



State of Tennessee

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NEW STUDY SUGGESTS PRE-K HAS REAL BUT LIMITED BENEFITS

A new report released by the state Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) suggests that some students who attend state-funded pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs perform better during their first two years of school. However, as previous studies have indicated, the benefits of pre-K seem for the most part to be limited to economically-disadvantaged students during kindergarten and first grade.

Despite their early academic advantage, pre-K program participants did not perform measurably better in the second grade or beyond, according to the report.

The report, produced by Strategic Research Group, was released today. This report, the third in a series of updates to previous studies, analyzed test data from the 2007-2008 academic year and compared performance of students who attended pre-K with those who did not. Test data for the analysis was provided by the Tennessee Department of Education for kindergarten through fifth grade students.

"The findings in this report are consistent with previous reports on this topic," said Dr. Phillip Doss, OREA's director. "The results of SRG's analysis show a positive academic effect during the first two years of elementary school for economically-disadvantaged students who have attended state-funded pre-K programs. In later grades, the effect diminishes."

Economically-disadvantaged students are defined as those who qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches.

OREA is an agency within the Comptroller's office that is charged with providing accurate and objective policy research and analysis for the Tennessee General Assembly and the public.

OREA commissioned Strategic Research Group, a firm that provides data collection, consultation and research services, to produce the series of reports on pre-K's impact on student performance.

The latest report, titled "Assessing the Effectiveness of Tennessee's Pre-Kindergarten

Program: Third Interim Report,” may be viewed at:

<http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/Repository/RE/SRGInterimReport2010.pdf>

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