (Sitterson, 1994).

Because of the increasing popularity of the trend toward all-day alternate day kindergarten, it is relevant to explore the literature to determine the reasons for this change. The literature review is divided into the following areas: academic comparison; nonacademic comparisons, that is, classroom behavior and attitude toward school; and parental attitudes and preferences.

Academic Comparisons

A total of 15 studies were located which compared some aspect of an all-day alternate day versus the every day half-day kindergarten schedule. The following paragraphs highlight those studies distinguishing those that were favorable to all-day alternate day kindergarten, those that favored half-day, and those that showed no significant differences.

Thirteen studies attempted to measure cognitive growth as one of the variables. Of those 13 studies, 4 favored the full-day alternate day schedule, 3 favored the every day half-day schedule, and 6 found no significant differences.

Gornowich (1974) and Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi (1979) used the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MTR) as the measurement instrument. Gornowich found that alternate day pupils scored significantly higher on 15 of 21 academic comparisons. Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi also found that alternate full-day pupils scored significantly higher on all the academic competencies as measured by MTR. C. L. Smith (1980/1981) found a significant difference in favor of alternate day pupils at the kindergarten level on the MTR test but that at the fourth-grade level the differences between the two groups had disappeared (see Table 1).

Table 1
Academic Comparisons for Alternate Full-Day Versus
Every Day Half-Day: Studies Favorable to
Alternate Full-Day

Author and year	Test	Finding
Gornowich (1974)	MRT	Alternate full-day significantly higher on 15 of 21 academic comparisons.
Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi (1979)	MRT	Alternate full-day significantly higher on all academic competencies.
C. L. Smith (1980/1981)	MRT	Alternate full-day significantly higher but effect disappeared by 4th grade.
Pasco School District (1987)	CTBS	Alternate full-day higher on two tests of English vocabulary. Poor children did significantly better than those in every day half-days.

The Pasco School District (1987), in Washington, used the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) over a four-school-year period (1982-1987) attempting to discover if a cognitive difference between the two schedules would appear. They found significant differences between the groups favoring alternate full-day schedules on two tests of English vocabulary. They also found that children who came from poor families did significantly better in alternate day schedules than those in half-day schedules (see Table 1).

Again, using cognitive growth as the test variable, three studies found significant differences in favor of half-day every day programs.

The Minnesota State Department of Education (1972) used the Caldwell Preschool Inventory. At the end of the project the half-day students tested significantly higher on the ability to name numbers and letters of the alphabet. Wenger (1978) conducted a three phase study attempting to correlate achievement with attendance patterns. In the first phase of his research he found that half-day every day pupils, particularly morning students, who were classified as low achievers did significantly better than alternate day students. His second phase gave the MRT to 223 first graders from both kindergarten schedules and determined that former half-day students performed higher on prereading, language, and auditory skills at a significant level. Following up with those same students the next year revealed that the advantages endured through that time with the half-day every day students. R. A. Smith (1979) also found that at the end of the school year, the every day half-day students scored significantly higher on readiness and achievement than full-day alternate day students. This advantage continued through the first grade year (see Table 2).

From 1976 to 1989 there were six studies that indicated no significant difference in cognitive growth. Mouw (1976); Schultz (1982); Ulrey, Alexander, Bender, and Gillis (1982); Lodi School District (1984); Gullo and Clements (1984); and finally Schuman (1989/1990) all found that the alternating full-day programs did not show any less growth in cognitive abilities (see Table 3).

Table 2
Academic Comparisons for Alternate Full-Day Versus
Every Day Half-Day: Studies Favorable to
Every Day Half-Day Schedules

Author and year	Test	Finding
Minnesota State Department of Education (1972)	CPI	Every day half-day students significantly better in ability to name numbers and letters of alphabet.
Wenger (1978)	MRT	Students classified as low achievers scored significantly better than alternate full-day students on pre-reading and auditory skills.
R. A. Smith (1979)	MRT	Every day half-day students significantly higher on readiness and achievement.

Nonacademic Comparisons

Eight studies were found that tested for nonacademic outcomes, that is, classroom behavior and attitude toward school (see Table 4). Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi (1979), C. L. Smith (1980/1981), and Gullo and Clements (1984) all reported at least one nonacademic effect favoring alternate full-day students. Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi tested for both motivation to achieve and social competence with the Kohn Competence Scale (KCS). There was no difference regarding motivation to achieve, but the KCS did reveal a significant advantage in social competence for all-day alternate day students. C. L. Smith found scores on the Self Observation Scale (SOS) to be significantly higher for all-day alternate day students but found that by fourth grade those effects had

Table 3

Academic Comparisons for Alternate Full-Day Versus
Every Day Half-Day: Studies Finding No
Difference Between Schedules

Author and year	Test	Finding
Mouw (1976)	MRT	No difference in academic achievement.
Schultz (1982)	Teacher interviews	No difference in academic preparation.
Ulrey, Alexander, Bender, & Gillis (1982)	MRT	No difference in prereading skills.
Lodi School District (1984)	MRT	No significant difference.
Gullo & Clements (1984)	MRT	No difference in academic achievement.
Schuman (1989/1990)	MRT	No difference in cognitive growth.

Table 4

Nonacademic Comparisons for All-Day Alternate Day
Versus Every Day Half-Day: Studies Favorable
to Alternate Full-Day Schedules

Author and year	Test	Finding
Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi (1979)	KCS	Advantage for social competence.
C. L. Smith (1980/1981)	SOS	Significantly higher scores.
Gullo & Clements (1984)	CHRS	Significant differences in originality and independent learning.

not endured. Gullo and Clements administered the Conner's Hyperactivity Rating Scale (CHRS) to matched groups of kindergarten children and found significant differences in originality and independent learning favoring the alternate day group. In the other 13 behavior factors no significant differences were found.

Five studies reported no significant differences between the two different schedules comparing student attitude and adjustment toward school. R. A. Smith (1979) surveyed the students themselves using a student attitude survey. The remaining studies (Finkelstein, 1983; Lodi School District, 1984; Schultz, 1982; Ulrey et al., 1982) all surveyed teachers concerning the children's attitudes and adjustment to school (see Table 5).

Table 5

Nonacademic Comparisons for All-Day Alternate Day Versus
Every Day Half-Day: Studies Finding No Difference
Between Alternate Full-Day Schedules and
Every Day Half-Day Schedules

Author and year	Test	Finding
R. A. Smith (1979)	Student attitude survey	No difference in attitude toward school.
Ulrey et al. (1982) Schultz (1982)	Teacher interviews	No difference in social and emotional adjustments to school.
Finkelstein (1983)	Teacher survey	No difference in children's attitude toward school.
Lodi School District (1984)	Teacher survey	No difference in children's adjustment to school or work habits.

No research was reported showing an advantage to every day half-day students in areas of nonacademic comparisons.

Parental Attitudes and Preferences

Parental attitudes toward half-day every day and alternate day schedules were examined in eight studies (see Table 6). The information is included here as there is a hypothesis that there may be a correlation between parental involvement in the decision-making process to change to an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule and the final degree of parental satisfaction.

Robertson (1984) reported that while their school district's experimental kindergarten schedule indicated that students performed equally well and achieved similar social development with either the half-day or alternate full-day schedule, they still chose to return to the every day half-day program because of parental and teacher attitudes. Their schedule change had been sold as a financial advantage and parents in that community wanted what was best for children, not what may have been cheaper.

Seven of the eight studies revealed that all-day alternate day schedules were preferred (see Table 6). A study conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education (1972) found 76% of the parents indicating that fatigue was not a problem for their children. Sixty-nine percent indicated that their children adjusted easily to the alternate day attendance pattern. Eighty-four percent said their children did not experience learning difficulties because of the alternating schedule. Seventy-two percent indicated they had no difficulty with the all-day

Table 6

Parental Attitudes Toward All-Day Alternate Day Versus
Every Day Half-Day: Studies Favorable to All-Day
Alternate Day Schedules

Author and year	Test	Finding
Minnesota Dept. of Education (1972)	Attitude survey	72% preferred all-day alternate day.
Gornowich (1974)	Parental questionnaire	62% preferred all-day alternate day.
Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi (1979)	Parental attitude scale	Significant preference for all-day alternate day for family convenience.
C. L. Smith (1980/1981)	Parental questionnaire	Preference for all-day alternate day for family convenience.
Ulrey et al. (1982)	Parental survey	Preference for all-day alternate day. Dissatisfaction rate increased from 21% to 34% during study.
Menser (1983/1984)	Parental survey	Preference for all-day alternate day due to flexibility of schedule.
Schuman (1989/1990)	Parental interviews	Preference for all-day alternate day for purposes of child care.

alternate day schedule and another 72% indicated that those parents who had children attending both schedules preferred all-day alternate day kindergartens.

Gornowich (1974) found that when asked to choose between all-day alternate days, half-days, or no preference, 62% of the parents chose alternate days and 36% chose half-days.

Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi (1979) also assessed parental preferences and found that a significant number of them preferred the alternate day schedule primarily due to parental convenience. C. L. Smith (1980/1981) also cited parental convenience as the primary reason parents preferred the alternate day schedule over the half-day schedule. Ulrey et al. (1982) surveyed parental satisfaction with an experimental all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule at both the outset of the experiment and at the conclusion. While the survey showed significant parental support, they did add that the parental dissatisfaction rate increased over the course of the experiment from 21% to 34%. Menser (1983/ 1984) surveyed parents as part of a pilot project involving alternate day kindergarten and found parents appreciated the flexibility that the alternate day schedule afforded them. He also reported that parents thought their children experienced a positive change as a result of the alternate kindergarten program. Schuman (1989/1990) found that there was greater parental involvement and support in the alternating full-day programs.

In another early study, Mouw (1976), however, reported that 59% of his parents of children who attended both schedules preferred the half-day every day program.

Summary

In summary, of the 15 studies that examined cognitive growth in one form or another, 6 studies indicated no significant differences in student achievement between the two schedules (Gullo & Clements, 1984; Lodi School District, 1984; Mouw, 1976; Schultz, 1982;

Schuman, 1989/1990; Ulrey et al., 1982), 4 that reported at least one academic achievement effect that favored alternate day kindergarten (Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi, 1979; Gornowich, 1974; Pasco School District, 1987; C. L. Smith, 1980/1981), and 3 that favored half-day every day (Minnesota Department of Education, 1972; R. A. Smith, 1979; Wenger, 1978).

Of the eight studies that tested for nonacademic student outcomes, it was found that five reported no significant differences between the two different schedules (Finkelstein, 1983; Lodi School District, 1984; Schultz, 1982; R. A. Smith, 1979; Ulrey et al., 1982) and three reported findings favoring the alternate day schedules (Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi, 1979; Gullo & Clements, 1984; C. L. Smith, 1980/1981). Seven of eight studies (Cleminshaw & Guidubaldi, 1979; Gornowich, 1974; Menser, 1983/1984; Minnesota Department of Education, 1972; Schuman, 1989/1990; C. L. Smith, 1980/1981; Ulrey et al., 1982) reported parental attitudes favoring alternate day scheduling.

