



PRE-K OUR WAY

Prepared for school, ready for success.



EXPAND NJ'S PRE-K

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS – AND HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES – ARE WAITING EACH YEAR

Pre-K Our Way (www.prekourway.org) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that started in early 2015 to provide a strategic effort to have pre-k expansion as a statewide priority. The organization is a statewide advocacy effort led by former governors Kean and Florio and funded by almost 10 different philanthropic organizations. From inception, Pre-K Our Way has had a **single focus: expansion of New Jersey's existing high-quality, state-funded, full-day pre-k program to hundreds more communities – and to the tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds waiting each year for access to New Jersey's pre-k.** Despite a law passed in 2008, the first funding in nearly a decade (\$25 million in June 2017) and significant funding in the first budget of the Murphy Administration (nearly \$83 million in July 2018), there are hundreds of communities still waiting for NJ's state-funded, full-day pre-k.

Working **strategically, tactically and together**, pre-k expansion has become a NJ priority! Throughout the 2017 election cycle, pre-k expansion and funding for pre-k were supported at the gubernatorial, legislative and local levels. In 2018, support from Governor Murphy and the legislative leadership resulted in more than 100 communities with state-funded, full-day pre-k in the 2018-2019 school year! That was a major step; however, tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds remain waiting across hundreds of communities for NJ's high-quality pre-k. Pre-K Our Way's focus continues: support the 2008 law for state-funded, full-day pre-k and secure significant funding for pre-k expansion in the next state budget.

MORE

Through its targeted messaging and strategic focus, Pre-K Our Way has driven significant results:

- **Made pre-k expansion a NJ priority;** it was one of the top 5 priorities in the 2017 gubernatorial election season, a gubernatorial and legislative leadership priority in the current state budget AND included in Governor Murphy's first budget message as a commitment to universal pre-k within four years
- **Secured nearly \$83 million in the current state budget for pre-k expansion,** bringing the number of communities with state-funded, full-day pre-k to more than 100 for the 2018-2019 school year
- **Secured \$25 million in last year's state budget** – the first funding in nearly a decade
- **Established a clear, focused message and purpose:** expand NJ's existing high-quality pre-k for 3- and 4-year-olds into more communities
- **Extended advocacy beyond the usual community of support** to showcase the importance of NJ's pre-k for child health, working parents and the business community, educational achievement and long-term future success – including reduced costs for law enforcement and as an investment in New Jersey's future; motivated in-person outreach across 400+ communities/all 21 counties/every legislative district
- **Identified key legislative education opportunities:** shaped testimony of more than half of all 21 presenters for the 2015 Senate Education Committee Hearing on Benefits of Pre-K; included pre-k expansion in the Legislative Leadership Policy Agenda Priorities beginning in October 2015 and throughout 2016 and 2017 (position papers presented by both State Senate President and Assembly Speaker); maintained focus on pre-k expansion throughout budget in 2016 and 2017
- **Linked pre-k expansion funding to school funding discussions**
- **Conceived, organized and executed the Campaign for Pre-k Expansion:** a focused, enhanced media outreach effort in September 2016 – June 2017 and again in September 2017 – June 2018 to drive the message of pre-k expansion directly to the new governor and new legislature

Throughout the balance of 2018 and into 2019, Pre-K Our Way will continue strategic focus on pre-k expansion and on securing significantly increased funding in the next state budget. Why? Tens of thousands of NJ's 3- and 4-year-olds across hundreds of communities remain waiting for NJ's pre-k. Working together, we can maintain NJ's pre-k as a NJ priority!

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QUESTIONS? You may reach the Pre-K Our Way team at 609-246-0034, ext. 4 or toll free at 844-335-PREK (844-335-7735). You can also email us at info@prekourway.org.