

KIPP HOUSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Early Evidence Suggests KIPP Houston Pre-Kindergarten programs have lasting positive impacts on student achievement

August 22- Houston, TX- Mathematica Policy Research released a new study today that found KIPP Houston's Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) programs have positive, persistent impacts on student achievement. Although some studies have shown that the impacts of pre-K programs fade—or disappear—over time, this study suggests that the impacts of KIPP pre-K may be more lasting.

To measure the combined impact of KIPP Pre-K and early elementary grades, Mathematica researchers followed students who entered randomized lotteries for KIPP Pre-K programs at KIPP SHINE and KIPP SHARP in Houston, along with KIPP LEAP in Washington, DC.

The study examined students' performance five years later, when the students were typically enrolled in second grade. To isolate the additional benefit of KIPP Pre-K, the researchers compared these impacts to the impacts of KIPP elementary schools that did not offer Pre-K. The study concluded KIPP Houston Pre-K programs have a positive impact on students' academic and cognitive skills that persists into second grade.

“Together, KIPP pre-K and KIPP elementary school had large positive impacts on student achievement in reading and math,” explains Virginia Knechtel, a researcher at Mathematica. “KIPP pre-K appears to offer an additional benefit beyond the impact of KIPP elementary school alone and may be one model for how pre-K programming can be structured and aligned with later educational approaches to produce lasting benefits.”

The Mathematica study also identified specific features of KIPP Houston's Pre-K programs that may contribute to the programs' lasting impacts, such as the academic focus, the coaching and feedback provided to program staff, and the alignment of Pre-K and elementary grade programming.

“We know from first-hand experience that KIPP pre-K is making a difference for children and families in Houston, and we're pleased to see external research from Mathematica that affirms the value of these programs,” said Sehba Ali, Superintendent of KIPP Houston. “Starting a KIPP education early can put children on the path towards long term success in college and life, even for our youngest KIPP students.”

KIPP Houston launched the first KIPP pre-K program in the country at KIPP SHINE in 2004 and now has eight schools that offer pre-K.

Below are some of the Mathematica study's key findings:

- **KIPP Pre-K has a significant positive impact on student achievement:** After five years, students who won an offer of admission to a KIPP pre-K program through a random lottery had higher reading and achievement than pre-K students who did not win an offer. For example, the study showed that scores on the Letter-Word Identification (reading skills) assessment improved by nearly 14 percentage points, moving KIPP pre-K students from the 66th to the 80th percentile.

On the Applied Problems (math skills) assessment, KIPP pre-K students moved from roughly the 47th to the 60th percentile.

- **KIPP early childhood programs may help students gain executive functioning skills:** KIPP Pre-K combined with KIPP early elementary school may also positively affect students' executive function, including their working memory and ability to follow instructions, although most findings were not significant. Executive function skills are widely believed to be related to students' long-term academic success.
- **KIPP Pre-K appears to offer an additional benefit above and beyond the impact of the KIPP elementary grades:** The reading impacts of KIPP elementary schools that offered pre-K were larger than those of KIPP elementary schools that did not offer pre-K, although the differences were not statistically significant.
- **The impact of KIPP Pre-K on reading skills persists into second grade:** Students who won an offer of admission to KIPP Pre-K appear to maintain an advantage in reading skills over their second-grade peers who did not win an offer. The size of their advantage in reading comprehension appears to decrease, but not disappear, over time. Although some studies show that the positive impacts of some Pre-K and other early childhood programs eventually decrease or disappear, this study suggests that the combination of KIPP Pre-K and KIPP early elementary school may have more lasting impacts.

These recent findings build on [Mathematica's 2015 report](#) that found KIPP elementary schools had positive impacts on students' reading and math skills after three years.

The study was funded by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. Read the full report [online](#).

About Mathematica Policy Research:

Mathematica Policy Research is a pioneering nonpartisan research organization dedicated to improving public well-being. [Our 1,200+ experts](#) conduct policy research, data collection, and data analytics that meet the highest standards of quality and objectivity, working with decision makers across the public and private sectors.

About KIPP Houston Public Schools:

KIPP was founded in Houston in 1994 and has since grown to 209 public charter schools in 20 states and D.C. educating 88,000 children. Houston is KIPP's largest region and educates 14,500 students in 28 schools and serves an additional 2,300 alumni in college and beyond. While only 10.6 percent of students from low-income communities in Houston graduate from college, 50 percent of KIPPsters, tracked from the 8th grade, graduate college. www.kipp-houston.org

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