One study by Mouw (1976) reported a parental preference favoring half-day scheduling from parents who have had children in both settings.

Closer scrutiny of the literature reveals that all of the studies that indicated that the half-day every day schedule produced greater cognitive gains were done in the 1970s. Studies published after the 1970s reflected either greater cognitive growth with the all-day alternate day schedule or showed no significant difference.

The same is true about parental attitudes toward all-day alternate day kindergarten. The one study that indicated parental preference for

the half-day every day schedule was conducted in 1976. Since then no study found indicated this preference. This may reflect changing family patterns and needs.

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, finances can be identified as a motivating factor in the decision to make the transition to an all-day alternate day schedule. However, no research can be found which examines finances as a factor of implementation success. The first chapter also identified professional development of staff as a key issue in implementation. Although common sense may indicate that there will be a relationship, no quantitative or qualitative research was found which shows a correlation between degree of professional development and implementation success of all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules.

Michigan has no centralized data bank, source, and so forth to assist administrators in making the transition to all-day alternate day kindergarten. To make good, well grounded decisions, administrators must have access to this information. As finances continue to be a problem in public schools, it is anticipated that there will be continued interest in examining all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules.

How data were gathered and what procedures were used to evaluate the data once they were collected are outlined in Chapter III. Chapter IV contains the results of the data that were collected, and Chapter V includes conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to examine, in light of the escalating numbers of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs in Michigan, what rationale schools were using to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten, examine the process of implementation, and determine the evaluative base being utilized.

The methodology used in the research project is outlined in Chapter III. Included are the research design used, the population sampled, how the data were collected, how the data were analyzed, and a summary of the chapter.

Research Design

The research design for this study was descriptive survey research. Isaac and Michael (1990) noted that the purpose of descriptive research is to describe systematically a situation or area of interest factually and accurately. Furthermore, Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) stated:

Descriptive research describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist: Practices that prevail; beliefs, points of views or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing. Its major purpose is to tell what is. (p. 26).

Babbie (1973) wrote that survey research is probably the best known and most widely used research method in the social sciences today. In particular, surveys are considered to be the most widely used technique in education and in the behavioral sciences for the collection of data (Isaac & Michael, 1990). Because of the above information, this methodology was thought to be the most appropriate given the nature and purpose of this research study.

The study gathered data via survey from Michigan school districts concerning the implementation process of all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. It attempted to identify the rationale schools were using to implement all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules, what preplanning activities transpired prior to implementation, staff development preparations made in light of changing to a full-day program, the degree to which parental concerns were identified and addressed during the decision-making/implementation process, and what evaluative data are/were being collected to substantiate claims that all-day kindergarten schedules are successful/unsuccessful.

Instrument Design

The method of collecting the data was a survey questionnaire mailed to selected school districts. Borg and Gall (1989) have stated that surveys are a very legitimate form of collecting and evaluating data from many different aspects of school programs. This approach seeks to cast light on current problems by further description and understanding of current conditions. It seeks to understand the present through a data gathering process which will enable the researcher to describe it

more fully and adequately than now possible (Fox, 1969).

The survey instrument was designed by the researcher. It contained four topical sections that dealt with the implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten in addition to requesting demographic information. Those topical sections were who originated the idea, pre-planning activities, staff development preparations, parental involvement issues, and overall program evaluation. It included a combination of multiple choice, ranking, and open-ended questions.

Upon initial completion of the questionnaire, it was piloted by six people who were considered to be knowledgeable about all-day alternate day kindergartens. Three were elementary principals with existing all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules within their school buildings and three were early childhood education experts who had extensive knowledge of all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. The three principals were randomly selected from the list of school districts that were not selected to participate in the project. The other three experts were chosen from a recommended list of people provided by Michigan Department of Education personnel. The survey instrument was piloted by these individuals to determine the propriety of the questions, completion time, and to identify concerns that could cause the instrument to be misinterpreted or difficult to complete.

Sample Population

The sample population consisted of two groups. The first were those schools that had implemented an all-day alternate kindergarten schedule for a minimum of 2 years. The 2-year implementation criteria

was included as it was felt that it could take schools a couple of years to get their evaluative data organized into a presentable format. The second group were those schools which implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule and subsequently dropped it. Officials within the Early Childhood Education Office in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provided the names of school districts in both groups. The entire second group was asked to participate in the survey as the number was estimated by the MDE to be approximately 12 schools. (It turned out that only 5 schools in this group participated.) The first group contained approximately 82 schools. Sixty-eight of those schools were selected to participate. As noted earlier (see Figure 1), there were approximately 94 schools that had implemented an all-day alternate day schedule during the 1992 school year. From that number, 12 had supposedly dropped the program leaving a total of 82 schools from which to choose. Isaac and Michael (1990) indicated that to provide a 95% confidence level, with a total population of 82, the sample size must be 68.

Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for each of the participants were obtained from the 1993-94 Michigan Association of School Administrators membership list. From this list the researcher called each superintendent of the district selected to participate. This was done for two reasons. The first was to encourage participation in the study and the second was to have the list of schools that were going to participate. This would allow a later determination of those districts that had not responded to the survey.

A written script was developed by the researcher and used while contacting the superintendents. It introduced the researcher, the purpose of the study, outlined the survey, and requested their participation. If the superintendent responded in the affirmative, the survey was sent. The information that was sent to each district included a cover letter from the researcher reminding them of the phone conversation and their agreement to participate in the study as well as thanking them for their participation. Also included with the survey was a letter from Jackie Thompson, Department Head of the Michigan Department of Education, Early Childhood Education Office, acknowledging the department's knowledge of and support for this research project.

The survey instrument asked for some demographic information. Included were the name of the district, a contact person who completed the survey, and a request for a telephone number for the contact person. This request was made to facilitate follow-up if future clarification of information became necessary. The researcher indicated that names of the school districts involved in the survey would not be identified in the final research study unless written consent was provided by the school district. (These criteria met the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board [HSIRB] guidelines established for research projects conducted under the auspices of Western Michigan University.)

If the superintendent was willing to have his or her school participate, he or she was asked to identify a contact person with whom the researcher could correspond if necessary. The survey was sent to the superintendent with directions to pass it along to a designated person if they so chose.

The survey instrument asked why the districts originally chose to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, what preplanning activities transpired prior to implementation, what staff development preparations were initiated, what parental involvement issues were addressed, and what overall program evaluations are/were being used to substantiate claims that the program is/was either successful or unsuccessful. (See sample letters and survey in Appendix F.)

Collection of Data

Selected schools were given 2 weeks to return the survey. Envelopes were provided for the survey forms to be returned. Surveys were mailed on August 26, 1994. The majority of surveys were returned by mid September. A few follow-up calls were made encouraging nonrespondents to please reply. Of the 68 surveys sent to districts operating an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, 58 were returned for a return rate of 85%. Of the five surveys sent to districts that had dropped an all-day alternate day kindergarten, four were returned for an 80% return rate.

The researcher was available for consultation during this time to assist districts in filling out the questionnaire if necessary. Because the school district name was provided on the survey form, along with a contact person, the researcher would have been able to contact the school district for additional information or clarification should it have become necessary upon receipt of the survey.

Summary

Within this chapter the procedures for this study are outlined. The participating school districts were divided into two groups, those that had implemented all-day alternate day kindergarten and continued implementation for a minimum of 2 years and those that implemented the schedule and subsequently dropped it. Sixty-eight schools were randomly drawn from a pool of 82 schools that met the 2-year implementation criterion. Five of the nine possible schools that had dropped an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule were included in the study.

The methodology of data collection for all-day alternate day kindergartens was accomplished by survey. Survey questionnaires were sent to those selected schools that had previously indicated that they would be willing to participate in this study. Each school was given a 2-week length of time to respond.

The descriptive statistics for each question are reported by a frequency tabulation, percentages, and in some cases mean ranking. Results are reported in narrative form with discussion for each question provided. Findings and conclusions concerning the implementation of all-day alternate kindergarten schedule are provided.

Chapters I and II of this research project contained an outline of the purpose of the study and provided a review of existing literature on the subject. Chapter III contains details of how this study was carried out. The data collected during this study are described in Chapter IV,

and Chapter V contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine, in light of the escalating numbers of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs in Michigan, what rationale schools were using to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten, examine the process of implementation, and determine the evaluative base utilized to determine program success.

Presented in this chapter is a description of the response data tabulated and reported in frequencies and percentages. Chapter IV is divided into eight sections. The first is the description of the sample. The second section provides the reasons for investigating an all-day alternate day kindergarten. The third section reports on the preplanning activities that transpired to assist in the decision to recommend implementation. The fourth section contains the information collected on staff development activities. The fifth section provides the information on parental involvement. The sixth section reports on the evaluation data being collected. The seventh section contains the data from those districts that dropped an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. The final section is a summary of Chapter IV.

A review of the related literature and previous research on the topic suggested several factors were involved in making the transition from a traditional half-day schedule to an alternate full-day schedule.

Those factors were the financial implications, the degree of planning that was involved in reaching an implementation decision, the professional development made available to implementing staff, the degree of parental involvement in the decision-making process, and the evaluative data being used to determine success. This prompted four research questions for the study. They were:

1. What was the origin, purpose, and content of any preplanning activities that took place prior to implementation?
2. What staff development preparations were made in light of changing to a full-day program?
3. What was the degree to which parental concerns were identified and addressed during the decision-making/implementation process?
4. What evaluative data are being collected to substantiate claims that all-day alternate day kindergarten programs are successful?

With the information made available from the related literature and the research questions formulated, a questionnaire was developed to gather data from Michigan school districts that had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. To establish the propriety of the questions, the completion time, and identify other concerns that could cause the instrument to be misinterpreted or difficult to complete, an expert panel of six persons who have been involved in implementing all-day alternate day kindergartens were asked to pretest the questionnaire. The pretest was conducted during the summer of 1994. Minor revisions to the questionnaire were suggested by the expert panel.

Questions for the survey related to each of the four research

questions posed plus the solicitation of some demographic information. The research design for the study was survey research.

Description of Sample

Sixty-eight schools were randomly selected from the list of 82 schools obtained from the Michigan Department of Education. Those 82 school districts had at least a 2-year implementation history of all-day alternate day kindergarten. Sixty-eight were selected, as that number reflects the 95% confidence level suggested by Isaac and Michael (1990). Questionnaires were distributed to the 68 school districts throughout Michigan which had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten for a minimum of 2 years.

All 68 school district superintendents were called by the researcher during the second week of August 1994 to determine if their school district would be willing to participate by completing and returning a questionnaire. Sixty-eight questionnaires were mailed and 58 (85%) were returned.

The school district enrollments ranged from less than 300 students to more than 10,000 students. Table 7 provides an overview of the enrollments of the school districts participating in the research project.

