

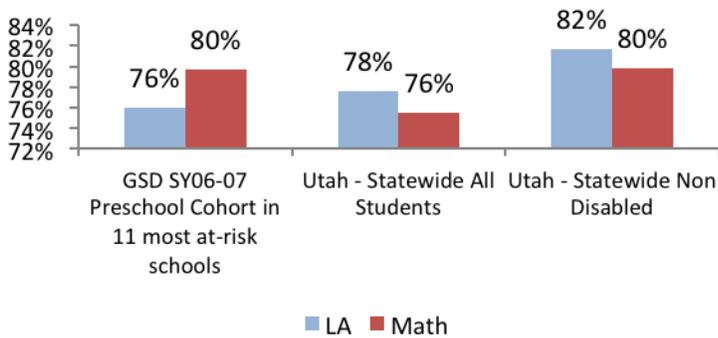


High Quality Preschool Closes the Achievement Gap and Reduces Special Education Costs for At-Risk Children

Evidence from the High Quality Title I Preschool Program in the Granite School District in Utah

Academic Achievement

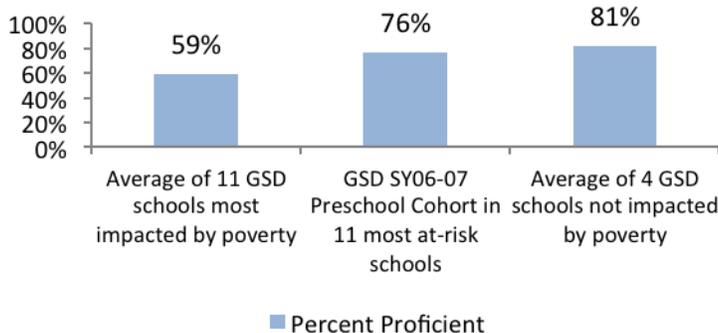
**2011 3rd Grade CRT
Percent Proficient**



The Granite Preschool Program has been successful in closing the achievement gap.

The School Year (SY) SY06-07 preschool cohort just completed 3rd grade. The SY06-07 cohort of at-risk children scored similarly in Language Arts (LA) as all children in the state and outperformed all children in the state in Math. The gap with respect to children without disabilities statewide was 6 percentage points in LA and the achievement gap in Math was eliminated.

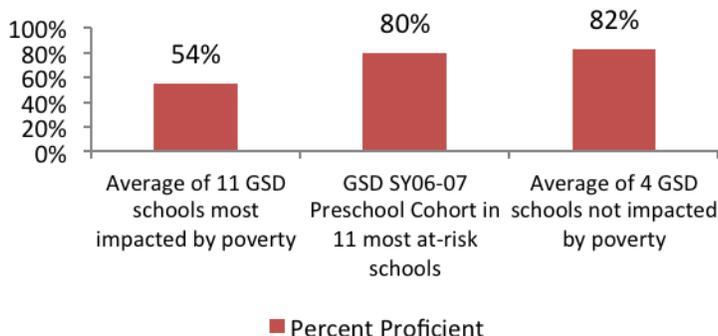
**2011 3rd Grade CRT
Language Arts**



The achievement gap in Language Arts was reduced from 22 percentage point to 5 points.

The achievement gap between 3rd grade students in the 4 schools least impacted by poverty (28% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch) in the district and the 11 schools most impacted by poverty (80% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch) in LA was reduced from 22 percentage points to 5 points.

**2011 3rd Grade CRT
Math**



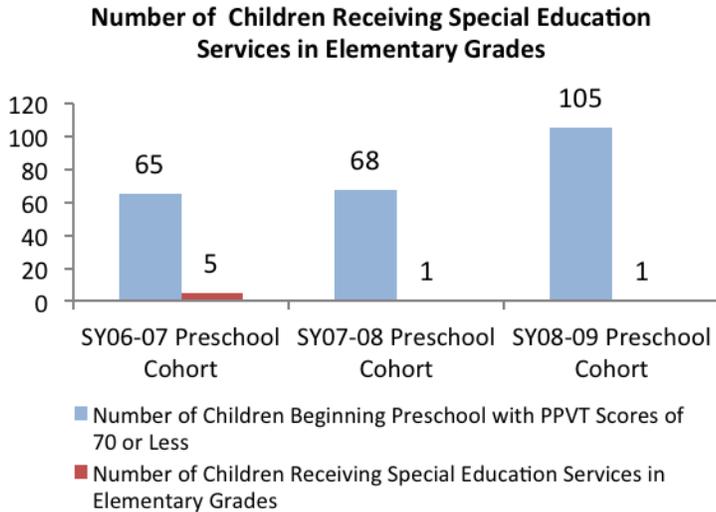
The achievement gap in Math was effectively eliminated.

The achievement gap in Math was reduced from 28 percentage points to 2 points.

