

APPENDIX

Preschool Snapshot 2015-2016

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (DECE)



Today's Presentation

- Current status of our preschool program
- Key elements of quality
- Continuous improvement cycle
- Our preschool classrooms
- Efficacy
- What's next

The division's mission:

- Provide educators with the tools and support to create high quality early childhood programs that maximize children's development and learning in all domains.

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The Preschool Programs FY 2016

35 Fully Funded Districts (31 "former" Abbots and Little Egg Harbor, Fairfield, Woodbine and Red Bank, 7 charter schools in the former Abbots and in Red Bank)

- 45,875 3- and 4-year olds

112 Partially Funded Districts (including 17 districts participating in the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant)

- 95 school districts serve 8,127 4-year-olds (and some 3s)
- 17 school districts will serve 2,300 4-year-olds as part of the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant (at the end of the grant)

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FY 16 Funding

- Total budget for the former Abbotts and 4 additional school districts (expanders) is \$611 million
- Total budget for the partially funded school districts “former Early Childhood Program Aid” and “Early Launch to Learning Initiative” school districts is \$44.5 million
- Budget for the Preschool Expansion Grant is \$17.5 million/year
- Funding is based on enrollment projections
- Base per pupils amounts for former Abbotts and expanders:
 - **\$12,788 (District)**
 - **\$7,943 (Head Start)**
 - **\$14,375 (Provider)**

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Key quality components in place

- Certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children;
- Developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curriculum;
- District/provider collaboration (district/provider contracts):
56% in community provider settings; 44% in district
- Full-day (6 hour educational day), 180-day program;
- Coaches for in class follow up;
- 62% of the preschool children with disabilities are included;
- Support for home languages of English language learners;
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties (pre intervention and referral staff);
- Supports for families (parent involvement spec., family workers);
- Fiscal monitoring and supports (fiscal specialists)

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The Brains

- Preschool Program Guidelines and Code
- Preschool Teaching & Learning Standards
- Professional development to equip key district staff with tools and information
 - **Early Childhood Supervisors**
 - **Coaches (inclusion coaches, and bilingual coaches)**
 - **Preschool Intervention and Referral Staff**
 - **Fiscal Specialists**
 - **Nurses**
 - **Social service personnel (parent involvement specialists, family workers)**

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Tools for Measuring and Guiding Improvements

Child

- Screening, Ongoing performance assessment

Classroom

- Structured Classroom Observation Instruments (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition, Preschool Rating Inventory of Science and Mathematics, Supports for Early Literacy Assessment, Classroom Assessment Scoring System), curriculum-based fidelity instruments

Site

- Grow NJ Kids (agreed upon set of program and learning standards across four agencies- Health, Children and Families, Human Services and Education, 5 levels)

District

- Program-wide self assessment (Self Assessment and Validation System)

State

- Watch data, external classroom evaluations, analyze district-reported info

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How we provide support

To support high quality early childhood programs the 10 DECE specialists:

- Develop and align teaching, learning, and program standards and guidance based on current research on early childhood education;
- Develop resources to facilitate the implementation of each component of high quality preschool programs;
- Review annual plans and self assessment and work with the districts to make improvements
- Provide statewide, regional and on-site support to key staff in state funded schools and districts.
- Through the continuous evaluation and improvement cycle, program improvements are made.

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How We Measure Up



The progression of our quality

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) Results (National Institute of Early Education Research)

1= Inadequate

3= Minimal

5= Good

7= Excellent

5.0 associated with learning benefits

300 observations across all of the school districts

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Progression of quality using the ECERS-R

SUBSCALE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2014	2015
space & furn.	3.76	4.00	4.57	4.72	4.90	5.03	5.03	5.16	5.05	5.17	5.22
personal care	3.69	4.20	4.47	4.16	4.30	4.29	4.34	4.49	4.63	4.12	4.40
language	4.27	4.57	4.97	5.03	5.08	5.46	5.56	5.84	4.74	4.90	5.14
activities	3.37	3.64	4.12	4.34	4.62	4.85	4.86	5.00	5.10	5.01	5.14
interactions	4.92	5.44	5.98	5.93	6.16	6.44	6.33	5.98	6.17	6.22	6.33
program structure	4.04	4.67	4.91	5.02	5.41	5.41	5.45	5.41	5.92	6.04	6.09
parents & staff	4.37	4.63	5.17	5.19	5.38	5.59	5.77	5.75	5.95	5.88	6.32
ECERS-R Overall	3.96	4.31	4.77	4.81	5.03	5.20	5.23	5.30	5.31	5.22	5.43

A quick look inside our high quality classrooms



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Warm and responsive teachers that enhance children's social skills and enrich vocabulary



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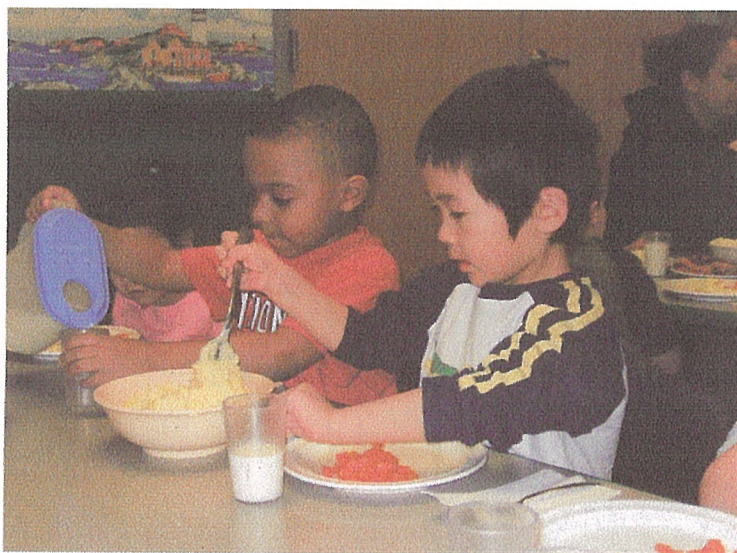
Classroom centers designed for preschoolers that promote each learning domain



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Experiences that develop independence and self regulation



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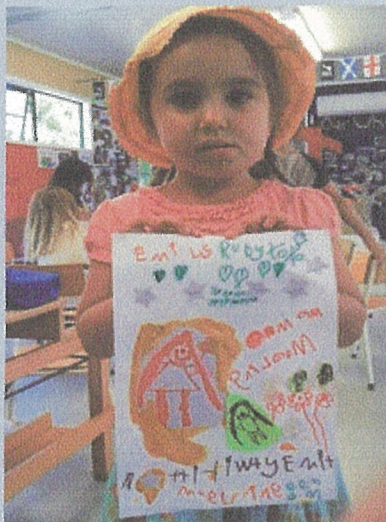
Organized activities that promote listening, speaking and reasoning skills



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Children practicing writing skills in meaningful contexts



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9x

Children problem solving and experimenting with mathematical concepts



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Inviting places to try out emerging literacy skills

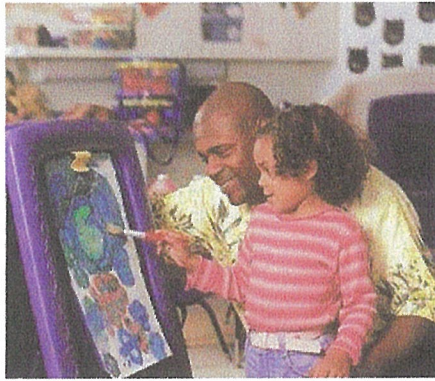


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10x

Engaged families



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Impact on children



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11x

Tracking preschool participants*

Longitudinal Design

- In 2005 followed samples of children that attended the preschool program to those who did not (754 preschool participants, 284 who did not attend)
- Retrospectively looked at state test scores using NJ SMART and 5th grade performance on battery of measures

*Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow Up
National Institute of Early Education Research, March 2013

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The results

- At kindergarten entry achievement gap cut in half for preschool attendees with two years of preschool having twice the effect of one
- Differences between attendees and non attendees were maintained through 5th grade*
- Children who attended preschool were $\frac{3}{4}$ year ahead of children who did not attend in 5th grade
- Reduction in grade retention and special education placement rates

*Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow Up
National Institute of Early Education Research, March 2013

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What's next for the preschool program?

This year's focus areas:

- ❑ Implementing Grow NJ Kids, our Quality Rating Improvement System
- ❑ Better supports for children with disabilities
- ❑ Going deeper with instruction by switching to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3)
- ❑ Helping the Preschool Expansion Grant school districts implement a high quality preschool program
- ❑ Plans to work with NIEER to continue following the children

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Any questions?



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The **View** of Kindergarten
in
New Jersey



Vincent J. Costanza, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge &
Director, Office of Primary Education
New Jersey Department of Education

We shouldn't wait until
children are in high school to
fuse academic and social
development.

Benefits of Full Day Kindergarten

Strong transitions

Increased attendance

Academic and social gains

Enhanced social, emotional and
behavior development

• Villgas, Malia. 2005. Full-Day Kindergarten: Expanding Learning Opportunities. WestEd.

K/x

4

Kindergarten Profile

District Type	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
Districts with Full-Day K	70.1%	75.9%	81.5%	85.5%
Districts with Full-Day and Half-Day K	4.5%	2.9%	3.1%	1.4%
Districts with Half-Day K	25.4%	21.2%	15.4%	13.1%

5

New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA)

Fully implemented portfolio-based (TS GOLD) NJ KEA system by 2019

- Voluntary & Funded
- Aligned with the NJ K-Seminar
- Social-Emotional, Literacy, & Math assessed in Year 1

Year 1 Participation

- 200 teachers
- 94 administrators
- 29 districts

6

Participant Comparison

Year	Teachers	Administrators	Children	Districts
Y1	200	94	3,442	29
Y2	520	154	9,000 (approx.)	51
TOTAL	720	248	12,442 (approx.)	80

15x



Giving Every Child A Chance

To: Members, Senate Education Committee
From: Cecilia Zalkind, Executive Director
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Date: September 21, 2015
Re: **The Benefits of Preschool and Other Quality Early Learning Programs**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at this important hearing. Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) is a statewide child advocacy organization based in Newark. Ensuring that every child has access to high-quality early learning has been a long-standing priority for ACNJ. We know that a strong early education gives children the best start towards success in school and life and that what happens to children in those early years impacts the rest of their lives.

This is no exaggeration. There is so much evidence – scientific, medical and developmental – about the importance of the early years, starting at infancy. This is the time when the brain grows faster than any other time. It sets the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior and health depends. When children have acquired that foundation, they will experience early success and those successes will lead to future successes. When they are not prepared, we are setting them up for a lifelong struggle.

Parents, of course, are their child's first and best teacher. But almost 70 percent of New Jersey parents with children under age 5 work outside the home. They rely on child care, not only to work, but to provide the high-quality early learning experiences they know their children need. But quality child care is expensive. It can cost a significant percentage of a family's income. This is a challenge to all families, but even greater for low to middle income families.

It is an even greater challenge for parents of very young children, infancy to age 3. The cost of quality infant/toddler care is beyond the reach of too many families. And quality can be hard to find. A recent study by NIEER evaluating infant/toddler programs in New Jersey raises some serious questions about the quality of care for young children – at the time when quality matters most.

There are some improvements on the horizon, however. Thanks to a federal grant, New Jersey is piloting a system to improve child care quality, called *Grow NJ Kids*. Another federal grant is enabling Early Head Start programs to partner with child care centers and family child care homes to improve quality. This has the potential to make a difference for infants and toddlers. The lessons learned from these efforts will help guide future policy and funding.

But we do not need to wait for these results to take action. There is one thing we can do right now. We can make sure that more children can benefit from our nationally recognized high-quality, successful preschool program.

New Jersey has the best preschool program in the country. It has a high-quality standard, with small class size, well-prepared teachers and partnerships among school districts, Head Start and child care, all

160x

critical elements of quality. It includes three- and four-year-old children, ensuring two years of a high-quality experience, which in itself makes a difference in preparing children for school. It is offered to children in the poorest communities of the state, ensuring that children who need it the most can access it. And it has a proven track record of success. A longitudinal research study by NIEER proves that high-quality preschool has an impact immediately and long-term, in learning gains that are sustained.

So what's the problem? It does not reach enough children.

Since 1999, thousands of low-income 3- and 4- year olds in New Jersey have started school on the path to success by attending state-funded high quality preschools. Every year, these young students continue to reap the benefits of this strong early learning foundation. For thousands more however, these programs remain inaccessible. Almost one-half of low-income children in New Jersey live outside of the school districts funded to provide preschool. For them, zip code continues to determine whether they can benefit from the strong start that preschool provides.

This is a problem we can solve. The solution already exists. The 2008 School Funding Reform Act called for expanding high-quality preschool to more low-income children across the state. Families in approximately 90 communities – the next tier of low-income districts – were promised access to quality preschool for their 3- and 4-year-old children. The remaining districts were targeted to provide that access to preschoolers from low-income families in their communities.

Over the last few years, fiscal constraints have moved preschool further down the list of state priorities. In the meantime, thousands of children have missed out on their opportunity for starting school with a greater chance of long-term educational success, because quality preschool was not available to them.

It is time to make preschool New Jersey's top priority and take the first step toward expanding it to more children. As you will hear from many witnesses today, preschool is an important investment, not only in the future of our children but of our state. That is why ACNJ is proud to support *Pre-K Our Way* and continue to voice our support to the growing number of other voices who support preschool and its expansion.

I saw the importance of preschool first hand last week when I visited a program in one of the communities that receives state-funding. It is a high-quality preschool program with a strong track record of results. I spent some time in the three-year-old class. This was the first week of preschool and the differences amongst the children were striking. Some of them were prepared. Too many were already behind. Their language skills were poor. They had never held a book. They had trouble simply communicating. But this group of 3-year olds is lucky because preschool will make a difference for them. Without preschool, they would start kindergarten already behind, when the stakes are higher and the remedy much harder.

I also had a conversation with a parent whose child is currently in the program. She had to return to work when her child was an infant and she told me about her struggle in finding infant child care. She knew what quality was but could not afford it. She described going to work every day knowing that her baby was in a program that was not meeting her learning needs. But cost drove her decision.

She also described how happy she was when her child turned 3-years-old and could attend a state-funded preschool program. She was grateful to live in a community where high-quality preschool was available for her child. We need to make sure that more children in New Jersey have an opportunity to start school with a strong foundation for future success.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important issue today.