Of these 58 schools, 52 (89%) reported that they implemented their all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule in all their buildings at one time. Thirty-two (55%) of the districts reported that they implemented a straight all-day alternate day schedule, 18 (31%) reported that they implemented a 2.5 day weekly schedule, 3 (5%) indicated that they

Table 7
Sample Description

District enrollment categories	Number of districts	Percent of total sample
< 500	8	14
500-1,000	14	24
1,001-2,000	18	31
2,001-3,000	10	17
> 3,000	8	14
Totals	58	100

implemented a 3-full-day-a-week schedule, and 5 (9%) reported an "other" schedule. Those other schedules were: one in which students attended school 3 days per week for 5 weeks and then 2 days per week for 5 weeks and so forth; one district that implemented a 4-day-a-week schedule, and 3 described a schedule where half the students come on even numbered calendar days and the other half come on odd numbered calendar days.

Fifty-four districts responded to the question pertaining to implementation dates. Of those 54 districts, 17 (31%) had their initial implementation in the autumn of 1992. The first district had started the schedule in the 1970s, but they were uncertain of the year. That district was in the western portion of the upper peninsula. The first district in the lower peninsula to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten

was Holton in 1983. The average length of implementation was just over 5 years. Table 8 provides additional sample information.

Table 8
Additional Sample Information
(N = 68)

Item	f	%
Returned questionnaires	58	85
Districts implementing in all buildings at once	51	89
Districts with straight alternate day schedule	32	55
Districts with 2.5 days per week	18	31
Districts where students come 3 full days per week	3	5
Other	5	9
Average number of years since implementation	5 years	

The researcher was also aware, from Jackie Thompson, Early Childhood Education Office of the Michigan Department of Education, that 12 schools had started an all-day alternate kindergarten schedule and subsequently discontinued it. An attempt was made to explore the reason(s) for dropping the all-day alternate day kindergarten. Of these 12 schools, 9 (75%) had actually discontinued the schedule. From those 9, it was determined, via phone conversations, that 2 (22%) had changed complete administrations since it had been dropped and they chose not to participate citing lack of knowledge about the reasons for discontinuation. Two (22%) had changed from an all-day alternate day

schedule to a 4 or 5 day schedule. The remaining 5 (55%) were mailed questionnaires of which 4 (80%) were completed and returned. Data from these districts are addressed in the last section of Chapter IV.

Reasons for Investigating an All-Day Alternate Day Kindergarten

Research Goal 1: To determine what preplanning activities transpired prior to implementation, including an attempt to determine who originated the idea and for what purpose.

Question 1 asked, "In your district the impetus to investigate an alternative kindergarten schedule was prompted by which of the following?" Respondents were provided six options and asked to rate each on a 10-point Likert scale with the numeral 1 being least important. A mean score was determined from each option.

Table 9 lists each of the six options. It indicates that 56 respondents selected financial savings as the most important reason for investigating an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule with a mean score of 7.7. Fifty-seven respondents rated curricular implications as the second most important reason with a mean score of 6.6. Fifty-six respondents selected the length of the bus ride versus length of day in school as the third reason with a mean score of 6.3. These first three issues, financial savings, curriculum implications, and length of bus ride versus length of day in school, were by far the most important issues listed. Nutritional concerns, facility usage, and safety in walking to and from school produced only mean scores of 3.6 and lower.

Table 9
 Impetus to Investigate an Alternative
 Kindergarten Schedule
 ($N = 57$)

Category	f	Mean	Mean rank
Financial savings	56	7.7	1
Curriculum implications	57	6.6	2
Length of ride versus half day	56	6.3	3
Nutritional concerns	57	3.6	4
Facility usage	56	3.6	5
Safety in walking to and from	55	3.1	6
Other	11		
Additional time	5	8.6	
Educational value	2	9.0	
Smaller classes	1	10.0	
Parental interest	1	5.0	
Teacher travel time	1	8.0	
Every day too much	1	9.0	

Note. $N < 58$ indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Respondents were also asked to list other reasons for investigating an alternative kindergarten schedule and to apply the same Likert rating scale. That request produced 11 additional responses. Additional time was identified by five respondents with a mean score of 8.6. Two respondents indicated educational value and a mean score of 9.0. Single

responses were made for smaller classes with a mean score of 10, parental interest with a mean score of 5.0, teacher travel time with a mean score of 8.0, and every day all-day being too much a mean score of 9.0.

A follow-up question asked for the percentage of savings realized due to the implementation. Only 47 respondents (81%) answered the question concerning the area of financial savings. Transportation was identified as the area of financial savings by 46 respondents (98%). Those savings ranged from 0.5% to 20% of transportation budgets. One respondent (2%) indicated that money was saved in staffing but did not elaborate on the amount of savings.

Question 2 asked where the idea to explore an all-day alternate day kindergarten originated. Thirty-three respondents (58%) reported the idea originated with the administration. Thirteen respondents (23%) indicated that the idea originated with teachers, and 4 respondents (7%) indicated the idea originated with the board of education (see Table 10).

Preplanning Activities

This portion of the questionnaire inquired about activities the districts had conducted prior to program start up. Forty-eight (87%) of the respondents indicated that preplanning activities were initiated.

Question 2 of this portion of the questionnaire asked if a committee was formed to investigate the idea; 46 respondents (92%) indicated that they did. Table 11 shows that the committee membership to investigate the idea varied somewhat. Teachers, however, were included on 100% of committees, parents were represented on 79% of the

Table 10
 Originating Source to Implement Alternative
 Kindergarten Schedule
 (N = 57)

Source	f	%
Administration	33	58
Teachers	13	23
Board of education	4	7
Other	7	12

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

committees, principals 64%, board members 57%, and superintendents on 38% of the committees. Other less frequently mentioned members included preschool teachers, curriculum directors, elementary counselors, outside consultants, speech/language specialists, occupational therapists, and one director of transportation.

Question 3 asked if preplanning activities included visits to an existing alternate day kindergarten program. Forty-five respondents (90%) reported they visited an existing alternating day kindergarten program. Table 12 indicates that the composition of the visiting teams varied by school district. Of the 45 responses to this question, 44 (98%) of the visiting teams included teachers. Thirty-six (80%) included administrators, 19 (42%) included parents, 10 (22%) of the visitation teams included board members, and 2 (4%) included elementary counselors.

Table 11
Committee Membership
(N = 42)

Representative group	<u>f</u>	%
Teachers	42	100
Parents	33	79
Principals	27	64
Board members	24	57
Superintendent	16	38
Preschool teachers	6	14
Curriculum directors	2	5
Elementary counselors	2	5
Speech/language specialist	1	2
Occupational therapist	1	2
Director of transportation	1	2

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question four asked if a review of the existing literature was conducted. Reviewing the literature was reported by 51 (96%) of the respondents. Question 5 asked if the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) had been consulted for assistance; and if yes, what was the value of their help. Contacting the MDE for assistance was reported by 23 (45%) of the respondents. Only 19 districts responded to the inquiry about the helpfulness of the MDE. Sixteen respondents (84%) felt they had received adequate or great help from the MDE, while 3 (16%)

Table 12
Composition of Visitation Team
(N = 45)

Team membership	<u>f</u>	%
Teachers	44	98
Administration	36	80
Parents	19	42
Board members	10	22
Elementary counselors	2	4

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

rated MDE's help as of little value.

It was assumed that a potential goal of the preplanning process was to build a support base from various stakeholder groups concerning all-day alternate day kindergartens. Respondents were asked in Question 6 to use a 10-point Likert scale (1 being support not necessary, 10 being support critical) to rate a provided list of eight potential stakeholder groups. A mean ranking was developed for each potential stakeholder group. Table 13 presents data in frequency and mean scores. Teachers received the highest mean score of 9.4. Tied for second were parents and the superintendent with mean scores of 9.3. Principals and board members were also tied at 9.1, followed by community representatives at 6.2, curriculum directors at 5.4, and community child care providers at 4.0.

Table 13
Major Stakeholders Essential to Implementation
Reported by Frequency and Mean Score
(N = 54)

Stakeholders	<u>f</u>	Mean	Mean rank
Teachers	53	9.4	1
Parents	52	9.3	2
Superintendent	53	9.3	3
Principals	53	9.1	4
Board members	54	9.1	5
Community representatives	45	6.2	6
Curriculum director	33	5.4	7
Child care providers	49	4.0	8

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 7 asked respondents to identify the major factors that convinced the stakeholders that an alternate day kindergarten schedule could be implemented successfully. Fifty-two respondents identified seven major factors which are listed in Table 14. Other district success and finances were each identified most frequently as success indicators, each named 14 times (27%). Instructional benefits was next, being identified 13 times (25%). Staff/administration/parent support was named 10 times (19%), research was identified 7 times (13%), pilot studies was identified 2 times (4%), and prior planning was named once (2%).

Table 14
 Convincing Factors for Successful Implementation
 ($N = 52$)

Category of factors	f	%
Other district success	14	27
Finances	14	27
Instructional benefits (time on task)	13	25
Staff, administration/parent support	10	19
Research	7	13
Pilot studies	2	4
Prior planning	1	2

Note. $N < 58$ indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 8 asked respondents to chose just one influencing factor that convinced stakeholders to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule. Fifty-one participants responded to this question identifying eight reasons. Table 15 reports these data in both frequency and percentages. The most frequently cited was instructional benefits, which were identified 17 times (33%), finances was identified 13 times (25%), other district success was cited 5 times (10%), reduced transportation (i.e., time on bus) was named 4 times (8%), parental support was noted 4 times (8%), teacher support 3 times (6%), research was noted 3 times (6%), and community trust one time (2%).

Table 15
Single Most Influencing Factor Convincing Stakeholders
to Proceed With Implementation
(N = 51)

Category of factors	<u>f</u>	%
Instructional benefits	17	33
Finances	13	25
Other district success	5	10
Reduced transportation (time on bus)	4	8
Parental support	4	8
Research	3	6
Teacher support	3	6
Community trust	1	2

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Staff Development

Research Goal 2: To determine what staff development preparations were made in light of changing to a full-day program.

The staff development section asked about activities that were initiated to assist the staff in preparing for the implementation of the alternative kindergarten schedule. Since not all participants responded to each question, N does not always equal 58. Also, since some questions asked for multiple answers, there is in some situations an appearance that N equals more than 58. The responses are reported in both frequencies and percentages and, in one case, in mean rank.

Question 1 asked if staff development needs were identified prior to implementation. Thirty-eight (68%) of the respondents indicated that staff development needs were identified prior to implementation. However, when asked if those staff development activities were implemented prior to program start-up, only 16 (52%) indicated that they were. A further probe asked participants to list or describe the content of their staff development activities. That question elicited only 12 responses. Four (33%) cited developmentally appropriate practices as a topic, 3 (25%) indicated planning time for implementation and priority of instructional delivery systems, 2 (17%) used teachers from existing alternative day kindergarten programs to work with their staff, one (8%) presented research, one worked on structuring the day, and one sent staff to conferences.

