



**EMBARGOED until 1:30 p.m.**  
**January 28, 2019**

**Contact:** Jill Byrd, Creative Noggin  
jill@creativenoggin.com | 210.501.4288

## **Pre-K 4 SA improved third grade STAAR reading and math results and other social outcomes**

*Enrollment in prekindergarten in Bexar County climbs following successful 2012 Pre-K 4 SA election*

**SAN ANTONIO** — Pre-K 4 SA produced positive academic outcomes for students enrolled in the first year of the program (2013-2014 cohort). On average, students enrolled in Pre-K 4 SA's initial class had stronger STAAR exam scores on third grade reading and math, better attendance, and less need for special education services than students who did not participate in public prekindergarten. This study also suggests the first cohort fared slightly better than children who participated in public prekindergarten. Because of its effect on attendance, San Antonio schools have so far realized a \$23.2 million dollar gain in school funding. The impact study, conducted by the Urban Education Institute at The University of Texas at San Antonio, was designed to evaluate the impact of Pre-K 4 SA on social and academic outcomes over time.

"The initial results of the Pre-K 4 SA Impact Study suggest that the program created a surge of awareness about the value of early childhood education, expanding the number of students enrolled in prekindergarten across San Antonio," Director of the Urban Education Institute Dr. Mike Villarreal said. "Not only does this study show the success of Pre-K 4 SA's model education centers, but it also highlights the ripple effects across public prekindergarten programs, which have been supported by Pre-K 4 SA's Competitive Grants Program and Professional Learning Department. Our findings suggest that San Antonio's investment in quality early education had a positive effect even beyond those children who enrolled in the model centers."

Across the board, public prekindergarten programs improved long-term student outcomes, with evidence suggesting participation in Pre-K 4 SA had an even more positive impact.

The study indicates Pre-K 4 SA produced a meaningful impact on raising third grade reading scores. Historically, San Antonio students of similar demographics as those who attend Pre-K 4 SA have performed well below the state average; those enrolled in Pre-K 4 SA nearly achieved the state average. The benefit of Pre-K 4 SA was most dramatic for economically disadvantaged students, significantly narrowing the achievement gap.

Pre-K 4 SA produced a stronger impact on raising third grade math scores. Historically, San Antonio students (of similar demographics) have also trailed behind the state average in third grade math; those who participated in Pre-K 4 SA exceeded the state average, according to preliminary findings.

"The board is committed to delivering the results our community was promised," Pre-K 4 SA Board Chair Elaine Mendoza said. "The outcomes of this impact study are encouraging and demonstrate Pre-K 4 SA has long-term positive results for students in San Antonio. We are particularly excited to see the broader impact of Pre-K 4 SA on attendance and special education. While we are optimistic, we will stay focused and hold Sarah (Baray) and her team accountable for innovative approaches and advances for student success year over year."

-more-

One of the areas where prekindergarten had the most pronounced impact was on the placement of children in special education. Students who participated in Pre-K 4 SA and public prekindergarten programs were two-thirds less likely to be placed into special education. This substantial impact saves money for schools but also avoids well documented negative impacts when children are unnecessarily placed into special education.

The study found students who participated in prekindergarten also had better attendance from kindergarten to third grade, amounting to 6 weeks more instruction for students who attended public pre-k and over 7 weeks more for students who attended a Pre-K 4 SA education center. Attendance is directly linked to school funding as well as student success. The study estimates that San Antonio public schools received \$9.7 million more in funding due to increased attendance of students who enrolled in Pre-K 4 SA and \$13.5 million from the increased public pre-k population that followed the Pre-K 4 SA election.

“Every day of instruction matters,” Pre-K 4 SA CEO Sarah Baray said. “This is especially true in the early years, as brain research tells us those years are the most critical for long-term success. This study provides evidence that San Antonio’s bold investment in early learning is paying off.”

The Urban Education Institute also looked at public prekindergarten enrollment in Bexar County and other urban counties from 2002 to 2018. In the school year following the Pre-K 4 SA election (2013-2014), the number of public school students who participated in public pre-k increased by 9.07 percent. Given the positive effects of public pre-k found by the study, more students enrolled in public pre-k means more San Antonio children are prepared to succeed in elementary school and beyond.

This impact study analyzes the sample of students who enrolled in Pre-K 4 SA during its first academic year (2013-2014) of operation. Later cohorts were not studied because the primary outcome of interest was student performance on the state’s third-grade standardized exams (STAAR). The 2014 cohort is the only cohort to have reached third grade and completed these exams. Later cohorts will be added as they reach this milestone. Researchers expect larger effect sizes associated with later cohorts because of the program’s maturity.

###

#### **About Pre-K 4 SA:**

Pre-K 4 SA is a comprehensive early childhood initiative aimed at changing the education and workforce trajectory of San Antonio in one generation. Pre-K 4 SA offers full-day pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds living in the City of San Antonio. Pre-K 4 SA is free for qualifying students and also accepts tuition-paying students. The school day begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Extended hours are available at no additional charge from 7:15 to 8 a.m., and from 3 to 6 p.m. for working families. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks are included and free transportation is available to all students. Pre-K 4 SA has four Education Centers located throughout the city: North Education Center, 3635 Medical Dr.; South Education Center, 7031 S. New Braunfels Ave.; East Education Center, 5230 Eisenhower Rd.; and West Education Center, 1235 Enrique M. Barrera Memorial Parkway. The Pre-K 4 SA Professional Learning program provides pre-kindergarten through third grade educators in San Antonio with complementary continuing education to support best practice instruction to help every child in San Antonio excel. The Pre-K 4 SA Competitive Grants program provides more than \$4 million in funding annually to increase quality and access in early childhood programs throughout San Antonio. Visit [www.prek4sa.com](http://www.prek4sa.com) for more information.

#### **San Antonio: America’s 21st Century City**

San Antonio is a global city with a dynamic economy and workforce, a deep cultural heritage, and diverse communities that are resilient and welcoming. It is one of the strongest fiscally managed cities in the country with a vibrant business climate and a ‘AAA’ general obligation bond rating from all three major rating agencies. San Antonio is a city that nurtures entrepreneurship, encourages investment and funds infrastructure. America’s seventh-largest city offers growth opportunities in bioscience, financial services, aerospace, cybersecurity, energy, transportation, manufacturing and health care. In 2015, UNESCO designated San Antonio’s 18th century Spanish colonial missions as a World Heritage Site — the first in Texas. Proudly called Military City, USA®, San Antonio is home to one of the largest populations of active duty military, veterans and crucial military commands. In 2018, the city will celebrate its 300th anniversary, honoring its rich past and a bright future focused on innovation and livability. For more information, visit [www.sanantonio.gov](http://www.sanantonio.gov).