



Find us in the recent brief released by our partners in the Madison Metropolitan School District!

THE RELEASE: [MMSD Research, Assessment & Improvement 4K Enrollment Brief - April 2024](#)

THE OVERVIEW: For the past decade, MEP has worked with MMSD's [Early Learning Department](#) to [study MMSD 4K](#) and inform district policy and practice. We began with the 2016 report, "[Madison Metropolitan School District Four-year-old Kindergarten Program: Patterns of Enrollment](#)," which examined 4K participation by student and family characteristics, session type and setting, and MMSD 4K enrollment relative to the state and comparable districts. This report became a foundational piece of a now-robust partnership between Early Learning and MEP, including an evaluation of [MMSD's full-day 4K expansion in 2022-2024](#).



Since the 2016-17 report, MMSD and its 4K program have experienced many changes, including introducing full-day 4K offerings, a changing context of declining birthrates and student enrollment in MMSD, and possible changes to parent decision making around 4K enrollment and timing in the wake of COVID-19. Thus, the MMSD research team believed an updated analysis of 4K enrollment patterns would yield useful insights for the district.

The district research team built upon the initial MEP 4K enrollment report to answer three research questions: 1) Who enrolled in 4K in MMSD between 2017-18 and 2023-24? 2) Does MMSD 4K reach more students from historically marginalized backgrounds? 3) Do students who access MMSD 4K programming persist in the district through kindergarten?

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- MMSD 4K enrollment declined by 300 students after 2019-20, but has stabilized in the last four years, hovering around 1,400 students annually. In that time, the demographic makeup of 4K has shifted, with students of color and ELL students making up a greater percentage than in the past. More students enrolled in MMSD school sites than early care and education sites, and enrollment in full-day 4K continues to increase.
- Overall, students from many historically marginalized backgrounds (including Black students, EL students, students with IEPs, and students from low income backgrounds) are more likely to enroll in 4K than students not from these backgrounds.
- On average, around 80% of students who participate in MMSD 4K continue on to enroll in MMSD kindergarten. We observe higher persistence rates for students who attended 4K at an MMSD site compared to early care and education sites, as well as slightly higher persistence for full-day 4K compared to half-day 4K. Persistence does not vary substantially by most student or family characteristics, but students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to persist to kindergarten.