Since the school districts participating in this project have had their all-day alternate day kindergarten in place for a minimum of 2 years, respondents were asked, in Question 9, to name the major staff development needs for implementing an alternative kindergarten schedule. Forty-six respondents produced such a list of needs.

Sixteen (35%) of the respondents identified scheduling for a longer day as the primary need. Preparing a developmentally appropriate curriculum was listed next by 13 respondents (28%), visiting existing programs by 11 respondents (24%), parent education and involvement by 6 respondents (13%), developing thematic units by 4 respondents (9%), assuring a positive teacher attitude by 3 respondents (7%), and granting time for teachers to meet and plan together by 2 respondents (4%). Other single responses included alleviating the fear of a longer

day, providing course work in early childhood education, dealing with days off, measuring the success of the program, and reviewing the research (see Table 16).

Table 16
Major Staff Development Needs
(N = 46)

Staff development area	<u>f</u>	%
Scheduling for a longer day	16	35
Developmentally appropriate curriculum	13	28
Visiting existing programs	11	24
Parent education and involvement	6	13
Thematic units	4	9
Teachers' positive attitude	3	7
Teacher time to meet and plan together	2	4
Alleviating fear of longer day	1	2
Courses in early childhood education	1	2
Dealing with days off	1	2
How to measure success of program (evaluation)	1	2
Review of research	1	2

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 2 asked if the staff had an opportunity to visit an existing alternative kindergarten program. Forty-two of 50 respondents (72%) indicated that staff members responsible for implementation did

have an opportunity to visit an existing program.

Respondents were asked to rate on Question 4 on a 10-point Likert scale with 1 being least apprehensive to 10 being most apprehensive the staff's primary apprehension regarding implementation. Choices given included staffing patterns, curriculum development, full day being too long, and possible inconsistency for students attending alternate days. They were also provided an opportunity to add to the list and rank additions with the same Likert scale.

Table 17 outlines the responses for the four choices provided plus the other reasons that respondents provided. The response a full day being too long obtained the highest mean score at 6.82 from 49 respondents. Inconsistency of the alternate days received a mean score of 6.66 from 48 respondents, curriculum development at 4.97 from 48 respondents, and staffing patterns a mean score of 2.79 from 48 respondents. Eleven additional concerns were identified. Their mean scores ranked from 10 to 6. In all but one case the additional factors identified as reasons for staff apprehension were isolated district issues, many of which could have fit into the choices provided.

Question 5 asked participants if those apprehensions faded once the staff was working with the new schedule. Forty-four respondents (75%) indicated that staff's apprehension did fade after implementation. Of the additional 11 other responses, 10 (91%) indicated that those apprehensions faded after the all-day alternate day schedule was implemented.

Questions 6 and 7 asked participants whether or not specials (i.e., art, music, and gym) with specialized teachers were available in half-day

Table 17
Staff Apprehension Regarding Implementation
(N = 49)

Apprehension	<u>f</u>	Mean	Mean rank
Full day too long	49	6.82	1
Inconsistency of alternate days	48	6.66	2
Curriculum development	48	4.97	3
Staffing patterns	48	2.79	4
Other	11		
Reduced contact time	1	10.00	
Fatigue of children	1	10.00	
Consistency-reinforcement	2	9.50	
Attendance	1	9.00	
Three days off over weekend	1	8.00	
General impact on learning	1	8.00	
Retention of information	1	8.00	
Students' ability to handle longer days	1	8.00	
Loss of preparation time between a.m. and p.m.	1	6.00	
Parental acceptance	1	6.00	

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

programs and full-day programs. Table 18 reflects the data for this question. For half-day programs, 32 respondents (65%) indicated that

specials had been available to the students. In the all-day alternate day programs, 47 respondents (92%), for an increase of 27%, reported that specials were available to the students.

Table 18
Availability of Specials for Half-Day Programs
Versus Alternate Day Programs

Schedule	f	%
Half-day program ($N = 49$)	32	65
Alternate day program ($N = 52$)	47	92

Note. $N < 58$ indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

The final question in the staff development section asked if the transition from a half-day schedule to a full-day schedule caused a philosophical change, that is, a change from an academic to a developmental approach, in their kindergarten program. Forty-seven districts responded to the question with 33 (70%) indicating that it did not and 14 (30%) indicating that it did cause a philosophical change toward a more developmental approach. However, further analysis demonstrates that 10 of the 33 school districts (30%) indicating no change noted they were already moving in that direction. One respondent suggested that the move to a more developmentally appropriate curriculum prompted the transition to the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, a reverse of the others.

Parental Involvement

Research Goal 3: To determine the degree to which parental concerns were identified and addressed during the decision-making process.

The parental involvement section contains an examination of parental concerns when implementing an alternative kindergarten schedule. Here, as in the previous section, scores are reported in frequencies; percentages; and in one case, mean rank.

Question 1 in the parental involvement section asked if parents were consulted prior to the decision to implement an all-day alternate day schedule. Fifty-six districts responded to the question and of those respondents, 47 (84%) indicated that parents were consulted prior to the decision.

Question 2 asked if parent meetings were held to inform parents of the decision to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule. Fifty-five districts responded and 44 (80%) indicated that parent meetings were held to inform parents of the decision to implement an all-day alternate day schedule.

Assuming that not all parents were in attendance at this meeting, Question 3 asked how parents were notified of the board's final decision to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule. Respondents were given four options from which to choose plus an "other" category. They could choose one or all of the options provided. Table 19 reports the results of this question.

Table 19
Parental Notification Methods
N = 54)

Method	<u>f</u>	%
Direct letter to parents	44	82
Parent meeting	35	65
District newsletter	33	61
Media announcement	23	43
Other	4	7

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

The most popular method of informing parents was a direct letter, reportedly used by 44 districts (82%). The next most frequent method was holding parent meetings, as was reported by 35 (65%) of the respondents. District-wide newsletters were used by 33 (61%) of the respondents, and another 23 (43%) said they used media announcements to get the message to parents. The other category produced four additional methods which were: all parents participated in a meeting where the decision was made, use of the city newspaper to inform parents, parents were told in their kindergarten registration materials as they were given a choice of either a full alternate day or a half-day every day schedule, and one respondent indicated parents were notified via the board meeting.

Question 4 asked what the initial parental reaction was to the board's decision to implement an alternate day kindergarten schedule.

Respondents were given three response choices: supportive, non-supportive, wait and see, and an "other" choice. Forty of the 55 respondents (73%) indicated that parents were supportive. Eleven respondents (20%) indicated that their parents were non-supportive. While 73% indicated that parents were supportive, included in that amount were some 40% who also indicated a wait-and-see attitude. The two other responses were parents' reaction was really mixed depending on their schedule and "I couldn't find any data on this question" (see Table 20).

Table 20
Parental Reaction to Implement
Alternate Day Kindergarten
(N = 55)

Category	<u>f</u>	%
Supportive	40	73
Non-supportive	11	20
Wait and see	22	40
Other	2	4

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 5 asked respondents about the major concerns that were expressed by parents. They were to rate, on a 10-point Likert scale, 1 being of least concern and 10 being a major concern, each of four possible answers in addition to an other category if one of the four didn't fit a major concern category. A mean score was determined for each major concern category.

Table 21 reports the responses to the question regarding parental concerns. Of the 54 respondents the highest concern was that an all-day schedule was too long which produced a mean score of 6.57. The next highest concern was that of consistency of learning with alternate days which provided a mean score of 6.34. General resistance to change had a mean score of 6.00 and the schedule producing failure elsewhere produced a mean score of 2.42. The other category identified nine additional concerns. Four of those related to the calendar issues of alternate days, three indicated that alternate days created child care problems, one indicated that lunches and buses were a major problem, and one said that the only parents who had major concerns were those parents who had teachers who were not supportive of the schedule.

Table 21
Parental Concerns Regarding Alternate
Day Kindergarten
(N = 54)

Parental concerns	<u>f</u>	Mean	Mean rank
All day is too long	54	6.57	1
Consistency of learning with alternate days	53	6.34	2
General resistance to change	53	6.00	3
They tried this elsewhere and it didn't work	52	2.42	4
Other	9	6.89	5

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

When asked if parents were asked to volunteer some amount of time in the kindergarten, 34 of 53 respondents (64%) indicated that they were. When parents were asked to volunteer their time, 36 of 38 respondents (95%) indicated that parents did volunteer their time.

Question 7 in the parental involvement section was, "If there was one thing you would tell others about parental involvement in the decision-making process in changing to an alternative kindergarten schedule, what would it be?" Forty-seven districts responded to this question and of those, 39 (80%) indicated that it was crucial to involve parents early and keep them involved throughout the decision-making process. The remainder of the responses fell primarily into single categories. Examples include selling the positive benefits to parents, selling parents on what is educationally best for their children, providing options if possible, and making sure the teachers are supportive of the concept first.

Overall Program Evaluation

Research Goal 4: To examine what evaluative data were being collected to substantiate claims that programs were successful.

The final section of the questionnaire asked how school districts were evaluating the success of the alternative kindergarten program. Question 1 of this section asked if districts were collecting evaluative information (hard data, anecdotes, testimonials, etc.) for or against the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Forty-one of 54 (76%) indicated that they were collecting evaluative data.

Question 2 asked if they were collecting achievement data from all-day alternate day kindergarten students that were compared to

kindergarten students in a traditional half-day kindergarten program. Nineteen of 42 school districts (37%) indicated that they were collecting comparative achievement data. Eleven of the 19 (61%) said the data indicated no significant differences between the half-day students and the all-day alternate day students. Six more (33%) indicated that their results demonstrated significant differences in favor of the alternate day schedule. One did not indicate what the difference indicated.

Question 3 asked if the district had collected any longitudinal achievement data from all-day alternate day kindergarten students compared to traditional half day kindergarten students. Of the 49 respondents, 44 (90%) indicated that they had not collected longitudinal data. The five districts (10%) that indicated that they had collected longitudinal data noted that the data showed no difference between all-day alternate day students and half-day every day students.

Question 4 asked if they had collected any data from kindergarten teachers about their perception of student growth between the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule compared to the traditional half-day program. Thirty-five respondents (60%) indicated that data had been collected. Question 5 asked if they had collected data from first, second grade teachers, and so forth. Twenty-six respondents had collected data. Questions 4 and 5 were only yes or no questions. No districts offered evidence of what those data indicated.

Question 6 asked about parents and their perception and/or acceptance of the alternatively scheduled kindergarten program. Forty-three respondents (86%) indicated that they had collected those data (see Table 22).

Table 22
Evaluation Data
(N = 58)

Data type	<u>f</u> yes	% yes	Total responses
Collected any program evaluation data	41	76	54
Achievement (ADAD vs HDED)	19	37	52
Results:			
No significant difference	11	61	18
Favorable to all-day alternate day	6	33	18
Longitudinal achievement data	5	10	49
No significant difference	5	100	5
Parental acceptance of all-day schedule	43	86	52

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 8 asked participants what they considered to be the best data available in their district to evaluate the program's success. Forty-three participants responded to that question. Table 23 reports the data for that question. Of those 43 respondents, 30 (70%) indicated that positive parent surveys were their best data. Eleven others (26%) reported that teacher observation/support was their best data, and four others (9.3%) reported that student progress provided their best evidence. Two districts reported that their 2-year report was their best data (that report included many of the above categories) and other single districts reported the number of visitation requests they received, their

first and second grade teacher support, and community comfort level as evidence of the program's success.

