



## PRE-K OUR WAY

Prepared for school, ready for success.



# EXPAND NJ'S PRE-K

## IT'S A PRIORITY – BUT, THERE'S MORE TO DO!

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Pre-K Our Way ([www.prekourway.org](http://www.prekourway.org)) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization started in early 2015 to provide a strategic effort to have pre-k expansion as a NJ 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 occurred in June 2017 and funding continued in the 2018 and 2019 budgets signed by the Murphy Administration. However, there are hundreds of communities – and tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds – 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. Beginning in 2018, support from Governor Murphy and the legislative leadership resulted in 140+ communities with state-funded, full-day pre-k in the 2019-2020 school year! However, tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds remain waiting across hundreds of communities. 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 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 and has been a legislative priority since 2016; Governor Murphy's first budget message in 2018 included a commitment to universal pre-k within four years; in July 2019, the position of Assistant Commissioner, Division of Early Childhood Education was announced and put early education at an assistant commissioner level for the first time in nearly a decade
- **Secured funding for pre-k expansion:** funding in July 2017 was the first funding for pre-k expansion in nearly a decade; when combined with pre-k expansion funding in the first two budgets of the Murphy Administration, there has been nearly \$175 million in new, bipartisan pre-k expansion funding in the three most recent state budgets; NJ currently has 140+ school districts with state-funded, full-day pre-k, including more than two dozen NEW districts announced by the NJ Department of Education for the 2019-2020 school year
- **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:** showcased 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 the 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 throughout budgets in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 – and counting
- **Linked pre-k expansion funding to school funding discussions in 2016 and 2017 – and now, beyond:** the Murphy Administration has included *continued* and new pre-k expansion as part of a district's annual school funding formula for districts where pre-k expansion had already been awarded
- **Conceived, organized and executed the Campaign for Pre-k Expansion:** a focused, enhanced media outreach effort and continued at critical times in the calendar to drive the message of pre-k expansion directly to the governor and legislature

**Pre-K Our Way continues strategic focus on pre-k expansion and on securing funding for pre-k expansion. 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!**



**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](mailto:info@prekourway.org).