What policy makers should know about Pre-K effectiveness



Steve Barnett, PhD

848-932-4350

sbarnett@nieer.org

RUTGERS

Graduate School of Education

Potential Gains from Pre-K Investments

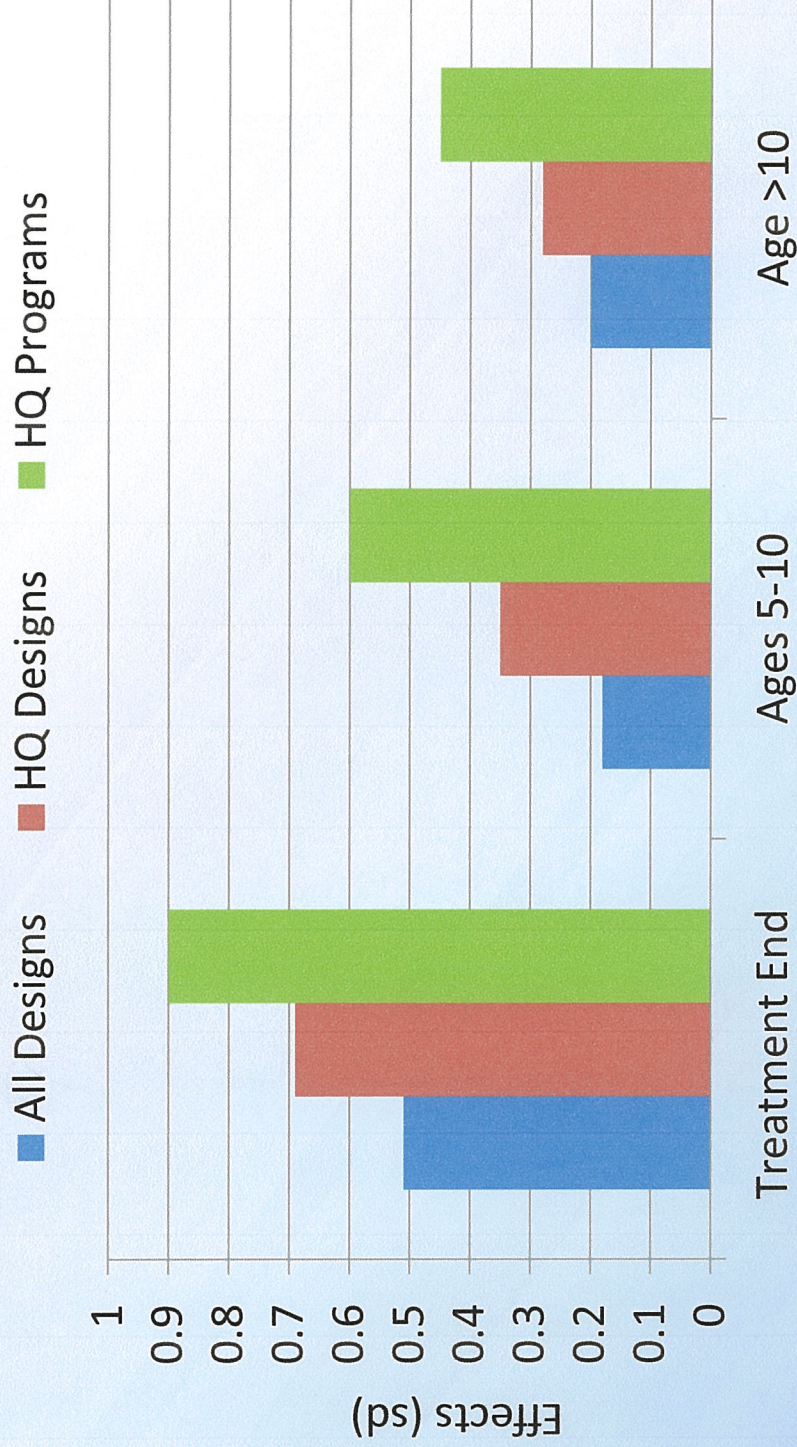
Educational , Social and Economic Success

- Achievement test scores
- Special education and grade repetition
- High school graduation
- Behavior problems, delinquency, and crime
- Employment, earnings, and welfare dependency
- Smoking, drug use, and even health

Decreased Costs to Government

- Schooling costs
- Social services costs
- Crime costs
- Health care costs (teen pregnancy and smoking)

Looking at *all* the evidence: Cognitive gains from ECE in the US (123 studies since 1960)



Age at Follow-Up
 Note: 1 sd = achievement gap, so high quality preschool could close nearly half the achievement gap

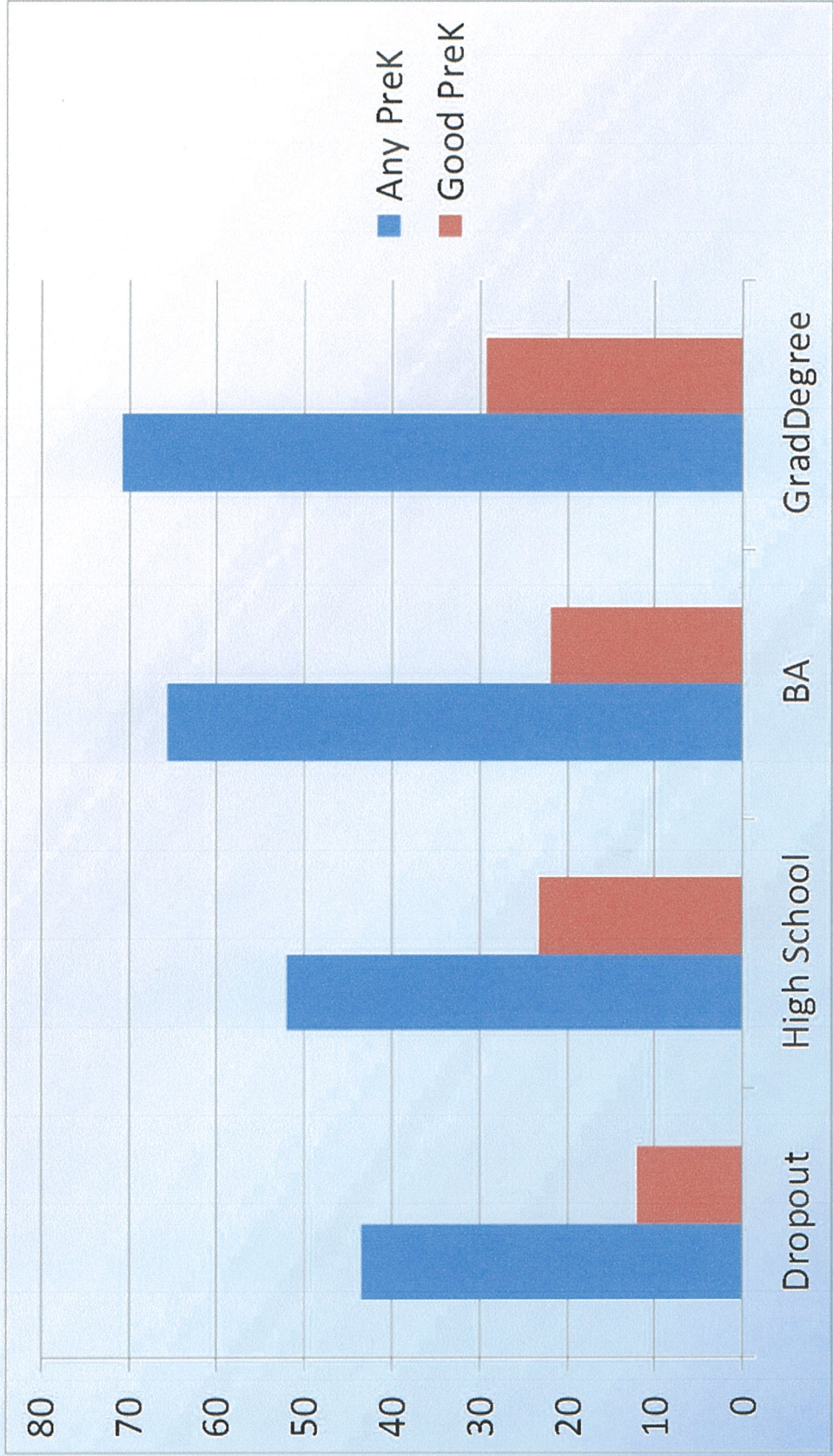
What do we learn from research?

1. High quality early care and education can has long-term academic, social, and economic benefits
2. Cognitive effects are positive and on average persist through the school years
3. High quality programs emphasizing education have larger effects:
 - Intentional teaching
 - Individualization & small groups
 - Requires strong teachers adequately supported
4. Large short-term gains needed for long-term gains
5. Every year matters: quality early care and education are the leading edge of school reform

Few children and families have access to high-quality early care and education

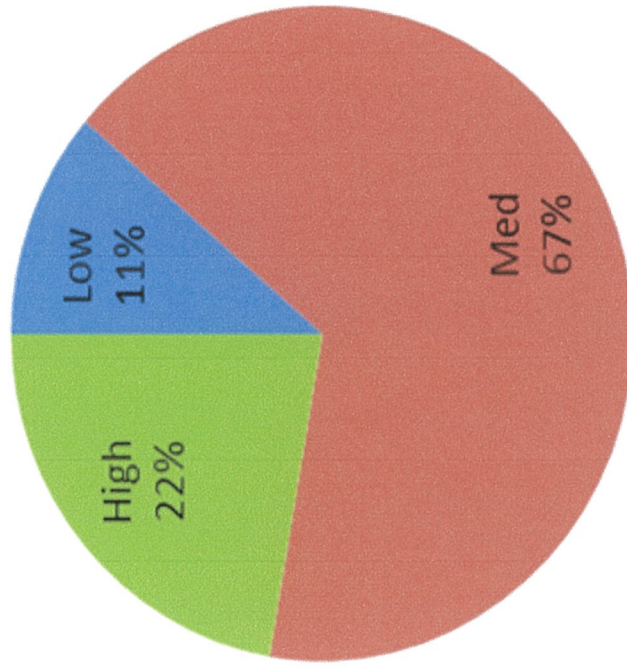
- Only 1/3 of centers serving 4-year-olds are good or better
- Quality of care is lower for younger children
- Private programs have lower observed quality than public--parents cannot discern quality and poor quality drives out good from the market
- The child care subsidy system may actually harm children because standards for quality are so low

Good pre-K least available to most disadvantaged



Little high quality infant-toddler center care in NJ (511 classrooms statewide)

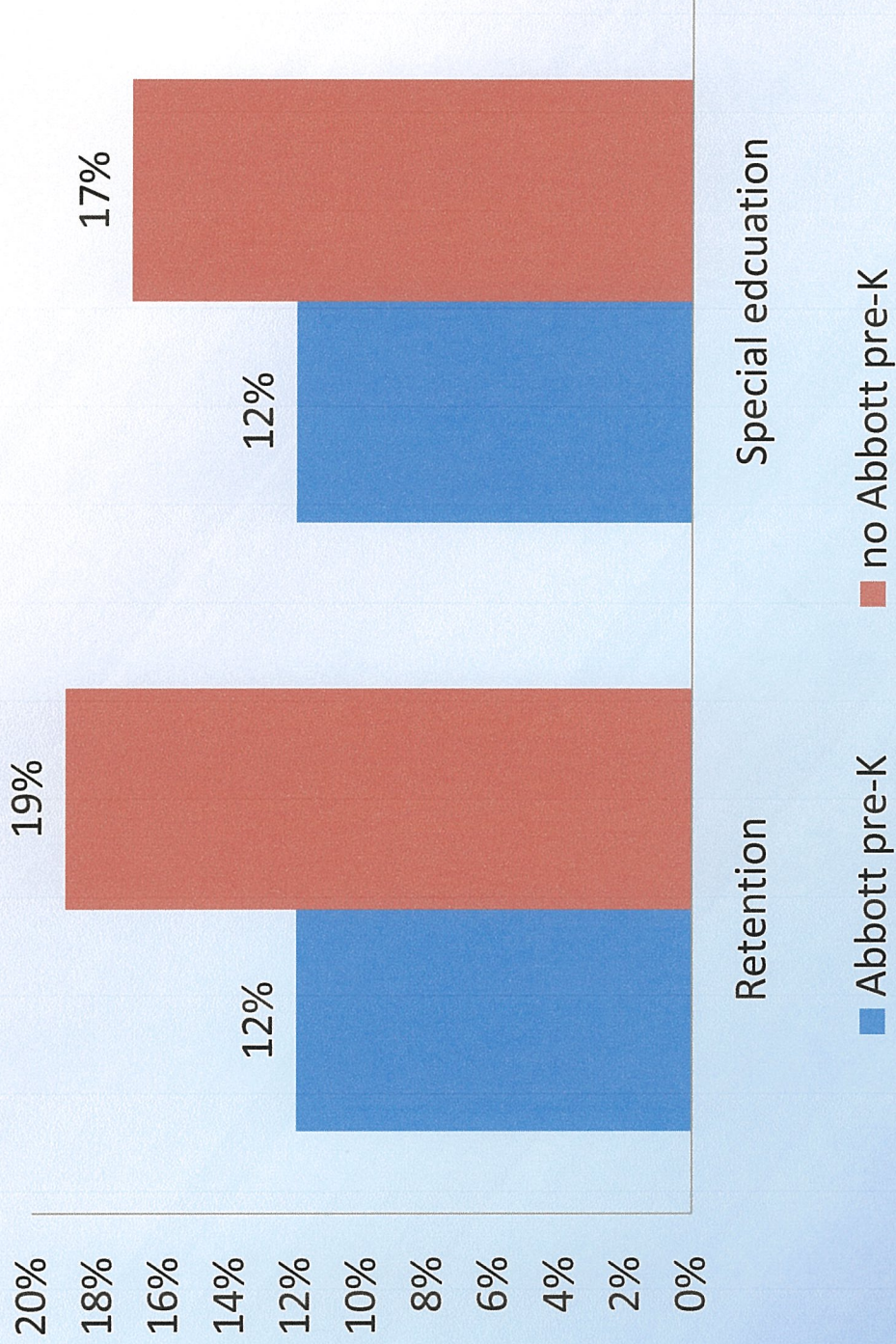
Distribution of scores



NJ has a *proven* Pre-K approach

- Abbott reforms with high standards and adequate funding shifted the entire distribution of quality upward
- Quality improved in public *and private* providers
- Test scores increased through at least 5th grade
- 2 years starting at age 3 doubled test score gains
- Grade repetition and special education cut by 1/3
- State legislature's plan to offer this model statewide, was never implemented
- High quality pre-K for all children <200% FPL in NJ would decrease costs of education by \$850 million per year

NJ Effects on Retention & Special Education at Grade 5



Plot

Takeaway Lessons

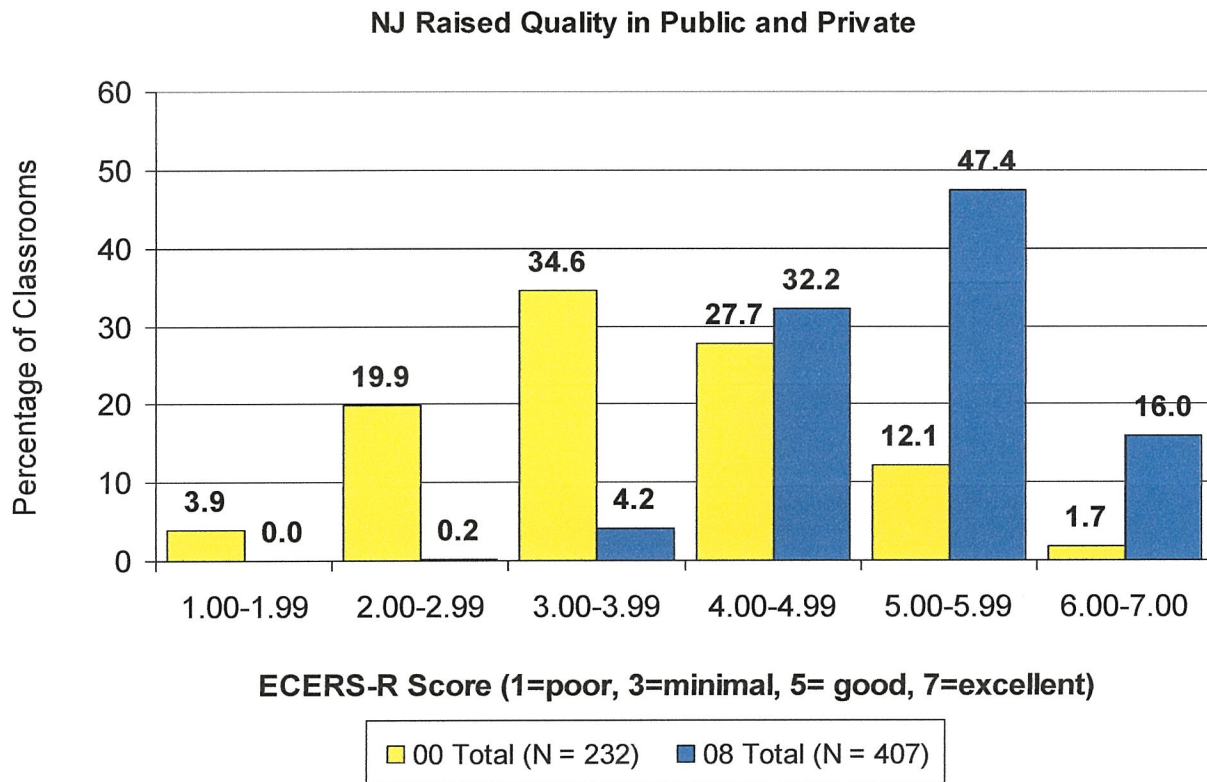


1. High quality early care and education (ECE) benefits children, families, and taxpayers
2. Most children do not attend good programs and some are in harmful ECE
3. We know how to do better and NJ has a successful model for producing high quality
4. In the long-term the state will pay less each year for education if it invests in quality pre-K
5. Expanding quality pre-K will lower state costs of education in the long-term while improving outcomes
6. Every year matters for learning and development
 - K-12 reform and realignment can be driven by pre-K
 - Build infant and toddler care quality together with pre-K

The Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES)

The New Jersey Supreme Court in *Abbott v. Burke* mandated that the state establish high-quality preschool education in the 31 highest-poverty school districts in the state. Since the state began implementation in 1999-2000, high standards and a continuous improvement system have transformed a patchwork of private and public programs into a highly effective mixed delivery system. We have tracked changes in quality to document progress over the years, and the results are displayed in Figure 1. In 1999-2000, less than 15% of pre-K classrooms were good to excellent and nearly 1 in 4 was less than minimal quality. By 2007-08 the vast majority of classrooms were good to excellent; almost none were poor, with very few were even below a score of 4 (midway between minimal and good). The Abbott model totally transformed the quality preschool education using essentially the same programs (2/3 private) and teachers—though many teachers went back to school for degrees and specialized training in return for higher pay, all received coaching.