Table 23
Schools' Best Evaluative Data Indicating Success
(N = 43)

Type of data	f	%
Parent surveys	30	70.0
Teacher observation/support	11	26.0
Student progress	4	9.3
Two-year report	2	4.7
First and second grade teachers	1	2.3
Visitation requests	1	2.3
Community comfort level	1	2.3

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Participants were also asked how their district was communicating their evaluative data to support the district's decision to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Respondents were given five options from which to choose in Question 7. Those were: kindergarten round-up sessions, school newsletters, parent advisory committees, board of education information, and local media coverage, as well as "other" if one of these did not reflect the district's method. (Since respondents could have used multiple methods, the cumulative percentage may add up to more than 100.) Thirty-four of the 48 respondents

(71%) indicated they reported their findings to their boards of education. Twenty-six (54%) indicated that they reported their data in their local school newsletters, 23 (48%) indicated they provided their information during kindergarten round-up sessions. Nineteen (40%) reported their data to their parent advisory committees, and 12 (25%) said they provided their data to their local media. Nine respondents (19%) provided single district responses that included open houses, including the data in their annual report, in school parent meetings, and sharing data with the "constant stream of visitors" (see Table 24).

Table 24
Communicating Evaluative Data
(N = 48)

Mode of communication	<u>f</u>	%
Board of education information	34	71
School newsletter	26	54
Kindergarten round-up sessions	23	48
Parent advisory committees	19	40
Local media coverage	12	25
Other	9	19

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

Question 9 asked if, based on data that the school district had collected, they had changed their alternate day kindergarten schedule in any way since implementation. Twenty-five districts responded. Of

those 25 respondents, 21 (84%) indicated that they had made changes. Those changes were related to changing the swing day from one day to another to allow for 2.5 days of contact with the students each week. Three districts (12%) indicated that they had made curriculum changes, trying to become more developmentally appropriate, and one (4%) indicated there had been no changes in the 10 years the district had been operating an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule.

Question 10 asked the respondents if they were to make a recommendation(s) to a school district about implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, what would that/those recommendation(s) be. Forty-seven districts responded to this question with responses that have been grouped into the headings shown in Table 25. The reader will note that there is universal agreement to go ahead with implementation if certain conditions are in place or if certain issues are addressed. For example, 15 (32%) of the respondents recommended implementation if the staff and parents are committed. Eight (17%) recommended implementation, provided the educational merit of the schedule is highlighted, not because it saved money. Seven (15%) recommended implementation but also added advice about program consistency. Other reasons were also given that supported implementation. Not implementing the all-day alternate day schedule was never suggested.

Schools That Dropped All-Day Alternate Day Kindergarten

The final section of this chapter contains a review of the data collected from the schools that dropped the alternate day kindergarten

Table 25
Recommendations for Implementation
(N = 47)

Category	f	%
Definitely implement it if staff/parents are committed	15	32
Implement program on merit/not finances	8	17
Make program consistent as possible	7	15
Involve parents/teachers in initial decision	6	13
Review the research	5	11
Have open communication	5	11
Make site visits	4	9
Operate a pilot giving parents choices first if possible	3	6
Get impetus to come from teachers/parents	1	2
Give it at least a 5-year try	1	2

Note. N < 58 indicates that not all participants responded to the question.

schedule. The purpose of collecting data from these schools was to determine why the programs were dropped. If reasons could be determined it would follow that measures could be taken by future districts desiring to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule to avoid these potential difficulties.

As previously stated, data were received from only four districts in this category. Three of these districts dropped the schedule after 1 year and the other district dropped the schedule after 2 years.

Districts that had dropped the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule were given the same questionnaire as districts that had not dropped it. They were also asked what the main reasons were for dropping the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. They were provided six possible reasons as well as an opportunity to provide others, if necessary.

One district indicated lack of teacher and parental support as their reason for discontinuing the schedule. They reported the following: "Alternate day kindergarten was not preplanned or implemented successfully. Teachers were informed days before the first day of school as were the parents. All fought it for a full year. The major reason was to save +/- \$5,000 in transportation."

Another district respondent indicated they dropped it after one year because of lack of teacher and parental support. The original decision to implement it was, "to save money as part of a budget-cutting process." They did not try to develop a support base prior to implementation but did provide staff with 2 days of summer planning time to prepare for implementation. They also reported that after they dropped it the first grade teachers felt that students involved in the pilot year were better prepared for first grade.

The third district dropped it for "inconsistency of alternate days." They reportedly spent the necessary preplanning time and effort, recognized that kindergarten children would spend more time in school, and the potential benefits that could generate. They visited another school district that had the schedule for several years and spent the staff development time helping teachers prepare schedules, academic units

instruction, and so forth. However, they went on to say, "The biggest staff concern was also the parents' biggest concern--inconsistency of alternated day schedules. The staff's desire was to go to all-day every day but that, due to finances, was not possible."

The final district reported that they dropped the all-day alternate day schedule due to "inadequate funding to keep the class size low and provide special classes." They reported class sizes of 35 students and that the teachers were exhausted at the conclusion of the day. They also reportedly involved themselves with preplanning activities, visited other districts, had adequate staff development activities, and so forth; but due to other financial restriction, they had such large class sizes it just didn't work for them.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the responses from a survey administered to 68 school districts across Michigan that had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten. The chapter is divided into seven sections and a summary.

The first section provides a description of the sample of schools that participated in the study. It revealed that the average number of years of implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten was 5 years, that the majority (89%) of districts implemented their all-day alternate day kindergarten in all of their elementary buildings at once and that 55% of the districts have a straight all-day alternate day schedule.

The second section contains information about the reasons for investigating an all-day kindergarten schedule. It indicates that the three

most prominent reasons for investigating all-day alternate day kindergartens were because of potential financial savings, curriculum implications, and the length of the bus ride versus the amount of time kindergarten students spent at school in the traditional half day setting.

The third section examined the preplanning activities the districts had conducted prior to initiating an all-day alternate day kindergarten. It revealed that 92% of the districts initiated a committee to research the issue. This committee membership (stakeholders) always included teachers, parents 79% of the time, principals 64%, board members 57% of the time, and superintendents 38% of the time. Committee activities included visiting existing all-day alternate day programs in 90% of the cases, reviewing the literature in 96% of the cases, and contacting the Michigan Department of Education for assistance in 45% of the cases. The major stakeholders that the committee felt essential for a successful implementation included teachers, parents, the superintendent, the building principal, and board members. The most frequently cited factor that convinced the stakeholders to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten was the perceived instructional benefits for the students.

The fourth section examined the staff development activities initiated to assist staff in preparing for implementation. The first three factors in staff development were scheduling for a longer day, providing developmentally appropriate curriculum, and visiting existing programs. Almost all the issues that staff had identified as creating a degree of apprehension in the implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten dissipated after implementation. An important finding was that the availability of specials, that is, art, music, and gym, increased by 26%

for all-day alternate day kindergartens.

The fifth section reported on parental involvement when implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten. The three major parental concerns regarding an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule were: all-day is too long, the consistency of learning with alternate days, and a general resistance to change. Eighty percent of the respondents reported that involving the parents early and often was crucial to success of the implementation.

The sixth section reported the findings on program evaluation. Ninety-four percent of the districts collecting achievement data indicated that their evaluation results indicated either no difference or that scores were in favor of those children attending the all-day alternate day kindergarten compared to those of children attending a traditional half-day program. Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that their best evaluative data were their positive parent surveys.

The seventh section examined the data from those districts that had dropped the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Only four districts fell into this category and no pattern of responses was found from those four respondents. Each respondent had their own unique reason that the schedule did not work in their setting.

Chapter V brings the study to conclusion. A summary of the data is again presented along with the conclusions derived from the study and the recommendations made for further study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to examine, in light of the escalating numbers of all-day alternate day kindergarten programs in Michigan, what rationale schools were using to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten, examine the process of implementation, and determine the evaluative data being utilized to determine success. This chapter provides a summary of the methodology, a discussion of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for further research related to this study and to furthering understanding of alternative kindergarten programs.

Summary

The research design for the study was survey research. Four research questions were constructed to guide the study:

1. What was the origin, purpose, and content of any preplanning activities that took place prior to implementation?
2. What staff development preparations were made in light of changing to a full-day program?
3. What was the degree to which parental concerns were identified and addressed during the decision-making/implementation process?
4. What evaluative data are being collected to substantiate claims that all-day alternate day kindergarten programs were successful?

From a review of the related literature and previous research on the topic, it was suggested that several factors were involved in making the transition from a traditional half-day schedule to an alternate full-day schedule. Those factors included the financial implications, the degree of planning that was involved in reaching an implementation decision, the professional development made available to staff entrusted with implementation, the degree of parental involvement in the decision-making process, and an investigation of evaluative data available to determine success.

With the information made available from the related literature and research, a questionnaire was developed to gather data from Michigan school districts that had implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule.

The survey questionnaire was developed from the critical elements of the research questions. It included five main sections plus a section that gathered demographic information. The first section solicited information on the origin of the idea or, where the impetus to investigate all-day alternate day kindergarten originated. The second section identified the preplanning activities that transpired once the decision was made to investigate the idea but prior to implementation. Were major stakeholders identified and what information was identified that led to the decision to proceed with a recommendation for implementation? The third section addressed staff development activities. What staff development activities were initiated to assist staff in preparing to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule?

The fourth section examined the parental concerns involved when implementing an alternative kindergarten schedule. To what degree were parents involved in the decision-making process prior to implementation and what were their major concerns? The final section addressed the overall program evaluation. Were districts collecting evaluative information; and if yes, what was its source and what did it indicate?

An expert panel of six persons who had been involved in implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten was asked to review and pilot the instrument. They were instructed to determine the propriety of the questions, how long it might take to complete the instrument, and identify any concerns that could cause the instrument to be misinterpreted or difficult to complete.

Questionnaires were distributed to 68 school districts as identified by the Michigan Department of Education as having implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten for a minimum of 2 years. The results were analyzed using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistical Data Analysis (Norusis, 1990) program. Data were reported in frequencies and percentages.

Discussion of Findings

The following section contains discussion of the findings of this research study. Each of the four research questions that were posited is listed and the findings for each follow. At the conclusion of this section a synopsis of the findings for each research question is provided.

Before the reader proceeds he or she must be reminded that the respondents have reacted with their perceptions to the questions.

Survey directions asked either the superintendent or a person more knowledgeable about the implementation of the all-day alternate day kindergarten to be the respondent. Because of the way information was gathered, an administrator's perception of the program and subsequent responses may be different than that of a nonadministrative respondent.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What was the origin, purpose, and content of any preplanning activities that took place prior to implementation?

