



PRE-K OUR WAY

Prepared for school, ready for success.

"Today, more children are attending a high-quality pre-k program..."



That was the first of three shout-outs for pre-k in Governor Murphy's first State of the State address. Delivered on January 15, the State of the State address continued to include pre-k:

"To prepare our kids for a better future, we invested hundreds of millions of dollars in our schools and pre-k. **Now, 4,000 more 3- and 4-year-olds are attending a high-quality pre-k program...**"

and

"I look forward to working with you - and with Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Coughlin and their teams across the aisle - to build a state that leads for all the right reasons and in all the right ways. The state others point to and say, **"that's what the future looks like... It's a state where young families can grow and prosper. A state that redefines public education for our nation, with access to a free education from pre-k all the way to an Associate's degree."**

Together, we've come a long way in just a few years of strategic focus! Pre-k expansion is - and remains - a NJ priority. In addition to the 2019 State of the State, pre-k expansion has already made news in multiple ways in the young year of 2019:

- On January 2, more than 2,000 of our state's 3- and 4-year-olds began state-funded, full-day pre-k classes across 33 communities.
- On January 8, Governor Murphy announced New Jersey's receipt of \$10.6 million in federal funding for a new initiative - The NJ Preschool Development Collaboration.
- On January 10, Eatontown's state-funded, full-day pre-k program provided a venue for Governor Murphy and Commissioner of Education Repollet to visit a new pre-k classroom and to repeatedly underscore their public support for - and strong commitment to - continued pre-k expansion.

Here are additional details:

- The January 2019 first day of class for more than 2,000 preschoolers results from pre-k expansion funding in the current year's state budget. More than two-dozen school districts started classes in October 2018, and more than three-dozen additional districts started classes in January 2019. As a result, **NJ's pre-k - state-funded, full-day, high-quality - is available now in more than 110 school districts!** Remember: this time two years ago, the number was 35. This time last year, the number was just over 60.

- The newly announced federal grant enables "a periodic needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing early childhood programs, and will develop a strategic plan to improve coordination among existing programs and local educational agencies, specifically to create an easier transition from early education programs to elementary school." The early childhood education programs covered by the grant provide benefit to all the years before kindergarten and provide further evidence that **the focus on raising the priority for pre-k expansion has raised the priority of all early education areas**. Read more about the grant at <http://bit.ly/2RgiKie>.
- Finally, Governor Murphy's January 10 remarks at Eatontown again stated his support for pre-k expansion as the best investment that NJ can make. Both the Governor and Commissioner Repollet cited the fact that "every \$1 invested in pre-k returns up to a \$9 return on investment." **The Governor further committed that New Jersey "is a full partner in pre-k expansion" and made it personal: "I am committed to continuing pre-k expansion" in our state.**

Learn more about some of NJ's most recent pre-k expansion by checking out the news clips and featured stories at <http://bit.ly/2AO4mU1>.

Today, tens of thousands of NJ's 3- and 4-year-olds across hundreds of communities are waiting for all of us to continue to work for them - and for their access to state-funded, full-day pre-k. The next inflection point is March 2019, the Governor's Budget Address. As Pre-K Our Way believes: **Now, it's time to *significantly* fund pre-k expansion!**

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