Figure 1: Quality Rating in Abbott Pre-K Programs (Public and Private)

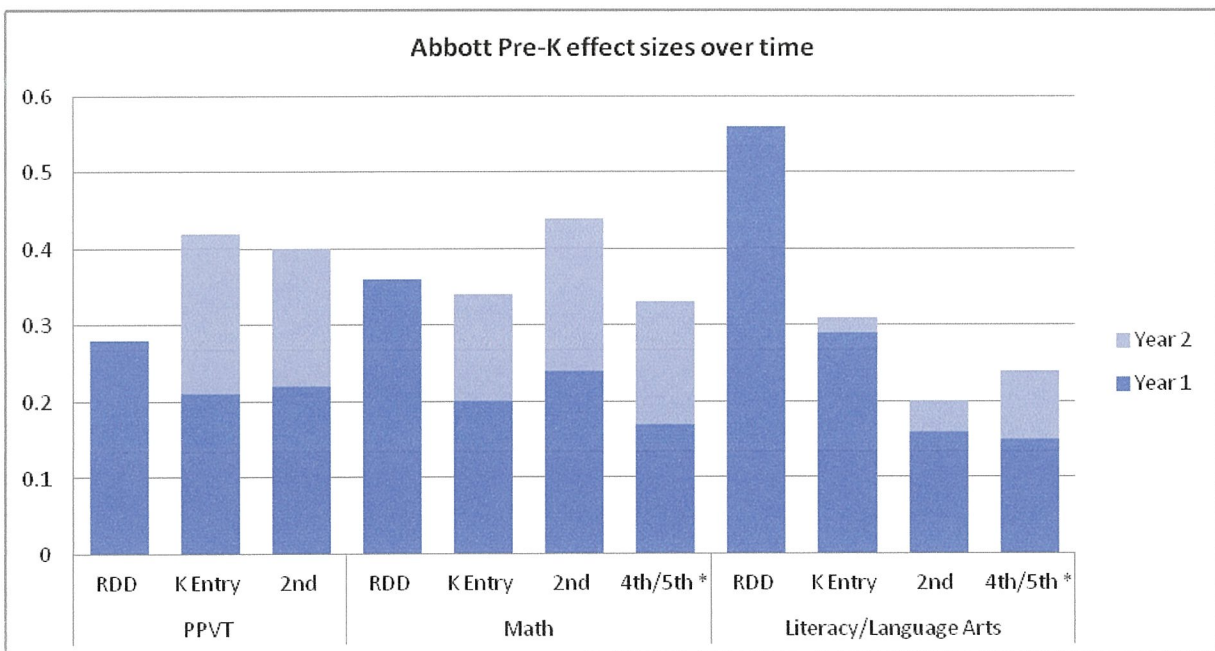


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Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, the seventh year of implementation, NIEER began a longitudinal study to measure learning gains from participating in Abbott pre-K. At the time the study began, quality had risen but not yet to its current level, and 40,500 3- and 4-year-old children were served.

Initial results found strong gains in language, literacy, and math at kindergarten entry. Gains were found again at 2nd grade follow-up. Most recently NIEER worked with the state to assess the effects of Abbott Pre-K on statewide measures of achievement, grade retention, and special education at 4th and 5th grade. Estimated effects on achievement for 1 and 2 years (beginning at age 3) are shown in Figure 2. The most rigorous method (RDD in the chart) can only be applied to 1 year at age 4, but it indicates that our longitudinal methods tend to underestimate program effects but a substantial amount. Therefore, our later estimates should be considered lower bounds on effects. Nevertheless, estimated effects are substantial, persistent, and larger for 2 years than for 1 year. The 2-year effects are large enough to close about half the achievement gap between low-income children and their more advantaged peers. In addition, we estimated that Abbott pre-K reduced grade repetition from 19% to 12% and special education from 17% to 12% through 5th grade.

Figure 2: Abbott Pre-K effect sizes (standard deviation units) for achievement over time



Source: Barnett, W.S., Jung, K, Youn, M., & Frede, E.C. (2013). *Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at: <http://nieer.org/publications/latest-research/abbott-preschool-program-longitudinal-effects-study-fifth-grade-follow>

National Institute for Early Education Research (www.nieer.org) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research.



PRE-K OUR WAY

Prepared for school, ready for success.

**Brian Maher
State Senate Testimony
State Senate Education Committee
September 21, 2015**

I want to thank the committee for having this hearing on expanding pre-k educational programs to more children in New Jersey.

People are always asking me, "How did a guy who spent his whole career in the Marine Terminal Business in Port Elizabeth become interested in early education?"

The answer is that, like many people, I am concerned about the growing income disparity, the shrinking middle class, and the lack of opportunity for upward mobility for financially disadvantaged and working class people. I also share the concerns of businesses that the future workforce will not have the skills necessary to fill the needed jobs.

While there is disagreement as to the causes of the current situation—and certainly disagreement as to the economic and fiscal policies necessary to improve it—most people agree that a strong education system in New Jersey is an essential ingredient of any solution.

While I was the Chairman and CEO of Maher Terminals in Port Elizabeth, we invested in educational programs that provided young people, particularly disadvantaged youth, with enhanced educational opportunities.

After selling my company in 2007, I resolved to try to use my good fortune to address the growing economic inequality and decided that education was the best way to have a significant long-term impact. As I researched what works in education, it became clear that high-quality preschool education programs were a proven way to improve educational performance throughout a person's educational career and thus enable children to have much improved opportunities for success in high school, college and life.

My first direct investment was to partner with the Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark to build an integrated, high-quality 0 – 5 early education center. I provided the capital funding; the program is owned and operated by the Ironbound Community Corporation. Using Early Head Start and the pre-k 3- and 4-year-old program funded by the state, this center now demonstrates the power of early education in preparing our youngest citizens for success in school and life.

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The lessons learned at the ICC Early Learning Center led me, along with many others, to undertake an effort to make 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs available to more children. Former Governors Tom Kean and Jim Florio—along with other civic and business leaders—have come together to create a non-profit advocacy effort to expand these existing high-quality preschool programs across the state. This effort, Pre-K Our Way, is working with communities and you to build support for this expansion. You can learn more about Pre-K Our Way at www.prekourway.org.

Luckily we do not have to invent a new pre-k program. We already have it. My colleagues, Dr. Steve Barnett and Ceil Zalkind have shared the success of the New Jersey program. Particularly compelling is that New Jersey has developed a proven model that is the envy of the rest of the nation.

However, New Jersey's leadership in providing high-quality pre-k programs is limited to only a select number of districts. Thousands of children are missing out on high-quality preschool simply because of their ZIP code.

The legislature recognized this deficiency by passing a 2008 law designed to expand the program to approximately 90 additional school districts. It was never funded or implemented.

This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. Pre-k is supported by members of both political parties in New Jersey and across the nation in so-called red and blue states such as Georgia, Alabama, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Even during the most difficult economic times in recent memory, states across the nation are investing in expanding pre-k because they have determined that it is critical to their future economic and social well-being. The leaders of these states are saying what our former Governor, Tom Kean says: "This is what works. If there is anything that you felt is a magic bullet, it is pre-k education."

I am not talking about expanding child care or day care. I am talking about expanding the high-quality pre-k program that already exists in New Jersey. A program that has proven to produce better education outcomes. Public Education at all levels is an investment—the educators and all the research say it should start at age 3 not age 5. I submit to you that anyone who has spent any significant time with young children knows that they are learning and absorbing at an incredible rate long before they reach age 5. My personal experience with my own 5 grandchildren has provided me with a front row seat to watch their development at a very early age. Every child is born with that promise—the question is whether New Jersey will make good on its promise to help more 3- and 4-year-olds reach their full potential.

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Do we have the will to step up and finish the job by implementing and funding the law that is already on the books?
Will we offer to children and families across this state the opportunity to be prepared for school and ready for success?

We believe now is the time to say Yes and take action to expand pre-k in New Jersey.



PRE-K OUR WAY
Prepared for school, ready for success.



FACT SHEET

1. PRE-K OUR WAY IS A NONPARTISAN EFFORT TO BRING NEW JERSEY'S EFFECTIVE, HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM TO MORE OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

- Pre-K Our Way wants to expand the quality preschool model for 3- to 4-year-olds that New Jersey already has—through a law that already exists—but has never been fully implemented
- Pre-K Our Way is a community-based initiative to bring New Jersey's successful preschool program to more communities so more children are prepared for school and ready for success
- Pre-K Our Way is not a school and is not connected with any school
- Pre-K Our Way and New Jersey law support a mixed-delivery system of public supports and public/private implementation

2. PRE-K OUR WAY'S MISSION IS SIMPLE.

- Expand New Jersey's existing high-quality preschool to more 3- to 4-year-olds in more of our state's communities
- Develop the public and political will to expand New Jersey's existing, high-quality pre-k program to 90 additional communities by implementing already-existing legislation to expand beyond the current fewer than 40 communities who have the program

3. PRE-K OUR WAY WILL DO THREE THINGS.

- Create opinion leaders and supporters – community residents, parents, other family members, early childhood education advocates and educators, media, business and community leaders – to spread the word about the importance of pre-k and the need to offer the program to more of our state's 3- to 4-year-old children in more communities
- Educate the Legislature on the value of pre-k programs in improving educational outcomes and the need to extend the program to more communities in the state
- Support a local organizing effort to develop demand for these services that will translate into action by the Legislature and Governor

MORE

4. PRE-K OUR WAY USES LOCAL OUTREACH TO SPREAD THE WORD, IDENTIFY KEY SUPPORTERS/ ADVOCATES AND COMMUNICATE.

- Our three regional forums (Spring 2015) engaged attendees from more than 300 different New Jersey communities across all 21 counties. Attendees used more than 90 breakout sessions to create opportunities to strategize, build alliances and take action to make quality preschool available to children in New Jersey's communities through use of a central question, 'What can we do now to ensure that our children are ready for kindergarten?' and focused on how we can act and work together to expand New Jersey's existing high-quality pre-k to more 3- to 4-year-olds
- Local outreach participants included neighbors, colleagues, family members, educators and administrators, education advocates, business people, interested citizens, elected officials and others – all committed to making quality preschool available in New Jersey's communities

5. PRE-K OUR WAY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT AND ACTION.

- Stay informed about progress and upcoming activities; like Pre-K Our Way on Facebook and follow us on Twitter



- Write personal opinion letters or op-eds to local news outlets, and use social media (personal Facebook, Twitter, blogs, community forums, online commentary in professional or community publications) about the need to bring New Jersey's existing high-quality pre-k education to more 3- to 4-year-old children in our state

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.



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HELP BRING PRE-K OUR WAY



Pre-K Our Way is a nonpartisan effort to encourage effective, high-quality preschool programs in each of our communities. It brings everyone together to talk about their aspirations for our children—and how quality preschool experiences can prepare each child for success in school and life. Most importantly, Pre-K Our Way is more than just talk—it helps empower us to bring effective early education programs home to our children.

WE NEED HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K IN OUR COMMUNITY

High-quality preschool is so important that New Jersey passed a law to bring it to young children in towns like ours. Existing state law calls for the expansion of New Jersey's proven preschool programs from the 31 existing towns to 90 more towns just like ours. However, the law has not been implemented to provide our town with the preschool programs to help prepare our children for success in school and life. It is up to you to change that. It's time to bring Pre-K Our Way—and you can be a big part of it.

PRE-K OUR WAY IS A NONPARTISAN COMMUNITY EFFORT

Pre-K Our Way is a New Jersey not-for-profit organization coordinated through a diverse group of business leaders, parents, foundations, early childhood educators, community leaders, interested citizens and elected officials who are determined to make sure each child gets a strong start in life through effective preschool education. That's why Pre-K Our Way is led by former Republican Governor Tom Kean and former Democratic Governor Jim Florio—and welcomes the support of anyone who wants our children to be prepared for school, ready for success.

"There are a few priority reforms we need to make to improve education in our state. One of our highest priorities should be the availability of a quality pre-k program for all of our children. These programs offer our best hope for future success in school and life."

TOM KEAN Former Governor of New Jersey

"The investment we make today in the education of our youngest citizens will yield real results for both our children's and state's future. Assuring that our children enter school ready to learn should be our highest priority."

JIM FLORIO Former Governor of New Jersey

RSV

NEW JERSEY'S PRE-K PROGRAM MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Access to high-quality preschool is critically important for children in our community. When it's available, those who get it do better in school; those who don't start behind and have trouble catching up. Children who experience one or two years of New Jersey's high-quality preschool demonstrate greater proficiencies in language arts and math in the 5th grade than those who didn't attend an early education program. In fact, children who attend New Jersey's pre-k programs achieve at a higher rate, with a 20-40% increase in elementary school test scores. They struggle less in school—they are 40% less likely to repeat a grade—and they overcome barriers to learning to the point where schools see a 31% drop in the need for expensive special education services.

TOGETHER WE CAN BRING PRE-K OUR WAY

Nobody is more important in this effort than you and your neighbors. Your input, involvement and voice are critical to sending a message that our community wants New Jersey's funding for your local high-quality pre-k program to come your way. Here's what you can do:



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Stay connected, get information and resources—and become part of the effort to bring Pre-K Our Way. Visit www.prekourway.org.



ATTEND AN EVENT

Pre-K Our Way is hosting local gatherings in communities like ours to exchange ideas and talk about how we can better prepare our children for success in school and life.



TELL YOUR NEIGHBORS

The more people know about the importance of quality preschool, the faster we can get our fair share of state preschool money for our children. Everything you need to educate others can be found on our website, www.prekourway.org.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Learn more. Get involved. Share your story. Download the tools you need to bring quality pre-k to our communities. Visit www.prekourway.org today.



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NEW JERSEY VOTERS AGREE:

**More needs to be done to prepare children for success in school—
and investing in preschool is the answer.**

The Monmouth University Polling Institute recently surveyed 800 New Jersey voters.¹ Results show likely voters strongly support access to quality preschool as a key to making sure children begin school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. In fact, 87% feel it is important to increase access to preschool—with 56% saying it was very important.

Nearly 9 in 10 New Jersey voters think it's important that all 3 and 4-year olds have access to preschool. This includes 62% who say access is very important. Of those who think it is very important, 82% believe we should be doing more to prepare our children for school.

- **98% of African Americans and 79% of Hispanics believe it is very important.**
- **75% of Democrats, 48% of Republicans and 58% of Independents say it is very important.**
- **71% of females and 52% of males think it is very important.**

57%

of New Jersey voters think we should be doing more to ensure children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in school.

THE POLL RESULTS ARE CLEAR:

There is a big opportunity to meet voter demand for more investment in access to preschool for New Jersey's children.

Across party lines, New Jersey voters feel that parents need help. Nearly 2 in 3 likely voters (63%) agree that parents today need society's support to provide early childhood education.



74%
DEMOCRATS

64%
INDEPENDENTS

49%
REPUBLICANS

New Jersey voters are supportive of legislators funding greater state investments. In fact, 40% would be more likely to vote for a legislator who supports government investment in early childhood education programs. Only 15% indicate they would be less likely to vote for a legislator who supported investment.

Preschool is seen as essential for school success. Nearly 2/3 of voters (64%) see preschool as critical to starting children off on the right foot so they can do well in school.