The idea to consider an all-day alternate day kindergarten was usually proposed by the administration (58% of the time). Secondly, finances are the most frequent reason provided for investigating the possible implementation of an all-day alternate day schedule. These findings support the previous work in Minnesota Department of Education (1972), Mouw (1976), and Menser (1983/1984), which indicated that finances were an impetus for investigating an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule.

It stands to reason that since administrators have the primary responsibility for school finances they would be interested in examining programs that could be financially beneficial to the school district. The concern is that financial decisions don't inhibit the integrity of the educational program.

Forty-six respondents (98%) indicated that the financial savings were in transportation. The savings in transportation budgets ranged from 0.5% to 20%. This tends to suggest that the potential savings depend upon the amount of bussing necessary. Previous research

conducted in Minnesota (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1972) had indicated that definitive savings were hard to substantiate and seemingly depended on the geographic size of the district.

Following close behind financial savings in the priority ranking of reasons to investigate an alternative kindergarten schedule were curriculum implications and length of bus ride versus amount of time spent at school in a half-day schedule. While financial savings are easily recognized when transportation is eliminated, it does raise the question when the issue of when curriculum implications became known. Since the question asked about reasons for investigating the idea, prior to implementation, it can be assumed that this information came from visiting other districts or from the review of literature, which were preplanning activities reported by 98% and 96% of the respondents, respectively.

From the collected data it was determined that 91% of the districts formed a committee to investigate the idea. Committee membership always included teachers. Parents were included on 79% of the committees, principals on 64%, board members 57%, and superintendents 38%. Other groups less frequently included were: preschool teachers, curriculum directors, elementary counselors, speech/language specialists, occupational therapists, and directors of transportation.

However, a later question asked, "Who were the major stakeholders the district felt had to be supportive should implementation occur?" The following was discovered: Teachers, parents, superintendents, principals, and board members all received mean scores above 9 on a 10-point Likert scale. It leads one to wonder if these stakeholders are so

important why they weren't included more frequently on preplanning teams. Cruikshank (1986a) reported that districts had found it paid off to involve all of the players in the planning process. The data collected in this research project seem to support Cruikshank's findings.

Activities of the preplanning committee included visiting existing all-day alternate day kindergartens (98% of the committees did this), reviewing the literature (96% of the districts reported this), and contacting the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for assistance (45% of the respondents reported this activity).

Respondents identified seven issues that helped persuade committee members that implementation was possible. Those were: (1) other district's success, (2) the financial savings possible, (3) the potential instructional benefits, (4) the support of staff/administration/parents, (5) the existing research, (6) pilot studies, and (7) prior planning. However, when asked to choose just one of those issues as the most important, respondents chose instructional benefits in 33% of the cases. This was the highest percentage of all responses. It was followed by finances with a response rate of 25%.

There are three observations to be made here. Teachers were rated first as the major stakeholders essential to implementation. However, when asked to choose the single most influencing factor that convinced stakeholders to proceed with implementation, teacher support was very low at 6%. A second observation is that of parental support. Parental support was rated second behind teachers as major stakeholders essential to a successful implementation. However, they too were rated low (8%) by respondents when asked about the single most

influencing factor that convinced stakeholders to proceed with implementation. The third is reviewing the literature. Ninety-six percent of the respondents indicated they reviewed the literature but in only 6% of the case was reviewing the literature listed as the single most influencing factor convincing stakeholders to proceed with implementation. If parents and teachers had read the research, visited other districts, and participated in other preplanning activities, they may have recognized that there were instructional benefits to be realized.

Then, when asked to list the most influencing factor leading to implementation, it was the instructional benefits realization that came to the fore, not the process of how the instructional benefits were determined. It may be this realization of the extra time, the horizontal expansion of the curriculum, and the more relaxed teaching conditions that creates a teaching/learning climate that is more advantageous to the child. If so, that would be a major selling point of the alternate day kindergarten schedule. As Egertson (1980) indicated, it is what happens to the child in the learning environment that is important.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: What staff development preparations were made in light of changing to a full-day program?

It appears from the data that only 52% of the districts surveyed implemented staff development activities prior to implementing their all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. The remainder either did not help the staff prepare or waited until after implementation to determine staff needs. Although the mean scores for the provided responses

regarding staff apprehensions didn't go beyond 6.82, this finding, that only 52% of the responding districts implemented staff development activities prior to implementation, may account for some of the apprehensions staff held. If all staffs would have had opportunity to prepare adequately for implementation, some of those apprehensions may have been relieved. This also gives more emphasis to the necessity of adequate staff development prior to implementation.

When asked what participants would identify now (minimally 2 years after implementation) to be the major staff development needs prior to implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule, scheduling for a longer day leads the list identified first by 16 respondents (35%). That is followed by providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum, identified by 13 respondents (28%), and visiting existing alternate day kindergarten programs, by 11 respondents (24%).

Teachers do have some apprehension prior to implementing an alternate day kindergarten schedule. Those apprehensions were identified as a full-day being too long for children, the inconsistency of reinforcement involved with alternate days, curriculum development, and staffing concerns. These staff apprehensions of a full-day being too long and the inconsistency of instruction with alternate days follow exactly with the primary concerns parents expressed. Were parents echoing the concerns of teachers? If yes, it again adds credence to the need for staff development prior to implementation. If no, it then could reflect the degree of parental involvement and how all parents are educated about the basis for certain decisions.

The expression, "a full day is too long" is generally understood in the context of child fatigue (Schuman, 1989/1990; Stinard, 1982; Towers, 1991). The findings of Schuman, Stinard, and Towers indicated there was no more noticeable fatigue among children in an all-day alternate day program than there was among children who attended the traditional half-day program and that there were no detrimental effects on the social-emotional, psychomotor, language development, or cognitive effects of children attending the alternating full-day kindergarten program. Here again, this research also indicated that in the majority of cases, teacher/parent apprehensions faded after implementation. From this it can be assumed that child fatigue and consistency of learning is not a problem.

These apprehensions of a full day being too long and inconsistency of instruction should not be stumbling blocks preventing implementation in other districts. It suggested from the data that the traditional apprehensions associated with implementing an all-day kindergarten, that is, a full day being too long and inconsistency of instruction, may dissipate after implementation in most cases.

One other important finding in this section was the increased availability of specials, that is, art, music and gym, to kindergarten children, such as in a full-day alternate day schedule. The data reflected a 26% increase in these offerings to full-day alternate day students. This, too, is supported by the previous research of Schuman (1989/1990) and Towers (1991), who found that there was greater flexibility in scheduling art, music, and physical education specialists in alternating full-day programs than in the traditional half-day program.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What was the degree to which parental concerns were identified and addressed during the decision-making/implementation process?

Family members should be participants in determining the nature, scope, and direction of the early childhood program according to Michigan's Early Childhood Standards of Quality (Michigan State Board of Education, 1992).

The data collected in this study reflected that parents were consulted prior to making a decision about implementing an all-day alternate day schedule by 84% of the districts responding. While a large percentage of districts contacted parents this doesn't mean that parents didn't have concerns. Parents, like teachers, had expressed that all day is too long as their highest concern, followed by consistency of learning with alternate days second, followed by a general resistance to change third. It is interesting to note that none of the parental concerns, as perceived by the respondents, reached a mean score of 7 on a 10-point Likert scale.

The important information in the section on parental concerns was the answer to the question of what respondents would tell others about parental involvement. Eighty percent indicated that it was crucial to involve parents early and keep them involved throughout the decision-making process. Again, it is interesting to note that while administrators understand how crucial it is to have parents involved in the decision-making process, parental support rates relatively low when selecting the

single most important factor convincing stakeholders to proceed with implementation. The reason for this is speculative but it may be an assumption that parents were already supporting the decision due to previous involvement.

Other comments dealt with how to sell parents on the advantages of implementing this alternate full-day schedule.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4: What evaluative data is being collected to substantiate claims that all-day alternate day kindergarten programs are successful?

While there is evidence from the research that collecting achievement data from young children via standardized tests is neither reliable nor a proper measurement of classroom practice, there are still some schools collecting achievement data (Kamii, 1990; NAEYC, 1991). Thirty-seven percent of the districts reported collecting achievement data that allowed the comparison of students from all-day alternate day schedules to traditional half-day everyday schedules. The results of these data reflect previous research conducted by the Pasco School District (1987), C. L. Smith (1980/1981), Gullo and Clements (1984) Schuman (1989/1990), and others that there is either no difference in their academic performances or that all-day alternate day students outperform in at least some of the subsections of standardized tests.

Parental satisfaction was cited as the most persuasive evidence the districts had that an all-day alternate day kindergarten program was successful. Parental satisfaction data are collected by the majority of

districts as the Michigan Department of Education requires districts to collect these data as part of their approval process for alternate full-day kindergartens (see MDE approval form in Appendix E). Seventy-percent of the respondents indicated that parental satisfaction surveys were their best pieces of data indicating program success. This pattern also supports previous research by Cleminshaw and Guidubaldi (1979), C. L. Smith (1980/1981), Ulrey et al. (1982), Menser (1983/1984), and others that there was significant preference by parents for all-day alternate day schedules for their kindergarten students.

Another point of interest was the percentage of districts that had made changes to their all-day alternate day schedule in response to the evaluative data they were collecting. The changes reported here again referred to the concern for consistency and the desire to have student-teacher contact at least three times per week. Eighty-four percent of the reporting districts indicated they made schedule changes for this purpose. However, the reader must be cautioned that only 25 districts responded to this question. If this number is compared to the number of districts that reported that their schedule included either a 2.5- or 3-day schedule per week, the numbers do agree.

Summary of Major Findings

The data presented in this section are presented in the same order as the questionnaire was organized, that is, preplanning, staff development, parental involvement, and evaluation. This is also the same order that has been used in the previous chapters while discussing each of these issues.

Preplanning

1. The impetus to investigate alternative all-day alternate day kindergartens was because of potential financial savings.
2. Financial savings range from 0.5% to 20% of transportation budgets pending the amount of bussing necessary.
3. While teachers were always included on preplanning committees, other major stakeholders were often omitted.
4. The most important reason for recommending implementation was for the perceived instructional benefits.

Staff Development

1. Only around 50% of implementing districts initiated staff development activities prior to implementation.
2. Major staff development needs were identified as scheduling for a longer day, providing developmentally appropriate curriculum, and visiting existing all-day alternate day programs.
3. Apprehensions about all day being too long, the inconsistency of alternate days, curriculum development, and staffing patterns almost always dissipate after implementation.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement was determined to be crucial throughout the decision-making and implementation process.

Evaluation

1. Approximately one third of the districts in Michigan have collected achievement data that generally reflects other studies that academic achievement is either equal to or higher than students attending half-day schedules.

2. Parental satisfaction is the most persuasive evidence cited for success of all-day alternate day kindergartens.

3. Less than 10% of the districts return to a half-day schedule once they have adopted an all-day alternate day schedule.

