

Governor Phil Murphy

# Murphy Administration Announces Nearly \$25 Million to Bring High-Quality Preschool to 26 More School Districts

10/18/2023

**CHERRY HILL** – Acting Governor Tahesha Way today joined the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and other state officials at the Estelle V. Malberg Early Childhood Center to announce the 26 school districts that have received Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) to establish or expand access to high-quality preschool programs in the 2023-2024 school year. The 26 districts are receiving a total of \$24,903,130 in State funding.

This round of funding will add over 1,715 seats to New Jersey's expanding preschool system, significantly bolstering access to high-quality preschool programs and building on the Murphy Administration's efforts to provide every three- and four-year-old child in New Jersey with access to free, full-day pre-K.

"Providing children with access to preschool programs not only sets our students up for success, but also yields both short- and long-term economic benefits for their families and communities," **said Acting Governor Way**. "By investing in preschool education, we are investing in our youth and in the future prosperity of New Jersey. Today's announcement is another step toward Governor Murphy's goal of providing universal preschool and a brighter future for New Jersey's youngest learners."

"Governor Murphy's continued prioritization of high-quality preschool gives many young children an opportunity to attend preschool and reap the benefits of starting school earlier," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "Our vision is to create an educational landscape where every child, regardless of their background, can thrive from the very beginning of their academic journey. This investment not only expands preschool seats but also opens doors to greater educational and life opportunities for our state's future leaders."

As New Jersey continues its campaign toward Governor Murphy's vision of [universal preschool](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3rc97j/nrddit/f5e195_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!Kw3rVLjw24eRdZs33VgljmK-22D7kCpAgJE03bRx0o42FFBpRFKA501D8NTzDHjSYcV9LrsTYkZaCcGYWRkxC4gEtYBI$) ([https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3rc97j/nrddit/f5e195\\_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!Kw3rVLjw24eRdZs33VgljmK-22D7kCpAgJE03bRx0o42FFBpRFKA501D8NTzDHjSYcV9LrsTYkZaCcGYWRkxC4gEtYBI\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3rc97j/nrddit/f5e195_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!Kw3rVLjw24eRdZs33VgljmK-22D7kCpAgJE03bRx0o42FFBpRFKA501D8NTzDHjSYcV9LrsTYkZaCcGYWRkxC4gEtYBI$)) throughout the state, the 2023-2024 school year ushers in an important shift in how State funds for preschool are allocated. Last year the application process was available only to districts with 10 percent or more of student enrollment from low-income families; this year marks the first time any school district has been able to apply for State preschool-expansion funding. Applications for PEA are reviewed and scored by a panel at the NJDOE.

The grant awardees announced today demonstrated to the NJDOE their capacity to provide a high-quality preschool program, which is defined by a full-day program that has a certificated teacher, an aide, and small classes that are inclusive of children with special needs. The 26 new high-quality preschool programs will start by January 2024.

The Fiscal Year 2024 State Budget included an increase of nearly \$110 million in preschool funding compared to the prior year, for a total of \$1.1 billion. The increased funding supports prior preschool expansion districts, and includes \$40 million to expand high-quality, full-day programs into new districts while also supporting other preschool expansion needs.

"With the cost of childcare reaching a critical point, expanding pre-k adds to the long list of legislative investments in affordability for our working families," **said Assembly Majority Leader Louis D. Greenwald**. "We know the cognitive and social benefits of early childhood education have a profound and lasting impact on the future success and wellbeing of our children, and with this funding, more families than ever before will have access to these vital programs."

"There is no greater investment than investing in our children and the future of our state. Early childhood education is incredibly important, but unfortunately can be expensive, especially if you're already struggling to make ends meet," **said Senator Jim Beach**. "This funding will make a real tangible impact on lives of hundreds of families around New Jersey, giving them access to high quality preschool at no cost to them."

"If breakfast is the most important meal of the day to have the fuel needed for that day, then it only goes to follow that universal pre-kindergarten serves the same purpose in strengthening, energizing, and building confidence in our youngest learners so that they have the preparation and stamina needed to access learning for the duration of their academic careers," **said Karen Bingert, Executive Director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.** "From a strong foundation comes increased and equitable opportunities for success, and I commend Governor Murphy, Acting Governor Way, and their Administration for continuing universal Pre-K expansion, clearly not content to stop until there is a Pre-K seat for every NJ child."

The following is a list of the 26 school districts benefiting from PEA funding for preschool programs, and their awards:

<b>County</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Bergen	Carlstadt	\$442,304
Burlington	Florence	\$779,670
Burlington	Hainesport	\$580,560
Burlington	Medford	\$2,110,872
Camden	Cherry Hill	\$3,417,615
Camden	Magnolia *	\$291,060
Cape May	West Cape May	\$166,752
Gloucester	Elk Township *	\$1,100,962
Hunterdon	Clinton Glen Gardner	\$607,248
Hunterdon	Clinton Township	\$966,030
Hunterdon	East Amwell	\$520,170
Hunterdon	Flemington-Raritan	\$1,228,968
Hunterdon	Franklin Township	\$356,688
Hunterdon	Frenchtown	\$428,904
Hunterdon	Readington	\$1,522,410
Middlesex	Dunellen	\$444,180
Middlesex	Highland Park *	\$559,308
Monmouth	Oceanport	\$513,415
Morris	Mine Hill	\$850,906

County	District	Amount
Ocean	Lacey Township	\$3,323,279
Sussex	Hardyston	\$654,795
Sussex	Lafayette	\$378,326
Sussex	Sparta	\$1,076,774
Sussex	Sussex-Wantage	\$2,159,064
Union	Garwood	\$195,078
Warren	Washington Township	\$227,792
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$24,903,130</b>

*\* Denotes districts that previously operated preschool programs via state Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) and the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI) funding. The 2023-2024 State preschool aid will allow them to expand to a high-quality preschool program*

## Governor Phil Murphy

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