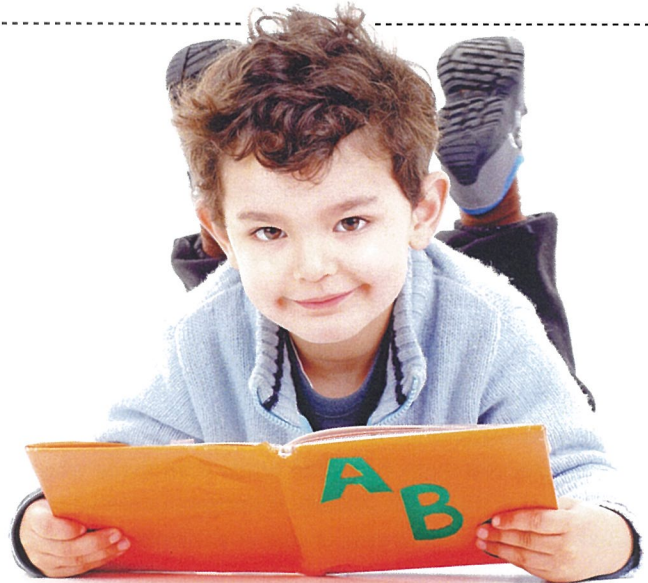
IT'S TIME TO BRING PRE-K OUR WAY

Pre-K Our Way is a nonpartisan effort to encourage effective, high-quality preschool programs in each of our communities. It brings everyone together to talk about their aspirations for our children—and how quality preschool experiences can prepare each child for success in school and life. Learn more, get involved and find the resources you need to bring high-quality pre-k to our communities. Visit www.prekourway.org today.

¹ Methodology: Monmouth University Polling Institute conducted a statewide telephone survey of 800 likely voters. The survey was conducted Feb. 26 - March 5, 2014 and has an overall margin of error of +/-3.5%. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the state and is demographically representative of the electorate.



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RESEARCH AND RESULTS MAKE THE CASE FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL

Research from educators, child developmental experts and economists supports what parents know intuitively—quality early learning opportunities are an essential foundation for success in school and life. Results from New Jersey’s existing preschool programs demonstrate improved success for children in school.

EARLY LEARNING IS IMPORTANT FOR LATER SUCCESS

Education starts at birth, not at kindergarten. Medical research shows that 90% of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life.¹ The quality of adult and child interaction from birth to age five spurs brain development and forms the foundation for the ability to learn, interact with people and apply knowledge. Families play the biggest role in developing these skills, with preschool programs helping parents accelerate learning and socialization to prepare their children for school. Skills developed in early childhood drive a host of adult outcomes including higher education, higher wages, healthier lifestyles, better health, greater productivity and stronger families according to research by Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman.

QUALITY PRESCHOOL DEVELOPS THE WHOLE CHILD

High-quality preschool programs help parents develop their children physically, emotionally and socially. While children learn the basics of letters and numbers, preschool also focuses on developing the whole child through adult and peer interaction and learning through play. Professional early educators use a child’s natural curiosity to develop skills that will last a lifetime—and they teach parents how to be their child’s best teacher at home.

PRESCHOOL PAYS OFF FOR CHILDREN

Children who receive quality early childhood education enter kindergarten prepared for school and ready for success. They are less likely to need remediation and special education and more likely to be engaged in school. According to the Advocates for Children of New Jersey, children who have had access to high-quality preschool have shown a 20-40% increase in elementary school test scores and are 40% less likely to stay back a grade than their counterparts who did not have access to preschool.²

PRESCHOOL PAYS OFF FOR EVERY CITIZEN

Parents know that investing in their child's early education helps them compete in school and seize opportunities later in life. But how do policymakers, educators and taxpayers know that investing in the education of young children will provide significant returns to society? Heckman's research has shown that every dollar invested in quality early childhood education for children who would otherwise not receive it delivers a 7-10% per year return on investment through better education, health, social and economic outcomes in addition to the reduced need for social spending.³

NEW JERSEY'S PRE-K DELIVERS RESULTS

Children who experience one or two years of New Jersey's high-quality preschool demonstrate greater proficiencies in language arts and math in the 5th grade than those who didn't attend an early education program. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University found that by 4th or 5th grade, these children are, on average, three-quarters of an academic year ahead of students who did not attend a quality preschool and are also less likely to require special education.¹

IT'S TIME FOR PRE-K OUR WAY

Although New Jersey recognizes the importance of preschool, today only 31 towns benefit from New Jersey's proven preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds. The New Jersey State Legislature adopted a state law expanding high-quality preschool programs to another 90 towns, but that law has never been implemented.⁴ This represents a significant loss of potential achievement for thousands of New Jersey preschoolers and a lost opportunity for the state to gain better education, health and economic outcomes. If implemented, this law could provide our town with the preschool programs that help prepare our children for success in school and life. And it's in our power to see that it happens. It's time to bring Pre-K Our Way—and you can be a big part of it.

ABOUT PRE-K OUR WAY

Pre-K Our Way is a nonpartisan effort to encourage effective, high-quality preschool programs in each of our communities. It brings everyone together to talk about their aspirations for our children—and how quality preschool can prepare each child for success in school and life. Learn more, get involved and find the resources you need to bring high-quality pre-k to our communities. Visit www.prekourway.org.

¹ National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>.

² Zalkind, Cecilia. "The ABCs of Preschool: Lessons Learned from New Jersey." *The ABCs of Preschool: Lessons Learned from New Jersey* (2013): n. pag. *BuildInitiative.org*. Advocates for Children of New Jersey, May 2013. Web.

³ James Heckman and Seong Hyeok Moon et al., "The Rate of Return to the HighScope Perry Preschool Program," *Journal of Public Economics* (2010).

⁴ Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Squires, J.H., Clarke Brown, K. (2013). *The state of preschool 2013: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Pre-K Our Way: Bring New Jersey's Existing, High-Quality Preschool Program to More Communities

WHAT IS PRE-K OUR WAY?

Pre-K Our Way is a nonpartisan effort to bring New Jersey's effective, high-quality preschool program to each of our communities. It's not a school and not connected with any school, but an initiative to bring preschool programs to all of the communities who have been waiting years for the state legislature to deliver them as promised. Pre-K Our Way wants to expand the quality preschool model for 3- to 4-year-olds that New Jersey already has—through a law that already exists—but has never been fully implemented.

WHO IS INVOLVED WITH PRE-K OUR WAY, AND HOW?

Pre-K Our Way is a nonprofit organization funded through support from a number of leading foundations and philanthropists in New Jersey; it is coordinated through a diverse group of committed business leaders, parents, foundations, early childhood educators, community leaders, interested citizens and elected officials who are determined to make sure each child gets a strong start in life through effective preschool education. As a nonpartisan organization, Pre-K Our Way is led by a growing Leadership Group – including former Republican Governor Tom Kean and former Democratic Governor Jim Florio – and welcomes the support of anyone who wants our children to be prepared for school and ready for success. Visit our website at www.prekourway.org for more information.

WHAT DOES PRE-K OUR WAY PLAN TO DO?

Pre-K Our Way's mission is clear and focused: expand New Jersey's existing, high-quality pre-k program to 90 additional communities by implementing already-existing legislation to expand beyond the current fewer than 40 communities who have the program. To accomplish this, Pre-K Our Way works to develop the public and political will to have legislative action result in expansion of New Jersey's existing preschool program – and to bring New Jersey's existing high-quality pre-k program to more 3- to 4-year-olds in communities throughout the state.

MORE

HOW WILL PRE-K OUR WAY ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION?

Our initiative will do three things:

- *Create opinion leaders and supporters – community residents, parents, other family members, early childhood education advocates and educators, media, business and community leaders – to spread the word about the importance of pre-k and the need to offer the program to more 3- to 4-year-old children in communities throughout New Jersey*
- *Educate the Legislature on the value of pre-k programs in improving educational outcomes and the need to extend the program to more communities in the state*
- *Support a local organizing effort to develop demand for these services that will translate into action by the Legislature and Governor*

IS THIS A PUBLIC TAKEOVER OF PRIVATELY PROVIDED PRESCHOOL?

No. New Jersey law supports a mixed-delivery system of public supports and public/private implementation. Federal programs and laws also incentivize public/private service delivery. Each individual community determines the mix; they decide how they want to bring pre-k their way.

SHOULDN'T WE FIX OUR K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM BEFORE INVESTING IN PRESCHOOL?

We need to improve K-12 education *and* invest in preschool. It's not either/or; it's both. Quality preschool programs give children a strong start by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to do well in school. We'll make greater progress when well-prepared children, children who have received high-quality preschool education, enter improved K-12 schools that are well prepared to help them continue to succeed.

HOW CAN SOMEONE GET INVOLVED – OR STAY INVOLVED – WITH PRE-K OUR WAY?

Right now, you can share your story, sign up to show your support, or download resources to educate others. Visit the website at www.prekourway.org, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to learn more and get immediate updates about Pre-K Our Way.

WHAT CAN EACH PERSON DO NOW?

Pre-K Our Way is using the information and results gathered from more than 90 breakout sessions from three regional forums (conducted in April and May of 2015) to complete a plan for grassroots legislative communication and education throughout New Jersey. The regional forums focused on discussion of a central question, 'What can we do now to ensure that our children are ready for kindergarten?' and focused on how we can act and work together to expand New Jersey's existing high-quality pre-k to more 3- to 4-year-olds. The action plan will be shared in the coming months, and the forum participants from more than 300 different communities and all 21 counties will be among the first to learn about it!

The best way to keep informed about progress and upcoming activities is to like Pre-K Our Way on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. More immediately, supporters are encouraged to write personal opinion letters or op-eds to their local news outlets and use social media outlets (personal Facebook, Twitter, blogs, community forums, online commentary in professional or community publications, etc.) to express personal support for New Jersey's existing high-quality pre-k education and the need to bring it to more 3- to 4-year-old children in our state. This is the best way to start now to help develop public and political will to create demand and support for funding.

MORE

NEW JERSEY'S PRESCHOOL PROGRAM: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL?

Preschool provides tangible benefits for children, their families, our schools and our communities. Those with preschool do better in school; those who don't start behind and have trouble catching up. In fact, New Jersey is a national leader in providing high-quality pre-k programs. Children who attend New Jersey's existing pre-k programs achieve at a higher rate, with a 20%-40% increase in elementary school test scores. Quality preschool enables us to give children a strong start, get them ready for school and move more children forward without fear of leaving some behind.

WHO IS BEING UNDERSERVED BY THE CURRENT SYSTEM?

Although New Jersey recognizes the importance of preschool, currently only fewer than 40 communities benefit from New Jersey's proven preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds. The New Jersey State Legislature adopted a state law expanding high-quality preschool programs to another 90 towns, but that law has never been implemented. This represents a significant loss of potential achievement for thousands of New Jersey preschoolers and a lost opportunity for the state to gain better education, health and economic outcomes.

IS NEW JERSEY'S PUBLIC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FREE?

Yes. The existing state-funded high-quality preschool programs are available to the public in these fewer than 40 communities at no cost. New Jersey has already recognized the value in children by passing a law to expand these programs to towns throughout the state. Pre-K Our Way is determined to see that a law that's already on the books gets funded.

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITIES THAT ALREADY HAVE NEW JERSEY'S EXISTING STATE PROGRAM JOIN THIS EFFORT?

Communities around the state that already have the benefit of New Jersey's high-quality programs are critical to the Pre-K Our Way effort. Pre-K Our Way encourages anyone from these communities to get involved by sharing their impressions and success stories. By sharing these with others around the state, we can help bring more high-quality programs to our communities and our children. Please visit www.prekourway.org to show your support. Or better yet, share your story and inspire others to bring pre-k our way today: <https://prekourway.org/share-your-story>.

MORE 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.



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**Ruth Piatt
State Senate Testimony
State Senate Education Committee
September 21, 2015**

Thank you. As a first generation American, it is an honor and privilege to be here today. My name is Ruth Piatt from Vineland.

Dr. Barnett, Ms. Zalkind, Mr. Maher and Ms. Anderson-Towns have testified to the real and lasting effects preschool has on education and school achievement. I want to spend my time addressing access to affordable, high-quality preschool programs for all families in our state.

New Jersey's preschool program is unique because it is implemented as a mixed-delivery system throughout public school districts *and* effectively utilizes private and community preschools to best suit local needs. In fact, the law calls for just such a delivery system. A delivery system that utilizes existing facilities with experienced faculty to successfully fulfill community needs. This law had the foresight to see the value of private preschools partnering with the public educational community to become a part of a larger mission in reaching and teaching more preschool children, and in strengthening the local tax base that builds up the local economy and educates the local workforce.

I'm a private preschool owner with over 30 years of experience (small business) in Vineland, New Jersey, who works with New Jersey's public preschool program to bring high-quality care and instruction to more 3- and 4-year-olds. My school, Little Lamb Preschool-Keener Kids, Inc. has been partnering with the Vineland public schools for 16 years. We educate 90 students every day at our 6 classroom facility. Each classroom has a teacher with either a BA and/or a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Yes, I'm a private provider of a public program. My preschool is a local small business providing a service to my community. As such, I employ local residents, engage local businesses (i.e., janitor cleaning service, local landscaper, local vendor for our children's hot lunch program, buy from a local hardware store, use a local electrician and plumber for building needs...) to provide services to our school. Those businesses and I all pay taxes. The taxes we pay help our public schools, roads, local fire and police department. We are a revenue-producing entity within our city.

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While I manage my business as a business, I am fortunate to get up every day and know my business is providing high-quality preschool programs to Vineland's youngest citizens. When my students leave our center to begin their K-12 school careers, I know they are prepared for school and ready for success. There are many private, community based and public preschool providers in our state. Despite our diversity, we all have the same goal: to make sure all children have access to high-quality preschool. Vineland's mixed delivery system has a proven track record that private and public preschools can put their personal agendas aside to improve the culture of the community.

Many providers don't need to generate or seek new business. Many have families on waiting lists for services. Unfortunately, for many parents, preschool is unaffordable.

There are more children in need of high-quality preschool than there are preschools to serve them or programs that working families can afford. Many children come from families where parents work two or three jobs to make ends meet. Their parents may not have the time, resources or education to provide the early learning all children need.

Preschool programs like mine provide these families and their children with a free, six hour educational program that ensures that they will not be left behind.

But it is not just about access; it is about access to high-quality programs. Quality is the top concern for preschool providers who care about their children and families. Quality is why I chose to be a private provider of New Jersey's public preschool program. As a business owner, the value of this law matches good business practices: it develops a positive culture, has a strong vision and mission statement of meeting the needs of ALL children, has standards of excellence (degreed staff implementing best practices) and a discussion of ideas between the private and public educational sector, and has a high educational yield along with qualitative research to prove the value of the dollars invested. What is needed NOW is your leadership and influence!

States across the nation are building preschool programs, but few are as thorough and tested as ours.

It's simply the best in the country—and it gives a private provider, like me, confidence that I can deliver the greatest value to the children in my care and the parents who place their trust in me.

We don't lack the proven program. We lack courage.

Courage to embrace the fact that education starts long before kindergarten.

Courage to act upon the overwhelming research that shows how our preschool program leads to better education

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outcomes that strengthen our communities and our economy.

Courage to invest more money in our young children so all have the skills to compete and do well.

We in Vineland are so blessed to have been one of the 31 towns originally chosen to receive the state's public preschool program.

Fortunate children. Fortunate parents. Fortunate schools. Fortunate employees. Fortunate local businesses—and fortunate community.

But the opportunity of a life-changing education shouldn't depend on the luck of where one is born, or where one's parents can afford to live.

We can't afford to wait any longer to expand our preschool program to more 3- and 4-year-olds—to more communities that have been waiting for their chance to prepare their children for success in school and life.

I urge you to have the courage to fully implement the law that expands New Jersey's preschool program to additional communities.

We must finish what we started—making sure each child has the access to high-quality preschool.

Thank you.

54x



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**Lynda Anderson-Towns
State Senate Testimony
State Senate Education Committee
September 21, 2015**

Thank you, it is an honor to be with you today.

My name is Lynda Anderson-Towns. I'm the former -- just recently retired -- Principal and Superintendent of Woodbine Elementary School in Cape May County, New Jersey. I served 9 years at Woodbine, and devoted my entire career of 34 years to education in Morris County at Dover High School and also to Cape May County at Middle Township High School, to Lower Township at the Maude Abrams Elementary School and then to the Woodbine School District at Woodbine Elementary School.