Reduced Special Education Costs

Research shows that at-risk children who attend high quality preschool programs use special education services at significantly reduced rates in kindergarten through the 12th grade as those at-risk children who do not attend a high quality preschool. This reduction in special education use is a cost savings to the state and federal government.

Data with regard to special education use was collected for three cohorts of children in the 11 most impacted Title I schools.

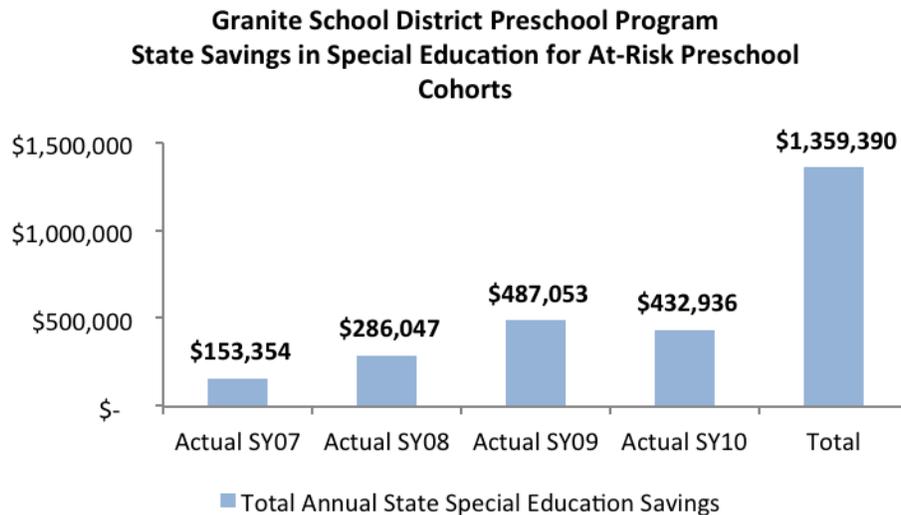


Of the 213 children in the SY06-07 preschool cohort included in the study, 65 (30%) of the children were potentially eligible for special education. **Only 5 received special education services k-3.**

Of the 245 children in the SY07-08 preschool cohort, 68 (28%) were potentially eligible for special education. **Only 1 received special education services k-2.**

Of the 279 SY08-09 preschool cohort, 105 (38%) were potentially eligible for special education. **Only 1 received special education services k-1.**

The Granite School District achieved a total of \$1.4 million in state special education cost savings (SY07-08 to SY10-11) as a result of reduced special education use among the at-risk preschoolers included in the study.



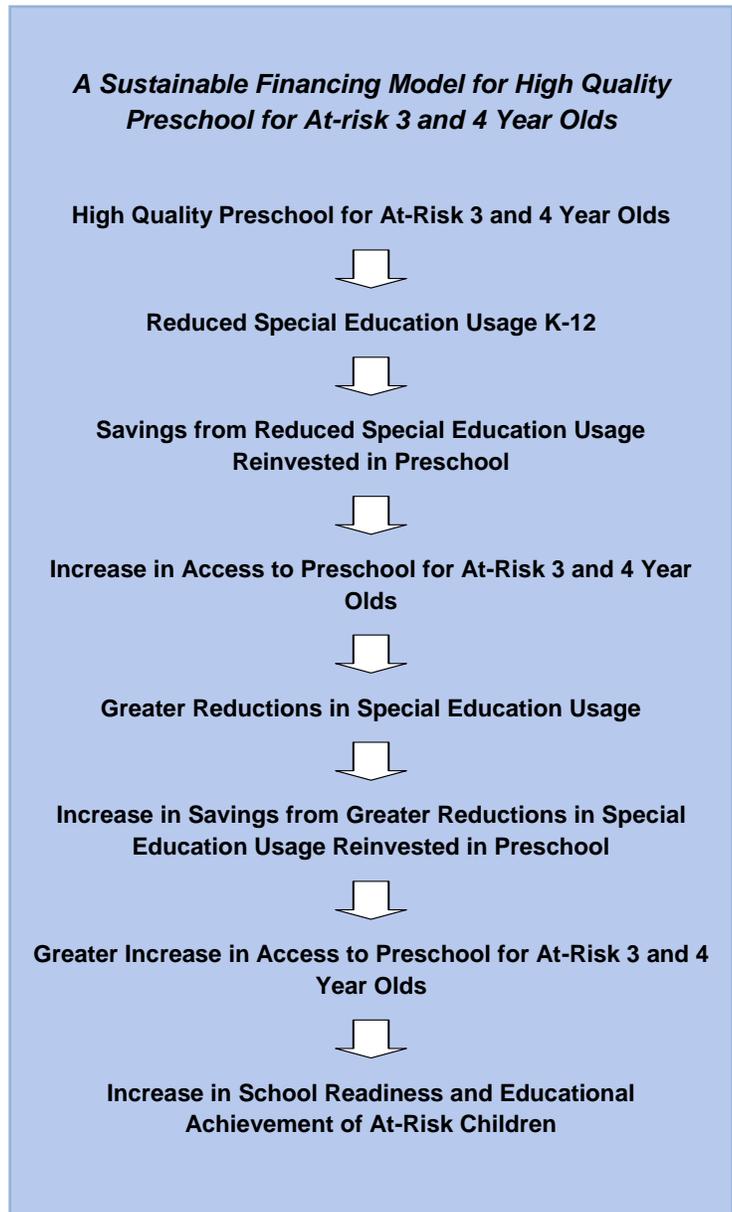
A Sustainable and Scalable Financing Model for High Quality Preschool