Conclusions

The overall success of this schedule is reflected in the fact that so few schools, once they get started in an all-day alternate day schedule, go back to the half-day schedule. When parents and teachers are convinced that the educational integrity of the all-day alternate day schedule is not compromised, the other advantages become more apparent. Other advantages would include the extended number of hours children spend in school, the more relaxed teaching condition an all-day experience provides, and the horizontal curriculum additions, as well as the parental advantages for child care.

Recommendations

The purpose of kindergarten needs additional exploration, definition, and concurrence. If the purpose could be agreed upon it would follow that educators could focus on how best to develop instruction to

meet the purposes. It would also follow that if the purpose of kindergarten was better understood by both parents and educators, the notion that it is necessary to have standardized student achievement data as the sole criteria to prove the educational merit of a certain kindergarten schedule could for once and all be abandoned.

Secondly, the present status of the kindergarten curriculum and, specifically, how best to deliver that curriculum need to be more clearly defined. As was stated in the opening paragraphs of this research study, there is presently a national debate occurring over which policies and practices are most appropriate for the education of kindergarten children. Part of that debate stems from the philosophical question of whether a kindergarten should be developmentally based or academically based. While these two philosophies are not mutually exclusive, school districts not having a sound kindergarten philosophy upon which to build their kindergarten curriculum may have a very difficult time determining what constitutes the most appropriate daily schedule. It may be interesting to examine school district philosophy statements for kindergartens as it could provide clues to divisive thinking regarding scheduling.

Thirdly, it may be helpful for the Michigan Department of Education to publish a "how to" book for those districts considering implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Professional literature and information available from districts that have an implementation history could assist those districts that are considering implementation. From the few districts that have dropped the alternate day kindergarten, errors of implementation may be avoided if such a guide would have been available.

Closing

The data provided from this research project provide some insight into the key factors involved in implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. It is a seemingly rare situation in public education where the improvement of instruction is accompanied by reduced costs. However, for those school districts that transport their kindergarten children to and from school, this may be a real possibility. A pedagogically sound kindergarten, however, is not determined by the daily schedule. It is determined by the curriculum and how that curriculum meets the philosophy of the kindergarten program. By providing the teacher with a better teaching environment, that is, longer and less stressful day, by enriching the curriculum for the students with more opportunity for specials, and providing a full day of enriched child care for the family could and should only add up to a positive experience for all involved.

In conclusion, the success or failure of an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule could hinge on several factors. Perception of the educational integrity may be the largest factor in determining the program's longevity in any school district. The degree to which parents and teachers believe that an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule is educationally sound, with or without supportive data, seems to determine its receptivity and longevity. Adopting this schedule for factors that are perceived to be purely financial seems to be ill advised. As one respondent noted, "sell the program on its educational merits, not on finances."

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Script for Initial Call to Selected School Districts

Script for initial call to selected school district

"Hello Name of Superintendent being called, My name is Ken Drenth and I'm superintendent in the Les Cheneaux Schools, in Cedarville, MI. I'm attempting to gather data for a research project I'm working on at Western Michigan University regarding the implementation process of all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules that are operating in Michigan. According to records I've received from the Michigan Department of Education your school is/was operating an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Is this true? (If the answer is no, I would at this point indicate that I evidently had incorrect information and would conclude the conversation.) (If yes,) would you be interested in sharing some of the information you have learned regarding the implementation process used in your all-day alternate day schedule with your colleagues across the state? I have developed a questionnaire that is 8 pages long and will take you, or your designated person, approximately length of time, to complete. It will ask some generic questions about your district and then go into the reasons why you implemented an all-day alternate day kindergarten program. It will further ask about the implementation process, what pre-planning activities you used, if there were staff development implications you looked at, how and if you involved parents in the decision making process, and what overall evaluative information you are collecting."

Assuming they are still willing to participate, I would then ask them to name a person that I should work with and to whom I should mail the survey. I will also ask them to advise the person that he/she had indicated that I should work with and that they could expect to receive the questionnaire from me within the next week.

At this point I'd tell them about the number of schools that would be involved, my projected timelines and what the information would be used for. I would conclude the conversation and ask if they had questions and state they would be welcome to call me at any point with questions or concerns. I would also thank them for their willingness to cooperate in the collection of this data.

Appendix B
Initial Letter to Participating School Districts

Dear :

During the week of August 22 I contacted you by phone to determine if you would work with me to collect information on the implementation process you used to develop your alternative kindergarten schedule. At that time you indicated you would, which I appreciate very much.

Enclosed please find the survey instrument I am using. You are welcome to fill it out yourself or pass it on to someone else in your district who may be more familiar with the requested information. You will note there is a place for your signature which indicates your permission to use your district's name in the final report should that be important.

The Michigan Department of Education estimates over 100 public schools in Michigan have all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. They also know that some school districts have tried alternative schedules for their kindergarten programs and subsequently dropped them. Part of my goal is to determine why it can be so successful in one community and a failure in another. Does success or failure have anything to do with the implementation process? Also included is a letter from Ms. Jackie Thompson, Office of Early Childhood Education, Michigan Department of Education, indicating her knowledge and support of this research project. Another goal is to assemble this data and share the results with other districts considering implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten program.

If you would like to include additional information not requested, but feel important to the success of your program, please include it. If you would like additional information about the survey please feel free to call me. All participating schools will receive a summary of the results.

If possible, please have the survey returned within two weeks.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kenneth G. Drenth
P.O. Box 245
Cedarville, MI 49719
(H) (906) 484-3483
(W)(906) 484-3211

Appendix C

Accompanying Letter From Jackie Thompson,
Michigan Department of Education,
Encouraging Participation



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909

May 17, 1994

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Governor John Engler
Ex Officio

Dear Superintendent:

Over the past 10 years, Michigan has seen a rapid increase in the number of school districts instituting all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. Almost daily our office receives inquiries from additional schools who are considering implementing an alternate full-day schedule and asking what the research indicates and what help we can offer them. Conversely, a few districts have tried instituting an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule and ultimately dropped it for one reason or another.

As part of the approval process, we require schools to collect some data about their implementation of alternate full-day kindergarten schedules. However, that data is very limited and not available in any one source, nor has it been examined, to our knowledge, by any single researcher.

As schools continue to have difficulty generating adequate funds, we know that there is going to be increased interest in all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules. In that context, I encourage you to seriously consider participating in this research study conducted by Ken Drenth, Superintendent for Les Cheneaux Community Schools, by sharing the implementation and evaluation information you have collected for your school district. Through the collection, analysis, and sharing of information from the implementing schools, others considering implementation of an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule will have a research base upon which they can make their implementation decisions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Thompson
Education Consultant
Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten ("ASK")
Michigan Department of Education
Comprehensive Programs in Health
and Early Childhood

JT:es



Appendix D

Letter From Evelyn Sitterson, Outlining Numbers
of Districts Implementing an All-Day Alternate
Day Kindergarten Program by Year



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909

March 1, 1994

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Kenneth Drenth, Superintendent
Les Cheneaux Community Schools
Post Office Box 366
Cedarville, Michigan 49719

Dear Mr. Drenth:

As per our conversation of February 28, 1994, below are the number of districts that have implemented Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten programs over the last 10 years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Districts initiating</u>	<u>Total districts</u>
1983-84	2	2
1984-85	6	8
1985-86	8	16
1986-87	5	21
1987-88	9	30
1988-89	12	42
1989-90	17	59
1990-91	8	67
1991-92	9	76
1992-93	18	94
1993-94	28	122

A total of ten districts have dropped the program which leaves a total of 112 districts currently managing Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten programs in the State of Michigan.

As to ZA endorsements, I was only able to get an approximation of the total issued in the last ten years. The total number of ZA endorsements issued in the last ten years is approximately 30,000. The number issued for 1992-93 was 399 and for 1990-91 was 347.

I hope these numbers are helpful in the completion of your thesis.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Sitterson
Secretary
Comprehensive Programs in Health
and Early Childhood



Appendix E

Initial Request for Approval of the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program From Michigan Department of Education

Michigan Department of Education
School Program Quality
**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS IN HEALTH AND
EARLY CHILDHOOD**
P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909

96

**INITIAL REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF
THE ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

- I. District: _____ ASK Approval Period _____ to _____
Year Year
- Address: _____

- Superintendent: _____ Phone: _____
Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____
(if other than Superintendent)

II. ADVISORY COMMITTEE (see criterion No. 1)

Administrator _____
*Pre-Kindergarten Teacher _____
Kindergarten Teacher _____
First Grade Teacher _____
Parent _____
School Board Member _____
Others (specify) _____

- III. I confirm that the local school board has approved the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program on _____.
(Date)

Superintendent's Signature

Please attach a dated copy of the school board minutes in which the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program was discussed and approved for the initial years requested. (see criterion No. 2)

- * Pre-Kindergarten Teacher can be from either the public or private sector. If unable to acquire Prekindergarten representation, please contact our office at (517) 373-8276.

- IV. Attach a calendar which indicates the total number of attendance days for each month of operation for the current school year; this calendar will be considered to be representative of the calendar for each year of the ASK approval period. In addition, attach the time schedule for each class in the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program. (i.e. group A meets on Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 - 3:30 and Friday from 9:00 - 11:15, etc.) (see criterion No. 3)
- V. Outline the procedures that have been (or will be) used to **assure that the quality of the curriculum** for the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program is equal to the non-alternative scheduled program. (i.e. Curriculum Review Committee Report, assessment report, etc.) (see criterion No. 4)
- VI. Outline the plan that will be utilized for **analyzing** the Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Program during the two year probationary period. (see criterion No. 5)

**PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL TO OPERATE
ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULED PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS**

The following is a complete list of criteria for the operation of Alternative Scheduled Preschool and Kindergarten Programs:

1. Appointment of a local advisory committee to review alternative scheduling as an option for the delivery of preschool programs for 4 year olds and kindergarten education; and to advise the local board on implementation in the district. This committee should be composed of at least one administrator; a pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade teacher; a parent; and a member of the local board. This criteria may be met by the establishment of a new committee or use of an existing one composed of the required personnel.
2. Local superintendent's signature confirming local school board approval. The public will have an opportunity for input at the board meeting. This includes the submission of a dated copy of that section of minutes from the local board meeting during which Alternative Scheduling was discussed and approved.
3. Submission of a calendar indicating the total number of attendance days for each month of operation, and the time schedule for holding each class in the alternative scheduled program.
 - a. Kindergarten program must include a minimum of 450 teacher/child contact hours spread over the full school year.
 - b. Preschool programs for 4 year olds must include a minimum of 300 teacher/child contact hours spread over the full school year. Alternative Scheduled Preschool Programs must also meet all other criteria for preschool programs including parental involvement, home visits, and staff planning.
4. Local assurance that quality curriculum for Alternative Scheduled Preschool and Kindergarten Programs is equal to non-alternative scheduled programs. This includes an outline of procedures the district will, or did, use to assess and compare the curricula necessary for such an assurance (i.e. Curriculum Review Committee Report, test scores, finding, etc.).
5. Local assurance that a plan to analyze the impact, merits, and concerns of alternative scheduled programs is in place to be conducted following completion of the second year of operation. This includes an explanation of procedures the district will use to assess the impact of all Alternative Scheduled Programs; such as curriculum, performance, parental involvement, and professional development on all children including those with special needs. Summaries of funding from surveys, evaluation procedures, and instruments, scores, or other findings may be presented.