I'd like to give you a first-hand account of what New Jersey's high-quality preschool program does for children, our local schools and our communities—especially those that struggle to make sure each child and family has the opportunity to achieve the American dream.

Today, Woodbine Elementary School is the pride of our community. It wasn't always that way.

Our school has a diverse population with many children from hard-working families. While their parents may not have as much as others, they have just as much desire to see their children do well in school and succeed in life.

Preschool is expensive in New Jersey. Many families, particularly in communities like Woodbine, struggle to pay for it and many can't afford the quality programs children need to be successful when they get to school.

In the past, many of our children arrived at school with a significant disadvantage because their parents couldn't afford high-quality preschool that prepared them for kindergarten and beyond. Woodbine Elementary School struggled too because too many of our children arrived at school with knowledge and developmental gaps that were hard to close no matter how hard educators, students and their parents tried.

Kindergarten needs to be a springboard, not an effort to teach children how to swim.

As an educator I can tell you that quality preschool is essential for building the early cognitive and character skills that enable effective, life-long learning. On the first day of school every kindergarten teacher can tell you which child

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went to preschool. They come in eager to learn from their teachers and their peers. They're attentive. They contribute. They're ready to build literacy and numeracy skills.

Fortunately, New Jersey has one of the best public preschool models in the nation and our school was lucky to get it.

We adapted the state preschool program to serve the needs of our local children and families, while maintaining the high standards this program requires. And that proved to be the turning point for us.

Today, the Woodbine school district educates over 90% of the community's preschool-aged students in programs that share the same building as its K-8 classes.

Educators – and parents – see the progression of learning, and the shared socialization and growth in each child from pre-k to kindergarten and beyond.

The introduction of a high-quality pre-k program has shown real improvement throughout each child's school life, and fundamentally changed Woodbine's school performance.

Woodbine's educators continue to see that children enter kindergarten with dramatic increases in language proficiency, writing skills, number recognition and awareness.

In fact, the number of students reading at third grade level has doubled since the preschool was implemented in 2008.

This strong start provided by high-quality preschool persists through the elementary school grades and helps improve the quality of instruction in Woodbine's schools.

Teachers move students forward instead of taking a great deal of time to get them up to speed.

Woodbine also has time to identify students with special needs and give them the attention they need to be successful—without holding other students back.

This success benefits the child, his or her classmates, and all of their futures.

It also gives parents confidence that public schools remain the best choice for their children—something that builds great value in and for the community. In fact, many Woodbine families who previously homeschooled their children

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as well as parents who sent their children to private schools have now returned for pre-k and kindergarten – and elementary school.

Today, many families recognize that our pre-k program is one of the best in Cape May County.

They move into our district and become a part of the Woodbine community because we provide a great start at the very beginning.

We're closing achievement gaps by investing early and working to prevent them with quality preschool.

I consider our school and community to be lucky to have been able to implement New Jersey's high-quality preschool program. But it saddens me to think that the future of too many children in too many communities depends on luck.

You can view our Woodbine story as a short video at www.prekourway.org/videos. Our success story does not need to be limited to our community. With your leadership, we can replicate our story in other communities across this state.

What we need is the funding to make sure that each child, no matter where they live, receives quality preschool that prepares him or her for school and success in life.

I urge you to expand New Jersey's preschool program to more three- and four-year-olds. We know it works and it's time to put it to work for more children in New Jersey.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY BY MARIE BLISTAN, VICE PRESIDENT
ON FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN
BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

Good morning, members of the Senate Education Committee.

My name is Marie Blistan, proud NJEA vice president and a 30-year special education teacher from Gloucester County.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to all of you on the important topic of full day kindergarten for our public school students.

For many years, we have heard about the importance benefits a high-quality pre-K program provides for our children. However, what you may not know is that kindergarten is an equally important part of early childhood and early learning, serving as an important academic, social and emotional bridge between nursery school and first grade.

While more districts are moving to offer full-day kindergarten in some capacity—441, or 87 percent, of them to be exact—it is not yet universal in New Jersey. And, at last count, only 84 percent of children were enrolled in a full-day program.

And that's why I'm here. We need to work together to get the remaining 13 percent of districts on board. Research shows that investments in quality early childhood programs generate returns of 3-to-1 or even higher, and the benefits of full day kindergarten are well known.

Children who have a developmentally appropriate full-day experience have higher achievement in later grades—especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds—better overall school attendance, and more developed social and emotional skills.

(continued)

Marie Blistan
Full Day Kindergarten
September 21, 2015
Page 2

Moreover, their academic gains, when compared to children in half-day programs, are statistically significant. That's critical to note as the academic demands on our youngest children are increasing.

Additionally, I regret to report that in places where there is only a half-day program, the demand for instruction in literacy and math can take precedence over art, music, recess, and play. Anyone who has a child knows that these latter items are the best part of a child's daily routine, and, from an educational viewpoint, I can tell you that the elimination of these important areas can stifle important developmental needs. Five year-olds are still part of the early childhood spectrum and need free play, which helps develop not only social and emotional skills, but also a child's language, math, and cognitive skills.

I can also tell you that teachers prefer full day kindergarten. It gives us the time to provide appropriate activities for all children to develop literacy and math skills while allowing ample time for free play and recess. The day then becomes less stressful for children, and they learn better.

We are not the only ones to feel this way because parents prefer full-day kindergarten, too. Not only do parents want their children to succeed, but they are secure in the stability full-day kindergarten provides—especially for those parents who work. Parents do not have to spend valuable time worrying about their children's child-care arrangements and become important, vested members of our school communities even sooner.

All told, full-day kindergarten is a winning proposition: it helps students, teachers, and parents, and it makes economic sense.

If we want to help children develop to their fullest potential, we need to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs—and this must include full-day kindergarten.

Thank you.



THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Early Childhood
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102-3091
(973) 733-6234
Fax (973) 424-4372



Statement to the New Jersey State Legislature – Senate Education Committee Senate Education Committee Meeting Monday, September 21, 2015

By: F. Nana Ofosu-Amaah, Executive Director of Newark Public Schools' Office of Early Childhood

Opening

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable Guests, the Pre-K Our Way team.

My name is *F. Nana Ofosu-Amaah*, the Executive Director of the Office of Early Childhood at the Newark Public Schools. I am honored, humbled and excited to be here today at this State Education Committee Meeting, on the invitation from the Committee's Chairwoman, Senator M. Teresa Ruiz, to discuss the importance and benefits of pre-k and other early childhood programs.

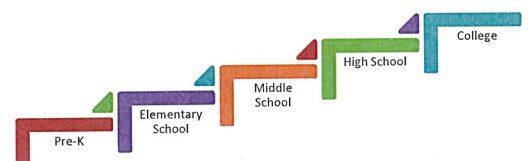
I have been with the Newark Public Schools since February of this year, prior to which I was at the NYC Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood Education (*which, at that time, had over 55,000 children in pre-k4*) engaged in the work with NYC's Mayor DeBlasio's team around his Pre-K For All Initiative to bring full-day pre-k to all 4-years olds in the largest district in the country.

Today, I come to share with you the elements of why pre-k and other early childhood programs are critical, not just for our children, but also for our families and communities through what I have seen over the last few months in Newark.

The Research

We know what the research says:

1. That the highest rate of brain development occurs during the first five years of life.
2. That "By kindergarten, half of the achievement gap evident in high school is present." [*Brooks-Gunn, J., McLanahan, S., & Rouse, R (2005). Introducing the Issue; School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gap: The Future of Children 15(1).*]
3. "For most children, the long term success of their learning and development depends to a great extent on what happens to them during these years of promise. Children fortunate enough to attend a high-quality preschool or child care program and who enter the primary grades with adequate preparation have a better chance of achieving to high levels than those who do not." [*Carnegie Taskforce on Learning in the Primary Grades, 1996*]
4. Research demonstrates the short and long-term benefits of high-quality pre-k – Children who attend high-quality pre-k (with the critical word here being high-quality) [*Summary from various sources of research: The High Scope Perry Preschool Project; The Carolina Abecedarian Report; The Chicago Child-Parent Centers; The Delaware Early Childhood Longitudinal Study*]:
 - o Will have better academic performance through the early grades



LOW



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Office of Early Childhood
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102-3091
(973) 733-6234
Fax (973) 424-4372



- Are more likely to graduate from high school and retain employment
- Will have higher earnings as adults
- Will have fewer criminal justice system interactions

Given what the research has said over the years and now, what have we done and what do we do?

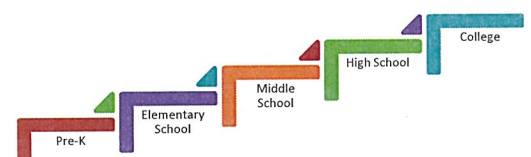
A Comprehensive, High-Quality Pre-K Program for Children - Newark

Today, over 6300 children in Newark are served in pre-k3 and pre-k4 classrooms in in-district schools, charter schools, and community-based organization preschools across the city with funding from NJDOE and Federal Head Start. We provide choices to families in various settings; and Newark Public Schools' itself also has a Federal Head Start grant which brings in additional resources, and a keener focus on supporting our families.

Upon joining the Newark team this year, I was amazed at care taken by many across the state of New Jersey, to design a comprehensive pre-k program for former Abbott Districts, which promotes high-quality. The design of this program brings together strong academics and social emotional development with interventions that support our children's health and wellbeing, and offers lines of support when they encounter challenges. It also brings the right levels of supports and resources to drive and maintain high-quality – we have:

- Our early childhood nurses who ensure that are children are in good health so they can be ready to engage in the learning experiences (*with >12,000 student visits in SY14-15*),
- Our master teachers who focus on supporting teachers and assistant teachers to bring rigor and inclusiveness into the classroom to support the development and academic learning of all our children (*In SY14-15, the percentage of children who are ELLs increased to 34%, about 10% more than in SY13-14*).
- Our Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) that brings in a wealth of knowledge and resources to teachers, assistant teacher and families for our children who may have challenges in the classroom (*>200 PIRT cases in SY2013-2014 with more than 60% having to do with challenging behaviors and other concerns*).
- Our collaboration with the special education team to ensure that our children are receiving the right supports in the least restrictive environment. In the *Spring of 2015 approximately 65% of children with IEPs in inclusive settings*.
- Our family and community engagement team that ensures that we have the right structures in place to engage families in children's learning NOW while ensuring that our families have the services needed to survive and thrive, and
- Our operations and fiscal team that ensures that our resources are targeted to the right things are the right time!

Ok, I have to admit that this is where I call my old colleagues in NYC and brag about the comprehensiveness of our program in Newark and our quality. Yes, because of your continued investments, per ECERS-R data from NIEER's our quality in Newark has been on a steady





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2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102-3091
(973) 733-6234
Fax (973) 424-4372



rise - our overall average score is 5.21 from 4.00 in SY2002-2003. High-quality pre-k matters! The structures and resources that ensure high-quality is what we must invest in to make a difference.

We do not only have positive outcomes for our children in preparing them for kindergarten and beyond, we also impact the lives of their parents, their guardians, which in turn adds more fuel to the fire of positive change for families and has ripple effects in shifting our communities.

Last spring, as I walked through the classrooms of Early Childhood School – Central at Samuel L. Berliner, a Pre-K3 to Pre-K4 Early Childhood School that also has our Head Start program, I saw a familiar face; a mother who often came to the school to volunteer her time. This day, she hurried down the hallway, excited and exuberant. She ran up to her Family Advocate and said “We did it! I have a job! It is day 3 and I love it. I love organizing and getting things done and now I am doing it every day.” You see, thanks to your investment, we are helping families invest in their futures – we are helping parents set positive examples for their children; with a full-day pre-k option in a place where families know their children are safe, we are providing parents with the opportunity to return to work.

In June this year, we graduated our first class of 20 Family Academy parents and guardians. Family Academy is an initiative that our Office leads that brings families together on Saturdays (*parents, guardians*) and their children who are in parallel sessions getting information, when appropriate, on the topics their parents were tackling that Saturday. During Family Academy sessions, we provide families with information and strategies about financial management, anger management, CPR, substance abuse prevention, healthy living, etc. During the graduation ceremony, we had parents share their Family Academy journey – it was the words of the lone male in the cohort, Mr. D., that still rings in my ear – “Today I graduate for the first time; today, I finished something.” He went on to speak about the Hart and Risley study on the 30 Million Word Gap [Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. “*The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3*” (2003, spring). *American Educator*, pp.4-9.. <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>] and how learning about this research changed the way he now speaks to his children, and that he is very careful about the words he chooses so the he can help his children build a more varied vocabulary. In four months on select weekends we changed the lives of parents and children forever, because you invested in pre-k in Newark, you invested in us, to make the difference one child, one family at a time.

The research is clear on the importance of early childhood programs and pre-k; the impact on children and families is clear. The impact high-quality pre-k has and can have on communities is tremendous from an economic perspective as well. We must do something for ALL children and families...we must do something to close the achievement gap from birth. We have preschool standards that are aligned with the K-12 common core learning standards; children who do not have the opportunity to participate in at least pre-k come to us in Kindergarten already two years behind. What would it take to invest?

Thank You.





Borough of Freehold Public Schools

280 Park Avenue
Freehold, New Jersey 07728
(732) 761-2100 - FAX (732) 462-8954

Michael Lichardi
Board President

Rocco G. Tomazic, Ed.D
Superintendent

*Testimony before the New Jersey Senate Education Committee
Monday, September 21, 2015*

Pre-Kindergarten: A district and classroom perspective

Tomazic: Good morning, Senator Ruiz. My name is Rocco Tomazic and I am the Superintendent in Freehold Borough. Accompanying me this morning is Freehold Borough Kindergarten teacher Randee Mandelbaum. We have come before you today as practitioners, seeking to provide some insight from the district and classroom level on the efficacy of Pre-Kindergarten for our overall academic aims.

In 2011, I had the opportunity to be on a dissertation defense committee at Kean University for Danny Robertozzi, currently the Superintendent in Linden, who had studied the effect of PK on DIBELS reading readiness scores in Kindergarten. His dissertation, entitled *The Impact of Prekindergarten Duration on the Early Literacy Skills of Kindergarten Students* was a wide ranging study, but the salient point of his work found a statistically significant difference in October Kindergarten DIBELS scores between those students who had some PK, full day or half, and those who had none. These are results on New Jersey students, in New Jersey programs, performed by a New Jersey educator. It echoes well what we know nationally.

Ms. Mandelbaum and I want to use our time to present some anecdotal information about the differences between former PK students and those without PK as they enter Kindergarten. Ms. Mandelbaum used a readiness benchmark given her students just two weeks ago at the start of school. Her purpose was to see how well the students knew to write their name, distinguish their colors and do basic counting. We have redacted some of the letters in the student names so you can't identify the student, but you can still see how well they are writing their letters. Now let me turn it over to Ms. Mandelbaum so she can walk you through what you are looking at.

Mandelbaum: Good morning Senator Ruiz. Thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Randee Mandelbaum. After teaching Kindergarten for 20 years, I truly understand the importance of children attending Pre-K. Pre-K benefits children both academically and socially. I have witnessed the difference between children who have attended Pre-K and those who have not. I believe the skills they learn in Pre-K provide them a solid foundation for future learning. Even in the first few days of the Kindergarten year, I can identify learning gaps between children with and without Pre-K experience.

I would like to share a packet of assessments I administered to my class the first week of school this year. I have the children complete a self-portrait, writing, and two math assessments. I will



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Michael Lichardi
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administer these assessments each month to monitor growth and progress. I also use the data from these assessments to drive my instruction, and create lesson plans to teach every child at their learning level.

On the first page you will notice the self-portrait with 2 students, student A and student B. There is a vast difference. Student A did not attend Pre-K while student B did. As you look through the packet all of the students on the left did not attend a Pre-K program, while all of the students on the right completed a Pre-K class. Another comparison is on page 4. This shows the biggest gap. You can see that student G does not know any letters, cannot write any letters and does not know how to write her name, while student H writes his name and can write most of the letters of the alphabet comfortably.

As you can imagine, I need to differentiate, scaffold and tier my lessons based on the children's ability. While I must catch up the children without Pre-K experience, I still need to teach and reach all children at their level and challenge the children who have already mastered the Pre-K skills. I would not have this dilemma if all the students had a Pre-K experience.

