



READY FOR KINDERGARTEN, READY FOR COLLEGE

2018 BUDGET TOOLKIT - PRE-K AGENDA

Make Quality Early Learning Top Priority In 2018 Budget

Talking Points

KEEP THE PROMISE FOR FULL-DAY QUALITY PRE-K

- Four years ago, state leaders pledged to make quality, full-day pre-K for four year olds available to all the state's children within 5 years giving every child access to the beginning of a sound basic education.
- New York has an obligation to our youngest learners to fulfill that promise. New York State has appropriately embedded pre-K as part of public education that means we have an obligation to make it available to all children just like any other grade.
- The expansion in Pre-K has slowed to a trickle because of lack of funding. Last year the state added only 476 seats for children. Despite the growing demand from parents, this left 79% of 4 year olds (81,000) outside of New York City without access to full day pre-K. At that rate, it would take 163 years to meet the promise we made to our children and their families.
- Funding levels for child care and pre-K still fail to reflect the true cost of providing services, threatening the stability of programs and their ability to appropriately compensate teachers and staff.
- At the same time, the state reduced childcare funding by \$7 million further limiting access to early learning for at risk and vulnerable children.

RESEARCH FINDINGS CONTINUE TO PROVE THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS IN QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

- Children with access to quality early education are more likely to be reading on grade level, graduate high school, enroll in college and have higher lifetime earnings
- Investments in quality early education more than pay for themselves, with an average return of \$7 to \$10 for every dollar invested
- Children who are denied access to quality early learning enter kindergarten without the tools they need to be effective learners.
- The need for quality early education has never been more urgent, given changing demographics across the state
- Most families can't afford private tuition for pre-K

**THE GOVERNOR'S 2018 PROPOSAL IS TOO MODEST:
\$15 MILLION STILL LEAVES GENERATIONS OF 4-YEAR-OLDS BEHIND
(78,000 CHILDREN)**

**WE ARE CALLING ON THE STATE TO MAKE EARLY LEARNING
A REAL PRIORITY IN 2018 AND MAKE AN INVESTMENT
OF \$150 MILLION IN PRE-K**

\$125 MILLION TO EXPAND PRE-K SERVICES, WHICH WILL OPEN THE DOOR TO 15,000 PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE STATE TO THE QUALITY EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITY THAT ALL CHILDREN DESERVE

- Open the program to any district ready with a plan to offer quality services and
- Set funding levels at a minimum of \$10,000 per child for four year olds and \$12,000 for three year olds to support high quality program
- Expand opportunities for dual language learners and for integrated classrooms where appropriate for children with special needs.

\$25 MILLION IN SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING TO ENHANCE PROGRAM LEVEL QUALITY AND REMOVE BARRIERS TO EXPANSION

- Support new program start up to meet the expansion goals
- Invest in quality supports in the classroom including professional development
- Develop regional technical assistance centers to support system wide quality improvement strategies similar to those established to support the community school expansion.

PROTECT THE STATE'S CURRENT \$803 MILLION INVESTMENT IN PRE-K INCLUDING:

- \$340 million which helps to support New York's Full day Pre-K for All program and full-day program serving 5,000 four-year-olds in 52 school districts and the
- Federal Pre-School Development grant serving 2500 children in high-need school districts.
- Make this funding permanent as allocations.

REFORM PRE-K FINANCING TO SUSTAIN QUALITY PRE-K

- Continue to consolidate all of the pre-K funding with funding for distributed by allocation, like other education funding including appropriate aid for essential infrastructure and quality strategies like K-12.
- Replace competitive grants with allocation. Competitive grants pit communities against each other. They are inefficient and delay implementation. Pre-K seats may not get into place until mid-year, as is the case with 2017 funding
- Conduct a cost-study of quality pre-K as recommended by the Board of Regents Blue Ribbon Committee to establish an aid formula for pre-K with funding levels that support the true costs of quality, including an appropriate compensation and support for qualified and effective teachers in both community programs and public schools.
- Include funding for regional technical assistance centers to strengthen the state's diverse system for delivery of pre-K services. Several models for such technical assistance support exist around the state today, but lack sustainable funding and are yet to be integrated into the state's pre-K education.
- Strengthen the state's mixed delivery system that includes child care, Head Start and other early childhood programs in the community working in partnership with the public schools.
- Today, more than half of pre-K services are offered in community settings leveraging existing resources, capacity and expertise in local communities
- Some of these programs also offer the expertise and capacity to create integrated settings, so children with disabilities and typically developing children can learn together and from each other
- Others offer experience and expertise supporting children and families whose primary language is other than English