6. Requests or applications for approval to begin operating an Alternative Scheduled Preschool or Kindergarten Program be granted for a two-year probationary period. Data regarding assessment of students in Alternative Scheduled Preschool and Kindergarten Programs, and parental response to alternative scheduling during this period will be collected annually and reported to the advisory committee for consideration.
7. Applications or requests to continue operating an Alternative Scheduled Preschool or Kindergarten Program beyond the two-year probationary period must include:
 - a. All documentation required to meet criteria for initial approval as established by the State Board of Education, and
 - b. A report with recommendations from the local advisory or other committee used for item 1, page 1, of this document.
8. Approval to continue operating an Alternative Scheduled Preschool or Alternative Kindergarten Program will be granted for a three-year period.
9. Curriculum and student assessment/achievement shall be reviewed periodically by Early Childhood Education staff or another designated committee which includes members with expertise in early childhood education.
 - a. Alternative Scheduled Preschool Programs shall be reviewed annually by an Early Childhood Education "committee consisting of, at a minimum, classroom teachers for prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade, a parent of a prekindergarten pupil, the district curriculum director or equivalent administrator, and, if feasible, a school psychologist, school social worker, school counselor." *
 - b. Alternative Scheduled Kindergarten Programs shall be reviewed every three years by an Early Childhood Education committee, as described in item 1, page 1 of this document or another committee including members with expertise in child development or early childhood education.

* Section 37(f) and (g) of the 1990-91 State School Aid Act.

Appendix F
Alternative Kindergarten Schedule Survey

Alternative Kindergarten Schedule Survey

School District: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Year Alternate Kindergarten Schedule was initiated _____

Was the alternate kindergarten schedule implemented in all elementary schools in the district the first year or was it piloted in an elementary school(s) before expanding to all district elementary schools?

____ Piloted in an elementary school(s) initially.

____ Implemented in all elementary schools at the same time.

Year Alternate Kindergarten Schedule was dropped _____ (if appropriate)

Superintendent's Signature _____

Superintendent's signature indicates approval to identify district by name in the final research report.

Type of Alternative Schedule: Please indicate the type of alternative kindergarten schedule your district operates(d).

(i.e., straight alternate day, or variation of alternate day)

____ Straight alternate day (3 days one week, 2 days the next)

Variation of straight alternate kindergarten program:

____ Students come 3 full days per week

____ Students come 2 1/2 days per week

____ Other: Please explain: _____

Please include evidence (hard data, anecdotes, testimonials) you have collected supporting any of your responses to the following questions.

ORIGINATING IDEA:

1. In your district the impetus to investigate an alternative kindergarten schedule was prompted by which of the following: (Please rate each item for importance with 1 being least important factor and 10 being extremely important factor.)

curriculum implications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
facility usage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
financial savings possibilities for district*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
nutritional concerns for children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
safety of kindergarten children walking to/from school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
length of bus ride in relation to time at school for half day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important
other (please list) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	least									extremely
	important									important

Comments: _____

* If financial savings for district was checked, what areas saved the district money? Also, please estimate the percentage of your district's budget that was saved for each item.

____ Transportation ____ % of transportation budget saved.
 ____ Other ____ % of _____ budget saved.

2. The original idea to initiate an all-day alternate day kindergarten came from:
(Please check only one if possible).

☐ board of education

☐ teachers

☐ administration

☐ parents

☐ other Please explain: _____

_____ .

PRE-PLANNING:

This section will attempt to identify the preplanning activities, (i.e., formation of committees, visiting other sites, review of literature, etc.) if any, that were conducted prior to implementation.

1. Preplanning activities were initiated by the district for the staff that was to implement the new schedule. Yes No Circle one!
 (If no preplanning activities were initiated prior to implementation please skip the remaining portion of the preplanning section and go to question 1 on staff development on page 7).

Comment: _____

2. Was a committee formed to investigate the idea. Yes or No Circle One
 If yes, who and how many (by representation i.e., parents, teachers, administrators, board members, etc.) were involved on the committee?
 (Example: 1 Supt., 1 bd. member, 4 teachers, 1 parent).

Please list: _____

3. Was an existing alternate day kindergarten visited by someone in your district during the preplanning phase? Yes or No If yes, who was included in the visitation team?

___ administrators
 ___ board members
 ___ parents
 ___ teachers
 ___ other Please list: _____

4. Was a literature review conducted to determine if there was any research on alternative kindergarten schedules?
 Yes or No Circle One

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
support not necessary support critical

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

support not necessary support critical

7. In your opinion, what was the major factor(s) that convinced the stakeholders that the idea could be implemented successfully?

Please list: _____

_____.

8. If there was one influencing factor that convinced stakeholders to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule, what would you suggest that one factor to be? _____

_____.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

This section will examine what staff development activities, if any, that were initiated to assist the staff in preparing for an alternative kindergarten schedule once the decision was made to proceed with the implementation.

1. Staff development needs were identified prior to implementation.

Yes or No Circle One

(If no staff development concerns were identified prior to implementation, please skip the remaining portion of the staff development section and go to question 1 on parental involvement on page 10).

Comment: _____

2. Did staff responsible for implementation have an opportunity to visit an existing alternatively scheduled kindergarten program prior to implementation?

Yes or No Circle One

If yes, where? _____

3. Did implementing staff participate in professional development activities, prior to implementation, to plan for all day sessions?

Yes or No Circle One

If yes, please describe the general content of those activities.

4. What was your staff's primary apprehension regarding alternate kindergarten scheduling prior to implementation?

(Please rate with 1 being least apprehension and 10 the most apprehension.)

staffing patterns

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 least most
 apprehension apprehension

curriculum development

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 least most
 apprehension apprehension

full day too long

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
least most
apprehension apprehension

inconsistency of alternate days

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
least most
apprehension apprehension

other: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
least most
apprehension apprehension

Please explain: _____

5. Has apprehension about these issues faded since implementation has occurred?

Yes or No. Circle One

If no, please comment. _____

6. Were specials (i.e., art, music, and gym, with specialized staff) available in the 1/2 day program?

___ Art ___ Music ___ Gym ___ Other (list)

7. Are specials (i.e., art, music, gym, with specialized teachers) available in the alternative scheduled kindergarten program?

___ Art ___ Music ___ Gym ___ Other (list)

8. What, in your opinion, do you consider to be the major staff development needs for implementing an alternative kindergarten program? _____

9. Did the transition from a half-day schedule to a full-day schedule cause a philosophical change in your kindergarten program? (I.E., change from academic to developmental approach) Yes or No Circle One

Comment: _____

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ISSUES:

This section will examine the parental concerns when implementing an alternative kindergarten schedule.

1. Were parents consulted prior to the decision to implement an all-day alternate day schedule? Yes or No Circle One

Explain: _____

2. Were parent meetings held to inform parents of the decision to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule?

Yes or No Circle One

3. How were all parents notified of the board decision to implement an alternative kindergarten schedule?

___ District newsletter ___ Direct letter to parents
 ___ Media announcement ___ Parent meeting
 ___ Other

4. How would you rate the initial reaction of parents when they learned of the decision?

___ supportive
 ___ non-supportive
 ___ wait and see
 ___ other (Please explain) _____

5. What were the major concerns expressed by parents?

(Please rate with 1 being least concerned and 10 being a major concern.)

all day is too long	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	least concern	major concern
no consistency of learning with alternate days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	least concern	major concern
they tried this elsewhere and it didn't work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	least concern	major concern
general resistance to change	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	least concern	major concern
other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	least concern	major concern

Please explain: _____

6. Are parents asked to volunteer some amount of time in the kindergarten program?

Yes or No Circle One

If asked do they? Yes or No Circle One

7. If there was one thing you would tell others about parental involvement in the decision making process when changing to an alternative kindergarten schedule, what would it be? _____

OVERALL PROGRAM EVALUATION:

This section will explore ways your district has evaluated the success of the alternative kindergarten program.

If you answer yes to any of the following, please send supporting information.

1. Our district has collected evaluative information (hard data, anecdotes, testimonials etc.) for or against the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule. Yes or No
(If no, this concludes the survey).

Comment: _____

_____.

2. Has your district collected any achievement data from all-day alternate day kindergarten students that was compared to kindergarten students in a traditional half-day kindergarten programs? Yes or No Circle One
If yes, what did the data show?

___ differences
 ___ significant difference in favor of alternate day
 ___ significant difference in favor of half day
 ___ no difference

3. Has your district collected any longitudinal achievement data from all-day alternate day kindergarten students compared to a traditional half day kindergarten students? Yes or No Circle One
If yes, what did the data show?

___ differences
 ___ significant difference in favor of alternate day
 ___ significant difference in favor of half day
 ___ no difference

4. Has your district collected any data from kindergarten teachers asking their perception of student growth between the alternatively scheduled program compared to the traditional 1/2 day program? Yes or No Circle One
5. Has your district collected any data from 1st, 2nd, etc. grade teachers, asking if they perceive any academic differences in children who have been through an alternatively scheduled program compared to a traditional 1/2 day program? Yes or No Circle One
6. Has your district collected any data from parents asking their perceptions and/or acceptance of the alternatively scheduled kindergarten program? Yes or No Circle One
7. How do you communicate your collected data to support your decision to implement an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule?
- ___ Kindergarten Round-up Sessions
 - ___ School Newsletters
 - ___ Parent Advisory Committees
 - ___ Board of Education Information
 - ___ Local Media Coverage
 - ___ Other: Please describe: _____
- _____
- _____
8. What would you consider to be the best piece of data available in your district which evaluates the program's success?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Please include a copy of this evidence.

9. Based on any data that you have collected have you changed your all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule in any way since you implemented it?

Yes No Circle One

Comment: _____

10. If you were to make a recommendation(s) to a school district about implementing an all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule what recommendation(s) would you make?

11. If your district has dropped the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule what were the reasons that the program was dropped? (Please check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of board support	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor preplanning activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of administrative support	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor staff development activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of teacher support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of parental support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please explain.	

12. The main reason our school dropped the all-day alternate day kindergarten schedule was: _____

Appendix G
Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board



Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008-3899
616 387-8293

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: July 29, 1994

To: Kenneth G. Drenth

From: Kevin Hollenbeck, Chair

for K. Hollenbeck

Re: HSIRB Project Number 94-07-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "A descriptive study of the implementation process for all-day alternate day kindergarten schedules in Michigan public schools" has been **approved** under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

You must seek reapproval for any changes in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: July 29, 1995

xc: Cowden, EDLE

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