There are also many other issues that slow down the level of learning in Kindergarten during September and October due to children who did not attend Pre-K. Here are just a few:

- separation from parent
- bathroom routines, buttoning & unbuttoning clothing, bathroom independence
- sharing 1 teacher's attention with 25 other children
- raising your hand and waiting your turn, not calling out
- writing and reading their name
- following 2-3 step directions
- using a scissor and glue properly
- stamina to stay in school for a full day
- problem solving
- gain a sense of self
- cooperate and collaborate with peers

The children with Pre-K knowledge and experience nearly always come into my class with the essential social, emotional, and academic skills, ready to launch a successful year in Kindergarten.



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Freehold, New Jersey 07728
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Tomazic: Senator, we don't want to take more than our allotted time, but we hope this brief exposure will give you a sense about how former PK and non PK students look as they enter Kindergarten.

Lastly, from the superintendent level, I think I can speak for all my members in the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and express our desire for policy consistency in this area. We are very mindful to plan our resources in personnel and facilities. It is difficult to reap the benefit of PK if we cannot have a reasonable reliance on a steady revenue stream for this purpose. As part of the recent Preschool Expansion grant, Freehold Borough has been delighted to offer 61 full day PK seats where last year we had none. Beside Kindergarten readiness, we know our English language acquisition challenge will be improved as well. Full day PK is an educational model that we want to continue consistently over the years.

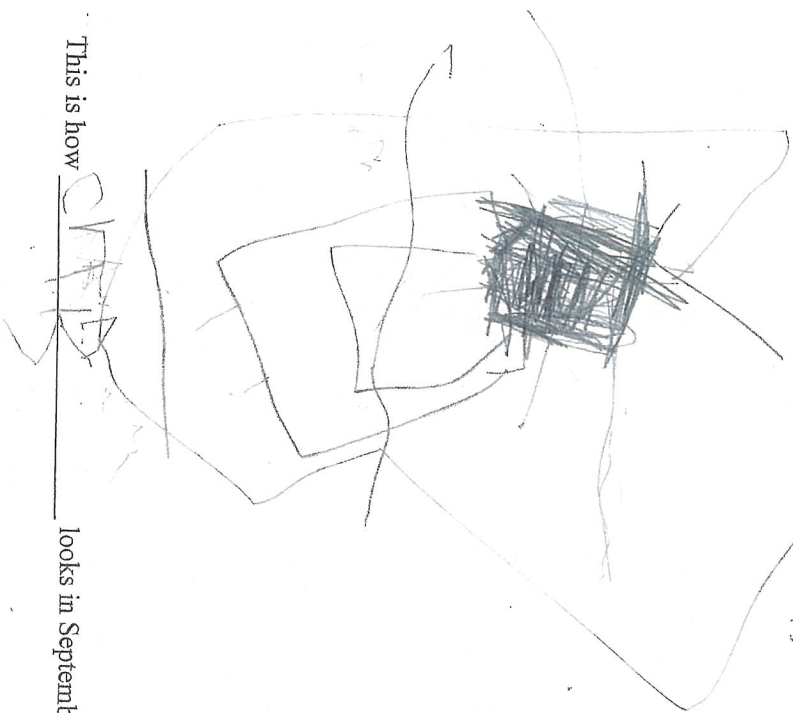
Thank you for listening. Both Randee and I are open to any questions you may have.

-xxx-

Rocco Tomazic, Ed.D., Superintendent, Freehold Borough
rtomazic@freeholdboro.k12.nj.us

Randee Mandelbaum, Kindergarten Teacher, Freehold Learning Center
randeem@freeholdboro.k12.nj.us

A



This is how

she looks

looks in September.

B



This is how

Rob

looks in September.

C



This is how _____ looks in September.

D



This is how _____ looks in September.

E



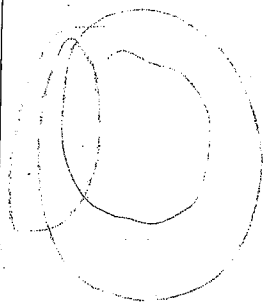
This is how _____ looks in September.

F



This is how _____ looks in September.

G



Handwritten practice of the letter 'G' on a set of three horizontal lines.

Blank handwriting lines for practice.

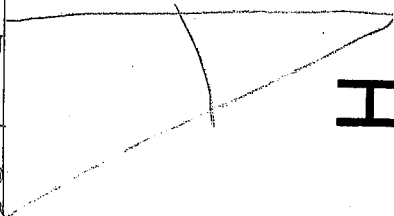
Blank handwriting lines for practice.

Blank handwriting lines for practice.

Blank handwriting lines for practice.

This is how OSEA O'SAY writes in September.

H



Handwritten practice of the letter 'H' on a set of three horizontal lines.

Handwritten practice of the letter 'H' on a set of three horizontal lines.

Handwritten practice of the letter 'H' on a set of three horizontal lines.

Handwritten practice of the letter 'H' on a set of three horizontal lines.

Blank handwriting lines for practice.

This is how JOSE writes in September.

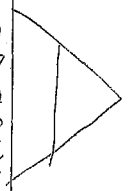
I

J

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Handwriting practice lines for uppercase letters I and J.

This is how _____ writes in September.

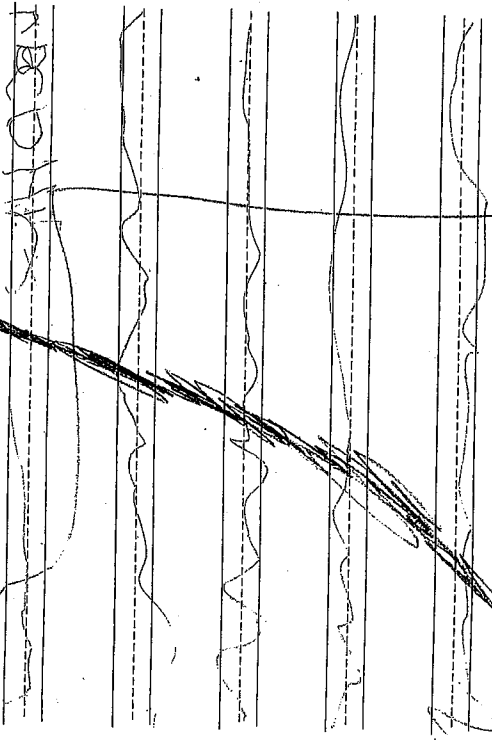
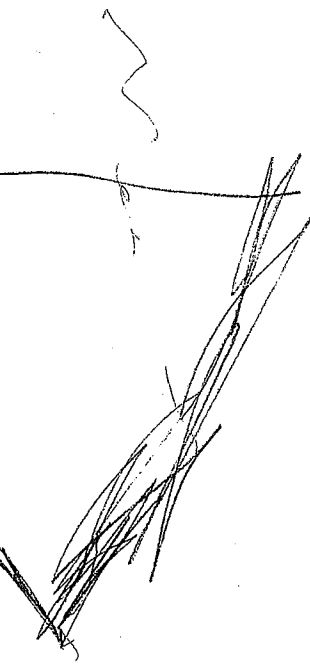


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Handwriting practice lines for lowercase letters i and j.

This is how DAV writes in September.

K

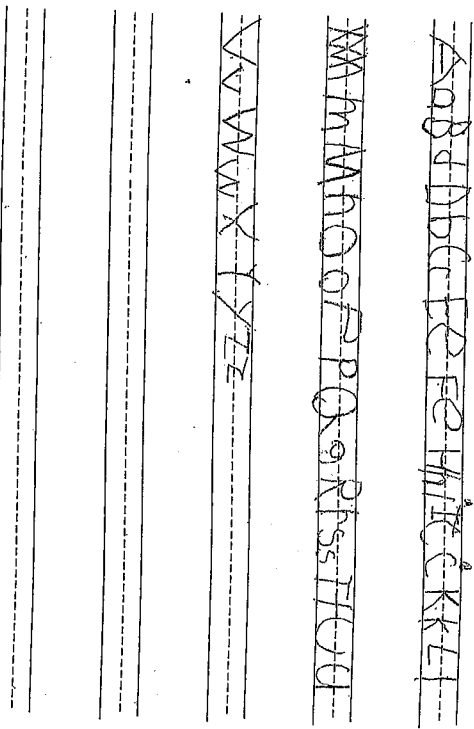
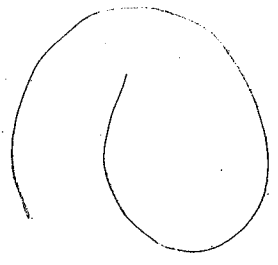


This is how

Apple

writes in September.

L



This is how

Apple

writes in September.

Date: September



I can write my name:

Woj W

I can count to: 1

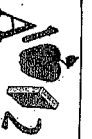
I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

10 20

Date: September



I can write my name:

Hindsop

I can count to: 25

I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

18 19 20

Date: September



I can write my name:

Blank handwriting lines for name

I can count to: 5 11 0

I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

Blank handwriting lines for numbers 0-20

Date: September



I can write my name:

Handwritten name: Gabriel

I can count to: 20

I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

Handwritten numbers 0-20



Date: September

I can write my name:

U POOR

I can count to: 5

I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20



Date: September

I can write my name:

JOE

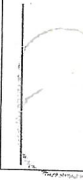
I can count to: 20

I can write my numbers 0 through 20:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Name C. Page

Test Date: 9/15



3 4 5 7 9



Name D. Page

Test Date: 9/15



4

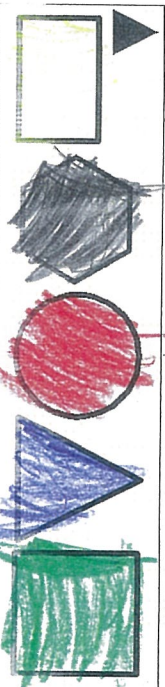


12



10

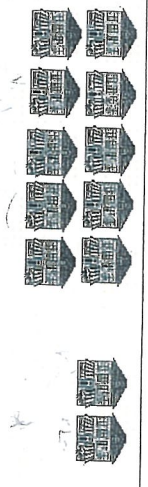
3 4 5 6 7 8 9



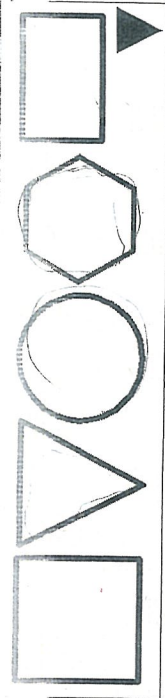
Name Madison

Test Date: 9/15

U



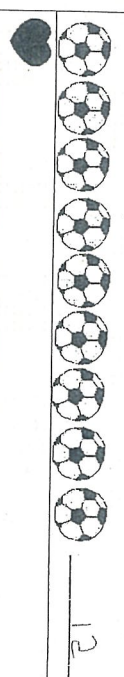
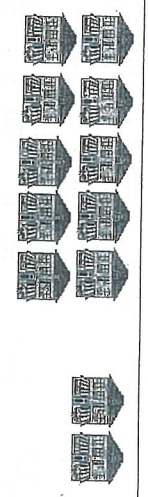
3 4 5 6 7 8 9



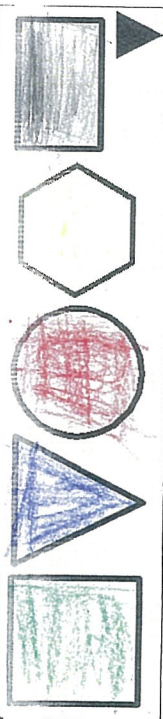
Name EVK

Test Date: 9/15

V



3 4 5 6 7 8 9





New Jersey School Boards Association

413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Senate Education Committee

Testimony

Monday, September 21, 2015

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of 581 local boards of education and 81 charter school associate members, provides training, advocacy and support to advance public education and promote the achievement of all students through effective governance.

NJSBA believes that full-day kindergarten programs benefit students. Technical assistance from the Department of Education and financial incentives including state funds for program planning, staff development, and renovation or construction of suitable kindergarten classrooms should be made available to districts seeking to convert from a half-day to full-day program.

Full-day kindergarten should not be mandated unless state funds are provided to meet the need for necessary additional facilities and staff. Programs should be supported under the T&E budget and the state funding formula and should apply the same per-pupil cost weight for full-day kindergarten programs that is used for the elementary grades 1-5.



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413 West State Street • Trenton, NJ 08618 • Telephone: 609.695.7600 • Toll-Free: 888.88NJSBA • Fax: 609.695.0413

Senate Education Committee

Testimony

Monday, September 21, 2015

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of 581 local boards of education and 81 charter school associate members, provides training, advocacy and support to advance public education and promote the achievement of all students through effective governance.

NJSBA believes that early childhood development and education should be a priority issue in New Jersey. All education, health, and social welfare agencies should work together to provide appropriate programs for young children and their parents.

The development of a comprehensive system of early childhood programs and services is a wise investment of public and private funds that will likely produce long-term educational and social advantages for pre-school age children.

Ideally, every child during the early childhood period (i.e. ages 3-4) should be provided with a continuum of developmental experiences that will enable him/her to grow and learn to his/her potential. The development of age-appropriate preschool programs for three- and four year olds that include full-day options for children of working parents should be encouraged. When possible, programs should provide an environment that allows for the inclusion of children with physical and mental disabilities.

The Department of Education (DOE) should be sufficiently staffed to provide local boards of education with on-going technical assistance, staff training, and research information. Assistance should include pre-service and in-service training for teachers and administrators; program design, implementation, and evaluation techniques; and identification of developmentally appropriate practices. Successful program models should also include coordination of early childhood efforts with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The Commissioner and the State Board of Education should have the benefit of a state-level advisory committee to advise them on early childhood policies, programs, and legislation. Representation on the advisory committee should include NJSBA, other statewide child advocacy organizations, Head Start agencies, local school districts, community-based programs, and parents.

Boards of education should explore all options for providing facilities suitable for early childhood programs. Options should include, but not be limited to, unused elementary and high school classrooms, under-utilized public community-based facilities, and shared facilities with other school districts.

School districts should be permitted to provide programs using a blend of funding streams, including federal, state and local monies. Federal and state funding should be available to support early childhood education programs and to enable school districts to build or renovate facilities for early childhood education and child care programs. Private sources of funding should be sought from foundations and the corporate sector.

Heightened public awareness will be critical to the advancement of pre-school education programs. Current demographic information related to young children and their families, the impact of unresolved social problems on the education system; the educational and social benefits of good quality, comprehensive early childhood development programs; and the need for creativity in early childhood education planning. Where necessary legislative/regulatory changes should be implemented to facilitate the use of facilities/funds detailed above.

September 22, 2015 Testimony before the N.J. Legislature Senate
Education Committee
Kiran Gaudioso, Senior Vice President of Community Impact and
Community Relations
United Way of Northern New Jersey

Good morning. Thank you Madam Chairwoman and committee members
for this opportunity.

I'm pleased to be here today representing United Way of Northern New
Jersey. Our United Way represents five northern counties which account
for 1,700 square miles with 1.2 million residents.

While the perception is often that our region and New Jersey as a whole
is wealthy -- the reality is we are a state facing a growing crisis with more
and more families living paycheck to paycheck unable to afford basic
necessities.

That's why our United Way is laser focused on making sure all residents
have access to quality early childhood education for their children -- most
especially a population we call ALICE. ALICE stands for Asset Limited,
Income Constrained, Employed and these are our residents who go to
work every day, often to more than one job, but struggle to afford basic
necessities -- let alone a \$1,000+ child care or preschool bill every month.

For us at United Way there is no greater call to action in our state today
than to provide access to quality early childhood education.

Our United Way ALICE Report shows that there are 1.2 million
households in New Jersey -- that's 40 percent of all households in the
state -- that cannot afford the basics of food, housing, transportation and,
yes, child care or preschool. Throughout much of the state, child care and

preschool is often the No. 1 most expensive item in a household's budget – more than housing and on PAR with the cost of a two year college education.

You've heard a lot already about the overwhelming evidence of study after study that quality preschool is a strong predictor of success in kindergarten. But it's so much more powerful than that.