There is growing state and national attention on addressing the achievement gap and increasing reading proficiency by 3rd grade. As state governments continue to face challenging fiscal conditions, there is a need to identify strategies that will lead to improved school readiness for at-risk children within state education budget constraints. The sustainable financing model for high quality preschool presented in this report is one strategy that could potentially increase the resources available to school districts to invest in high quality preschool programs for at-risk children.

The reduction in school age special education usage resulting from high quality preschool for at-risk children is a cost savings to school districts. Currently, in Utah, school districts lose special education funding if the number of children who qualify for these services decrease. Instead, if the savings were reinvested into high quality preschool programs, access for at-risk children within the school district could be increased.

In this model, school districts would be held harmless with respect to their special education funding. The savings in k-12 special education would only be reinvested into the preschool program once the savings had been identified and realized thereby allowing school districts to shift financial resources from remediation to prevention through increased access to high quality early education within existing budget constraints. Since special education programs lose funding when head counts decrease, this model would not adversely impact special education budgets.

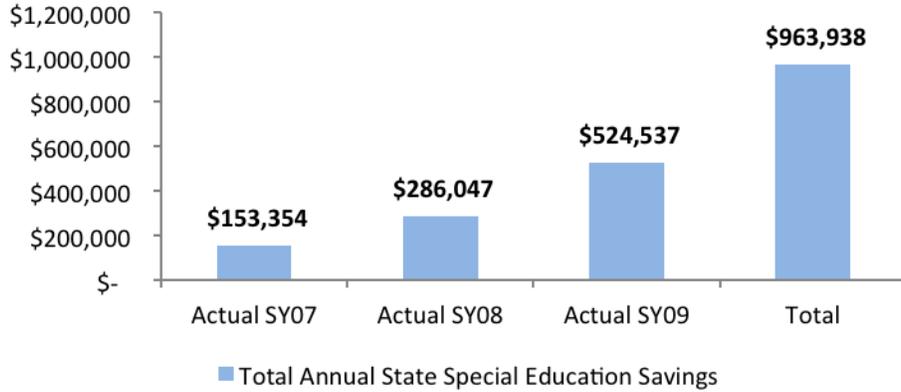
This financing strategy would be sustainable and scalable. The more at-risk children (who qualify for special education) who receive early education and move into general education, the greater the savings. And, the greater the savings, the greater the reinvestment opportunity into the preschool program. As more children are served, more money is saved, which in turn allows the school district to serve more preschool children who are at-risk for school failure.



Demonstration of the Sustainable Financing Model: Granite School District

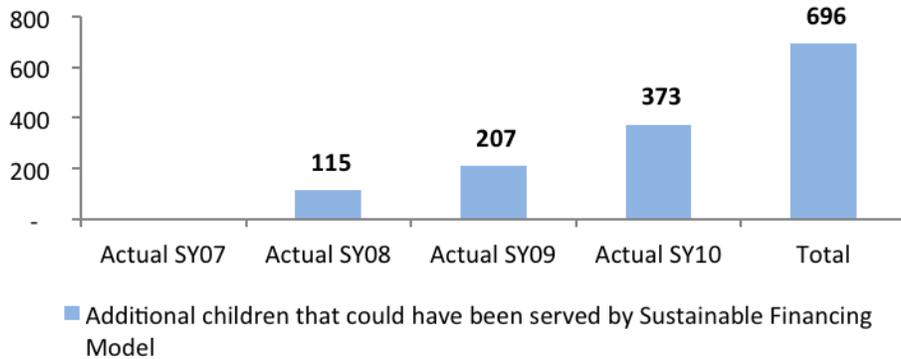
The total amount of state cost savings in special education associated with the 3 cohorts of at-risk preschoolers in GSD over the 3 year period from SY07 through SY09, including savings from additional children that could have attended preschool in SY08 had the model been in place, was \$963,938.

**Granite School District Preschool Program in Utah
State Savings in K-3 Special Education for At-Risk Preschool
Cohorts**



An additional 696 children over 3 years could have been served had the state cost savings been reinvested into the preschool program to serve more children with the same characteristics of the three original cohorts.

**Granite School District Preschool Program in Utah
Additional Children That Could Have Been Served by Sustainable
Financing Model**



For further information, please contact Janis Dubno, Senior Early Childhood Policy Analyst,
Voices for Utah Children, 801-364-1182, janis@utahchildren.org