



# **PRE-K OUR WAY**

Prepared for school, ready for success.

## **State Senate Budget and Appropriations Hearing**

**March 28, 2019**

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## **Testimony in Support of Pre-K Expansion Funding**

**Sam Crane**

**Pre-K Our Way**

Pre-K Our Way is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization formed four years ago to help bring New Jersey's existing high-quality, state-funded pre-k to the tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds waiting for it across hundreds of communities.

In the past two years, New Jersey has established pre-k expansion as a priority. Maintaining that priority is vitally important to the future of our state's 3- and 4-year-olds – and to their working families.

In his recent Budget Address, Governor Murphy continued New Jersey's commitment to pre-k expansion and proposed more funding for it – \$68 million.

Governor Murphy, Senate President Sweeney, Speaker Coughlin and many members of the legislature support New Jersey's high-quality, state-funded, full-day pre-k.

Our state's full-day, state-funded pre-k is a national model – one of the highest quality public pre-k programs in the country.

Until October 2017, only 35 of New Jersey's hundreds of school districts provided it to their children.

Today – thanks to strong legislative leadership and funding by the Murphy Administration – there are 113 school districts providing New Jersey's pre-k to thousands more 3- and 4-year-olds --- and their working

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families! Pre-K Our Way agrees with the statement made in Governor Murphy's recent Budget Address, **"...together, we are fundamentally redefining public education with greater access to pre-k..."**.

New Jersey's been expanding pre-k. The governor's budget wants *more* funding. Hundreds of communities, tens of thousands of kids, are waiting.

Pre-K Our Way, and tens of thousands of New Jersey's 3- and 4-year-olds across hundreds of communities – your communities – believe that **it's time to significantly fund pre-k expansion – NOW!**

Thank you.