It has far-reaching benefits in shaping our workforce. The evidence says the best predictor for success in college and life is a student's career in high school. But, what's the best indicator for graduating high school? Reading on grade level by the 3rd grade. And the best predictor for being proficient in 3rd grade? The number of words a child has in his or her vocabulary at the age of 2 and 3.

It's not just the pediatricians and the teachers and the advocates like United Way who point to early childhood education as a linchpin for future success. Corporate executives from all those Fortune 500 companies in our state tell us they, too, believe in this in order to produce a highly educated future workforce. And if we want to talk about money -- we know it always comes down to that -- there are top economists -- including a Nobel laureate in economics who points out that \$1 invested in early childhood education has a 7 to 10 percent return on investment over a lifetime.

Meanwhile, you know what the average portfolio in the stock market yields? These same economists tell us it's 6 percent.

I think we can all do that math.

This is why our United Way is so heavily invested in this issue and has been for more than a dozen years now-- to the tune of \$1 million a year currently.

First, we are invested in working with the state to establish and operationalize a quality rating system for child care centers through Grow NJ Kids.

Second, we invest in teacher education and training to reduce turnover rates because teachers matter more to student learning than any other factor in a school. Many of our child care educators are ALICE and are entrusted with the care of our children at this time of greatest vulnerability and of greatest potential. If I may, I'd like to submit one of our recent success stories. Malagros Castro-- executive director of El Primo Paso, a NAEYC- accredited center in Dover who attributes one of our scholarships with putting her on the path to rise from an assistant teacher to Executive Director.

Finally, we also fund half-a-million dollars worth of scholarships so ALICE families can access quality care and education that otherwise would be out of reach.

So that's how United Way has been investing its resources. We'd like to see the state consider expanding its investment as well. Today, centers serving families who are ALICE or in poverty receive just \$26 a day from the state to educate preschoolers.

That's what some of us may spend just on lunch today. And we're expecting centers to provide a safe, and engaging atmosphere to educate our children and prepare our future workforce on \$26 a day?

Quality child care and preschool gives parents the peace of mind to go to work and be their most productive. And it ensures that we continue to produce the highly educated workforce business looks for and expects from New Jersey.

Thank you.

Kiran Handa Gaudio



EDUCATION IMPACT STORY

EMPOWERING ALICE TO SUCCEED

“Without the United Way scholarship, I would not be here today...It definitely changed my life.”

– Milagros Castro, executive director, El Primer Paso

It’s a mantra often repeated to young children: Hard work pays off.



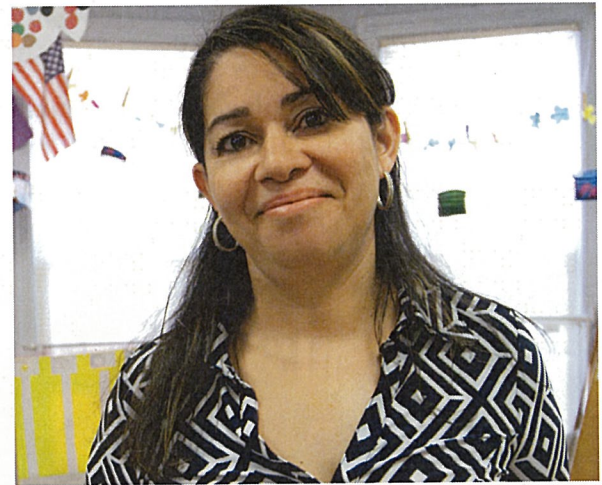
El Primer Paso Executive Director Milagros Castro is daily proof for the children she oversees at the nationally-accredited Morris County preschool. In the span of just six years, Milagros rose from being an assistant teacher to taking over as the school’s leader.

It took dedication and commitment from Milagros, but she traces back her success to a key element of support from United Way of Northern New Jersey.

“Without the United Way scholarship, I would not be here today,” Milagros says. “It definitely changed my life.”

Milagros is one of the 60 child care educators in the region who has been the beneficiary of a United Way scholarship to pursue a nationally-recognized early childhood training credential called the Child Development Associate or CDA. Through this credential program early childhood educators are trained in developmentally-appropriate practices in the classroom to nurture young children and prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

The scholarship program is a strategic component of United Way’s work to provide **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and families in poverty access to quality early childhood education.



Quality teachers are the most important factor for a child’s success in school. Children who have attended quality early childhood programs are more likely to graduate high school and have higher earnings as adults.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

**United Way
of Northern New Jersey**

UnitedWayNNJ.org/Education

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Quality Teachers Matter

Teachers matter more to student learning than anything else in a school. The CDA training sets the foundation for improving classroom quality and provides a stepping stone for an educator's career advancement, helping to combat high turnover rates. The average annual turnover rate is more than 30 percent for preschool teaching staff, which is detrimental to children's development, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"The CDA was a huge part of where I am today," Milagros says. "It gave me the tools to help children develop their skills. And it allowed me to get a raise – giving me the chance to stay in the community I wanted to work in. It wasn't about making money, it was about making ends meet."

A small school, El Primer Paso could not have afforded the costly training on its own, says Susan O'Donnell, the school's former executive director and a mentor to Milagros.

"We took a wonderful teacher who had great potential, and we were able to turn her – with United Way's support – into a very qualified staff person," Susan says.

Earning the CDA was just the beginning for Milagros, who then went on to apply those credits to help complete her bachelor's degree. United Way also helped her with a scholarship that she used to purchase expensive textbooks. Now, Milagros is pursuing a master's degree.

Long-term Societal Benefits

Once enrolled in the CDA program, Milagros says she came to better understand and be proud of the lasting, positive impact she could have on the lives of the children under her care.

Quality experiences during a child's formative years are shown to have positive ripple effects not only in the lives of individual children, but across communities. Children who have attended quality early childhood programs are more likely to graduate high school and have higher earnings as adults – reducing the costs that can weigh on a community to address crime and delinquency.



Milagros sees this firsthand, watching how children grow during the two years they spend at El Primer Paso. Many of the children come in as 3 year olds with limited English-language skills, but by the time they leave for kindergarten, they are able to stand at a microphone and speak in front of adults.

"I hope to maintain the high quality we have here and serve more children," Milagros says. "I never thought I would be sitting here as executive director. I want to continue all the work we do here for many years."

94%

of United Way's 60 CDA graduates have met a retention goal of staying on the job six months following certification.

Support United Way and help provide scholarships for early childhood educators to pursue higher training and improve children's lives through the nationally-recognized Child Development Associate program. To learn more, visit UnitedWayNNJ.org/SuccessBy6



We help children and youth
THRIVE



We help families become
FINANCIALLY STABLE

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We **IMPROVE LIVES**
of family caregivers



Good Morning Senators and thank you for the opportunity to speak about the necessary components of high-quality care and education for our youngest most vulnerable citizens, our children between the ages of 0-5.

My name is Kathleen Feigley, I am Executive Director of Kangaroo Kids Child Care and Learning Center located in Branchburg, NJ. I opened Kangaroo Kids in 1991, after many years as a New Jersey public school teacher. In 2009, Kangaroo Kids was named the National Child Care Center of the Year by Association of Early Learning Leaders (previously the National Association of Child Care Professionals). It also is important to note that Kangaroo Kids is a community based center accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This accreditation is equivalent to the "Blue Ribbon," standard of education in the public schools. Finally, I serve as President of the New Jersey Child Care Association, a trade group that represents the interests of NJ Department of Children and Families' licensed community based child care and early education centers.

During my 25 years of experience in the care and education of our 0-5 aged children I have found the benefits of high quality programs are:

- Children are well prepared to face the future academically, socially and emotionally.
- Families are supported and involved as partners in their child's education.

New Jersey has an extensive network of community based preschool. It is a pay as you go system that has operated effectively for MANY children for MANY years.

As we all know, quality child care has evolved over many decades to meet the needs of children and families. No longer does quality child care exist without preschool education.

In my mind, there are four factors that are imperative to the quality of care and education of this young population:

1. Teachers in high quality early childhood programs must provide a secure foundation and lay the groundwork for a lifetime love of learning. For preschool teaching to be impactful, they must have the following traits and/or characteristics:

- Knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices.

- Endless patience
- The ability to redirect children in a positive manner because they truly understand the Latin root of the word discipline, which is to "teach," not reprimand.
- Consistency meaning that teachers and caregivers should be one and the same, whether it is changing a diaper or engaging in a curriculum focused discussion. Consistency and familiarity create security for a child of this age. Having multiple people with multiple tasks creates confusion.
- Kind in heart and soft in voice
- Warm and engaging personalities where their interactions stimulate learning.
- A commitment to continual ongoing continuing education in specific early education training.

Early childhood educators should love their job and find joy in the smiles of young children. My experience is that a college degree does not always guarantee the teacher has all the ingredient necessary to provide a safe, secure and nurturing educational environment for these young children. Education is a key component but it is no more important than the ability to care, nurture and promote emotional and physical security and confidence in our youngest citizens.

2. The program must be family focused, providing integration of the child's family into the daily activities. We build lasting family bonds. Many of our preschool students are now college age and they and their families still come back to volunteer and participate in our community events. The key aspects of a quality program for families are:

- A welcoming atmosphere for all family members
- Daily communications with many options for parent participation
- Open Door Policy – Accessibility integrated with security requirements
- Time for sibling interactions
- Resources for young families
- Ability for a family to choose a center near their home or work.

Children do not come with an instruction manual! Community based schools provide daily support for all family members, whether it be helping a mom understand why her child cries after feeding, or a Grandma who needs to be reassured her grandchildren are in a safe, loving atmosphere.

3. The environment must be physically and environmentally safe. In addition, ratios and group sizes should be small for the best learning opportunities for children.

- New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) licensed centers are among the safest in the country. Unlike New Jersey public schools which are exempt from DCF

licensing, DCF community based centers are required to adhere to the strictest environmental and air quality standards because a healthy environment is a safe environment.

DCF playgrounds meet federal playground safety standards. There is no parking lot play as you see at many schools where safety cones are strategically placed as our young children play inches from cars and roads. Physical safety promotes security and peace of mind for families.

The learning environment should be age developmentally appropriate with high quality materials and opportunities for hands on learning. Childs artwork should be displayed and reflect their individuality.

4. The curriculum provides a road map for learning. It should be individualized and developmentally appropriate. In addition to the following:

Child Directed where children learn decision making and responsibility by having choice.

Intentional teaching with lesson plans and daily schedule that provide a foundation for learning. Goals should be a part of the planning. The curriculum should also provide flexibility necessary to look for teachable moments based on a child's interests, whether it is a butterfly fluttering by or a leaf falling.

Finally, if the goal is improving quality, the State must first address the fact that our family day care homes are not licensed or registered. If you look at most state quality rating systems, New Jersey ranks at the top with one exception: we are one of the few states that allows for unregistered, unlicensed homes where the caregiver have little to no experience or training. These unregistered and unlicensed homes are where most problems occur. As such, our elected officials must address this hidden and not talked about factor first.

In summary, quality care and education starts with a safe environment, a high quality consistent staff, a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and an enriched learning environment that builds a trusting, supportive partnership with families.

I welcome you to visit Kangaroo Kids at any time to see a high quality program in action.

Thank you for your time and interest in providing high quality care and education for young children.

Contact: Kathy Feigley, www.kangarookidschildcare.com/908-231-7800

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Garden State Coalition of Schools

160 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608 (609) 394-2828

- gscs2000@gmail.com
- www.gscschools.org

Comments before the Senate Education Committee, 9-21-15

Early Childhood Education in New Jersey

Good morning, I am Lynne Strickland the Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools/GSCS. Thanks you Chairman Ruiz for the invitation to comment on this important subject today, as well as members of the Committee for you kind attention. I will make a few overview comments and then turn to Elizabeth Ginsburg, Vice President of the GSCS to talk about some specifics of the long term and evolving successful early childhood education program at the Glen Ridge school district.

GSCS believes that early childhood education, from the earliest possible level as needed, is of great value to the well-being and lifelong opportunity for success of the whole child. Education, health and nutritional issues, among others, clearly set the table for serious and focused discussion.

Where there is particular need and lack of affordability early, education programs should be in line to look forward to additional supports. Because needs and support options do differ throughout the state, mandating programs is not a viable option.

Funding is a real problem, and requires in-depth and realistic investigation as to what sources may or may not be available, starting with federal, state and local dollars, as well as private and foundation support. Other issues in the funding arena should be taken into account as well, such as:

- Complexity of student needs in overall education foundation programs, such as special education
- Blended funding streams from other agencies, such as health, children and families, human services require review and recommendation.

My name is Elisabeth Ginsburg, president of the Board of Education in Glen Ridge, a pre-K-12 district in Essex County. I am here today, along with Lynne Strickland Executive Director of the Garden State Coalition of Schools, to speak about my district's positive experience with quality early childhood education.

In Glen Ridge we have offered half-day Pre-K since 1984 and full- day kindergarten since 1985. Nearly five years ago, we began offering the option of full-day pre-K. It has proved to be very popular, with the majority of Pre-K parents choosing the full-day option. For the convenience of parents, we also offer fee-based Before-Care, beginning at 7 am, and After Care until 6pm.

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Glen Ridge Pre-K is located in our school buildings and taught by certified teachers, who are in turn supervised by our elementary school administrators. At its inception, the Pre-K program was free to Glen Ridge families. About six years ago, when the law changed, we began charging for Pre-K. We were very reluctant, but our choice was plain—either charge for the program or eliminate it. We have surveyed the private nursery schools in our area and try to keep our tuition at or below the average.

We maintain Pre-K and full day kindergarten because the community has realized the following benefits:

- The ability to provide inclusion experiences for Pre-K handicapped children (age 3 and up), rather than having to send them out of district. This is the right thing to do for students, but is also a significant money-saver for the District.
- Students remain geographically and psychologically close to siblings and friends, which is desirable for the students, their families and the community.
- Early identification of developmental and educational challenges allows our professionals to create appropriate learning strategies for the affected children, greatly increasing their chances for academic and personal success later on.
- Accommodating working parents by providing students with high quality education.

Despite our success, our early childhood programs are in jeopardy. Classes, especially at the kindergarten level, are large, and we have no additional space. Freeing up space by reverting to half-day kindergarten would be a step backwards for us and our community. We are working on options for additional space and even dream of expanding early childhood education in Glen Ridge to include three year-olds. However, in a community that receives only three percent state aid, finding the money for the necessary staff and facilities is a major challenge.

As in all things related to education, there are no easy answers to the early childhood dilemma. A one-size-fits-all solution will not work statewide. It is much more likely that legislation or programs that reward creativity, partnerships and innovative educational solutions will best meet New Jersey's overwhelming need for high quality early childhood education. We are ready to help in any way.

GLEN RIDGE FACTS AND FIGURES

Enrollment*

Pre-K: 70 students in two schools

Kindergarten: 136 students in two schools

Tuition

PK Half Day - \$5,525

PK Full Day - \$7,960

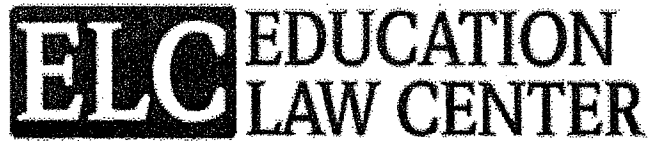
Pre-K: Closed to non-residents due to full enrollment**

K – Resident – free

K – Non-resident - \$11,531

*Our average school graduating class is between 135 and 160

**If space were available, we would be happy to enroll non-resident students



STATEMENT ON BENEFITS OF EXPANDING PRESCHOOL

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DAVID G. SCIARRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION LAW CENTER

September 21, 2015

Chairwoman Ruiz and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the importance of high quality early education and the urgent need to expand preschool programs statewide.

New Jersey is a leader in early education. In 1998, the NJ Supreme Court, in the landmark *Abbott v. Burke V* decision, issued the first judicial directive in the nation requiring the provision of full-day kindergarten and "well planned, high quality" preschool for all three- and four-year-olds in our most impoverished communities.

This -- and the subsequent *Abbott VI and Abbott VIII* rulings -- propelled implementation over the last 15 years of what is now widely recognized as the strongest early education program in the nation, commonly referred to as "Abbott preschool."

The hallmarks of Abbott preschool are New Jersey's rigorous standards for high quality programs, including an age-appropriate curriculum linked to the State's K-12 curriculum standards, small class sizes, full-day kindergarten and preschool programs, and certified teachers. Our mixed delivery approach is a model for other states, linking together in-district preschool classrooms, private providers and Head Start programs to serve over 43,000 three- and four-year-olds in our high poverty, urban school districts.

Even the federal government recognized the new ground broken by Abbott preschool. In 2013, when President Obama announced the federal initiative to expand preschool around the country, the Abbott program served as the template for the requirements for the national grant competition proposal.

Abbott preschool's success was also recognized by the State Legislature in 2008, when lawmakers included in the school funding formula -- the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) -- a requirement to phase-in expansion of the program to all at-risk, three- and four-year-old children across the state in five years, or by 2014.

Most importantly, the success of the Abbott program is based on solid, longitudinal research. Data from the APPLES studies show that children in the urban districts enrolled for two years in Abbott preschool do better in school, and that those benefits hold through fifth grade. These children have higher test scores, less grade retention and, most importantly, reduced need for costly special education services. This

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research demonstrates that preschool is an essential resource in the effort to close gaps in achievement among low-income, at-risk student populations.

We should take pride in Abbott preschool. But there is much more work to do.

First, we still have far too many children who are not in full-day kindergarten. ELC estimates that approximately 25% are in half-day programs. The SFRA formula does provide operational funding for a full-day program, but facilities remain a major obstacle, and the school construction fund has been depleted. When the Legislature considers increasing school construction bonds over the coming months, we must make construction projects aimed at increasing kindergarten from half- to full-day a top priority for the next round of school construction grants.

Second, despite the legal mandate in the SFRA, no funds have been appropriated to expand Abbott preschool beyond the 31 urban districts covered by the *Abbott* rulings. The five-year phase-in period under SFRA has come and gone, with not one new classroom funded. ELC estimates that 48,000 three- and four-year-olds should now have the benefits of high quality early education, but they do not. In our pending court case involving rural districts, the NJ Department of Education (DOE) represented in 2009 that it would fund preschool for the 2,000 eligible children to ensure a thorough and efficient education in those districts. These at-risk children are among the thousands across the state still waiting for SFRA's preschool mandate to be fulfilled.

And we're losing even more ground. Due to rising student poverty rates, the number of eligible preschoolers in universal districts, where every three- and four-year-old child is entitled to preschool under the SFRA, has increased by over 50% since 2009-10 to about 30,000 in 2014-15. Presently, 109 districts qualify for universal programs, as compared with 86 districts in 2009-10.

Finally, we also need to redouble our efforts in the 31 urban districts currently implementing preschool under the *Abbott* court order. Some of these districts are not meeting the target of enrolling 90% of all eligible children. An ELC analysis shows that enrollments in 21 districts, including Newark, are below 90% and have remained stagnant for some time. The barriers are several: flat funding of the SFRA since 2011, a lack of classroom capacity, strained budgets for community provider programs, a halt to new school construction projects due to a lack of funding, and reductions in mandated outreach and recruitment efforts. It is also critical that the APPLES longitudinal research following children who attended Abbott preschool be funded and continued by the DOE.

The hearing today is an opportunity to refocus New Jerseyans on this urgent issue. But I also urge that we get to work on three priorities:

- 1) Develop and implement a plan to provide full-day kindergarten to all children in five years, or by 2020-21, which includes raising the bond cap for school construction, prioritizing new classrooms necessary to reach that goal;
- 2) Restart the five-year phase-in of Abbott preschool expansion under the SFRA in 2016-17 by appropriating at least \$50 million in the FY17 State Budget to begin the effort next school year; and

3) Request a detailed analysis from the DOE on the barriers to achieving the 90% enrollment target in the SFRA for urban districts and a plan for addressing those barriers, along with continuation of the critically needed APPLES research project.

By taking these steps, New Jersey can become the first state where every child in a poor community, and every at-risk child across the state, has access to the high quality early education they must have to succeed in school and in life.

In 2000, our Supreme Court was at a crossroads similar to what we face today. High quality preschool had been ordered for urban children in 1998, but implementation and funding had not been forthcoming. In directing the State officials to get moving, Chief Justice Deborah Poritz's stirring words embody the call to action we need again today. The Chief Justice said "another generation of children will pay the price for each year of delay" because "quality early education does make a difference, that poor urban youngsters do better academically when they have participated in enriched preschool programs from an early age."

The Chief Justice also said that "our constitution requires a thorough and efficient education for all children because we believe that educated citizens are better able to participate fully in economic and communal life of the society in which we all live."

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today.



11 Commerce Drive, Suite 310 info@jerseycan.org
Cranford, New Jersey, 07016 www.jerseycan.org

Good morning. Madame Chairwoman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Janellen Duffy, and I serve as the executive director for a non-profit advocacy organization called JerseyCAN: The New Jersey Campaign for Achievement Now. As our name suggests, at JerseyCAN we are focused on closing the achievement gap for *all* students across the state as well as raising the bar to ensure that they are truly prepared for college and their careers.

Governor Kean serves as the board co-chair for JerseyCAN, and notably he also serves on the leadership group for Pre-K Our Way. We also have several current and retired New Jersey business leaders on our board who are highly supportive of expanding high quality early education opportunities.

When we launched JerseyCAN almost three years ago, we did a study to look across the state and identify the most critically needed policy changes to ensure that all students have access to a high quality education and graduate from high school ready to succeed in higher education and the workforce. For this study, we interviewed over 70 education stakeholders across the state, including superintendents, local elected officials, teachers, parents, school leaders and others. From this study, we learned that expanding access to high quality preschool particularly for low-income students rises to the top five priorities for education experts across the state¹.

I know that several members of this committee also consider preschool expansion for low-income students a high priority. I recall working with some of you on the School Funding Reform Act when I was in the Corzine Administration and the preschool initiative - included as a part of the SFRA- was clearly a priority for many of you.

You've heard the research today from the experts and business leaders regarding the benefits of preschool and from school district leaders about the immediate impact preschool has had on students in their districts. Our recommendation like theirs is to fund the existing preschool initiative embedded in the School Funding Reform Act. As you have heard today, this would entail expanding the high quality Abbott preschool program to three and four-year-olds in about 90 districts and all low-income children in the remaining districts across the state.

New Jersey is already a leader in preschool when we look at efforts across the country. We rank second nationally in spending, investing \$12,157 per-child according to NIEER. In addition, compared to other states, New Jersey has done particularly well in providing access to three-year-olds, serving about 20 percent

¹ "New Jersey Schools: A Framework for Excellence 2014," JerseyCAN, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://jerseycan.org/sites/jerseycan.org/files/JerseyCAN-FrameworkLong-WEB.pdf>.

of kids at age three, which places us fourth nationally.² We urge the committee and other policymakers to build on this leadership and move forward with funding an expansion of high quality preschool so all low-income students can gain access to these programs which will have both short and longer-term effects on their academic performance and truly their overall well being.

Thank you for your time today and for allowing us to share our recommendations.

² W. Steven Barnett, Megan Carolan, Jim Squires, Kristy Clarke Brown, & Michelle Horowitz. (2015). "The State of Preschool 2014: State Preschool Yearbook," National Institute for Early Education Research, accessed September 18, 2015, http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Yearbook2014_full2_0.pdf

Testimony
on the
Benefits of Investing In Early Childhood Education
before the
Senate Education Committee
September 21, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to share the thoughts of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association on the benefits of investing in early childhood education.

Our members are the principals, assistant principals and supervisory employees at the school building level who are responsible for: developing the educational vision of a school; ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff; implementing curriculum and assessment; and, leading teachers and school staff.

We are a supporter of early education for New Jersey's students. Here's why.

You've had the opportunity to hear much of the research on the benefits of preschool and full-day kindergarten. Children who attend New Jersey's existing pre-k programs achieve at a higher rate, with a 20%-40% increase in elementary school test scores. A meta-analysis of 84 Preschool programs nationwide showed children gained about a third of year in additional growth in language, reading and math skills. See Duncan, Greg J. and Katherine Magnuson, "Investing in Preschool Programs." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2013), 27(2): 109-132 available at <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/jep.27.2.109>. At least two studies in Tulsa and Boston showed even larger gains of between one half to one year of growth above non-participating peers. *Id.*

What we'd like to focus on is the long term gains from investments in early-childhood education. **While research shows that there may be some test score 'convergence' with students who did not participate in pre-K programs in later grades, positive outcomes continue – either through reduced grade repetition, reduced special education referral, increased high school graduation rates, earning potential, as well as reduced crime and teen pregnancy rates.**

Our focus will zero in on both the economic gains long term as well as the shorter term gains associated with reduced special education / retention costs. We'll then share what it takes to ensure these gains through the insights of a New Jersey principal, Ms. Fidelia Sturdivant, Principal of the Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy in East Orange, a school leader whose work in early childhood is paying off.

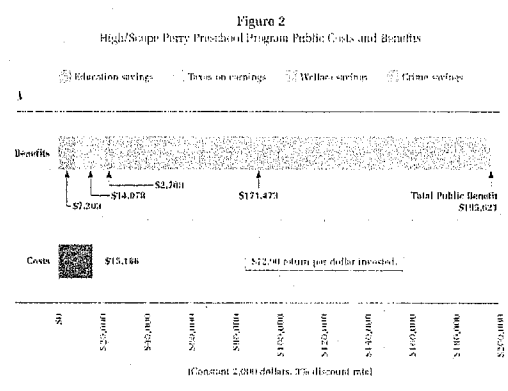
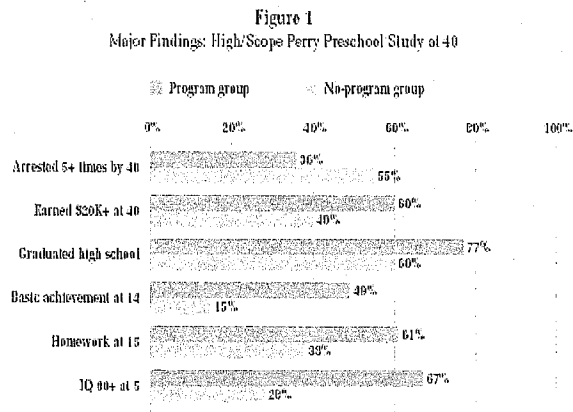
The Economic Benefits of Investment

The HighScope Perry Preschool Program is probably the best known longitudinal study on the benefits of investment in early childhood education. That study examined the lives of 123 children born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The preschoolers, enrolled between 1962–1967, ranged in ages between 3 and 4 years. Schweinhart, Lawrence J., Jeanne Montie, Zongping Xiang, William S. Barnett, Clive R. Belfield, and Milagros Nores, *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* (2005) Ypsilanti: High/Scope Press available at <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>. Children were randomly divided into a program group that received a high-quality preschool program based on HighScope's participatory learning

approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. *Id.* In the study's most recent phase, 97% of the study participants still living were interviewed at age 40. *Id.* Additional data was gathered from the subjects' school, social services, and arrest records. *Id.* **The study found that adults at age 40 who had the preschool program had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool. *Id.***

In educational performance at age 27, the children provided early interventions had completed a significantly higher level of schooling than their peers (71% vs 54%), graduated from either regular or adult high school or received General Education Development certification. Schweinhart, Lawrence J., Helen V. Barnes, and David P. Weikart, *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27*, (1993), Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. As compared to the no-program females, the program females had a significantly higher rate of high school graduation or the equivalent (84% vs. 35%). *Id.*

Previous findings for educational performance indicated that the program group also spent fewer than half as many years in programs for educable mental impairment as the no-program group (means of 1.1 years vs. 2.8 years). See Schweinhart, Lawrence J. and David P. Weikart, "Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths through Age 15." *Journal of Early Intervention*, (1981) 4(1): 29-39. On tests of educational performance, the program group significantly outscored the no-program group on a test of general literacy at age 19 and at age 27. *Significant Benefits at 1.*



Source: HighScope Perry Preschool Study, *Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 (2005)*, available at <http://www.highscope.org/content.asp?contentid=219>

Economically, 29% of the program group reported monthly earnings at age 27 of \$2,000 or more, significantly more than the 7% of the non-program participants who reported earnings. *Id.* For males, the difference was better-paying jobs: 42% compared to only 6% reported monthly earnings of \$2,000 or more. *Id.* For females, the difference was in employment rates: 80% of program females versus 55% of non-program females were employed at the time of the age-27 interview. *Id.* At age 27, significantly more of the program group than the non-program group owned their own homes (36% vs. 13%) and owned second cars (30% vs. 13%). *Id.* According to social services records and interviews at age 27, only 59% of the program group, as compared to 80% of the non-program group, received welfare assistance or other social services as adults. *Id.*

Police and court records showed that program group members averaged 2.3 arrests by age 28, significantly fewer than the 4.6 arrests averaged by no-program group members. *Id.* Only 7% of the program group had been arrested five or more times as compared to 35% of the no-program group. *Id.*

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Only 7% of the program group had ever been arrested for drug dealing, significantly fewer than the 25% of the no-program group. *Id.* At least two other studies have found such program effects on crime. Duncan at 110.

The Perry Preschool analysis was not alone. A similar study in Abecedarian, North Carolina found similar behavioral, health, and educational outcomes. On the health front, the Abecedarian study found that, in comparison to the control group where a quarter of male participants had serious physical cardiac issues, including heart disease, none of the children who received high quality preschool support had these issues when studied 35 years later. Savings from a public health perspective on this front are potentially exponential.

In fact, a benefit-cost analysis has been conducted by estimating the monetary value of programs and their effects in constant dollars discounted annually at 3%. See Barnett, W. Steven. *Lives in the Balance: Age-27 Benefit-Cost Analysis of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program*, (1996), Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press; Barnett, W. Steven, and Leonard N. Masse, "Comparative Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Program and its Policy Implications" *Economics of Education Review* 26 (2007), no. 1: 113-12. Although the analysis included economic benefits to program participants, researchers only examined the economic benefits to the public, as taxpayers and as potential crime victims. *Id.* In current dollars per study participant, the average annual cost of the program was \$8,287; 45 of the program participants attended for two years and 13 attended for one year. *Id.* The discounted, average cost of the program, used in the cost-benefit analysis, was \$14,716 per participant. *Id.* For this cost, the program yielded public benefits of \$105,324 per participant, a cost-benefit ratio of 7.16 to 1. *Id.* Sources of benefits per participant were, in order of magnitude:

- \$68,584 saved by the potential victims of crimes never committed, based on the typical in-court and out-of-court settlements for such crimes
- \$15,240 in reduced justice system costs
- \$10,537 brought in by increased taxes paid by preschool-program participants because they had higher earnings
- \$7,488 saved in schooling, due primarily to reduced need for special education services, and despite increased college costs for preschool-program participants
- \$3,475 in reduced welfare costs

Special Education

Similarly, investing in early childhood education may also reduce the need for special education placements and remedial education, thereby lowering public school expenditures. See Anderson, Michael L. "Multiple Inference and Gender Differences in the Effects of Early Intervention: A Reevaluation of the Abecedarian, Perry Preschool, and Early Training Projects," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (2014) 103, no. 484: 1481-1495; Carneiro, Pedro and Rita Ginja. "Long-Term Impacts of Compensatory Preschool on Health and Behavior: Evidence from Head Start," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, (2014) 6(4): 135-173.

The Chicago Child-Parent Center and Expansion Program, a larger-scale early childhood education intervention in Chicago, provides significant evidence of success as it relates to special education. Since 1967, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) have provided comprehensive early childhood education and family supports to low-income children and parents. Just like the Perry School and Abecedarian students, at kindergarten entry, CPC preschoolers' cognitive readiness showed similar gains, these gains continued through to adulthood. Interestingly researchers focused in on special education placement in longitudinal studies of CPC participations. Those who attended an early childhood education program were only 41% likely to require special education services than their peers who did not attend. See Reynolds, A. J., Wolfe, B. "School Achievement, Early Intervention and Special Education: New Evidence

From The Chicago Longitudinal Study." Focus: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty, (Summer/Fall 1997), Vol. 19, No. 1. These lowered placement requirements continued through age 12. *Id.*

Similar evidence of lower special education placements was found in the Abecedarian participants saving more than \$11,000 per participant through grade 12. Temple, Judy A. and Arthur J. Reynolds. "Benefits and Costs of Investments in Preschool Education: Evidence from the Child-Parent Centers and Related Programs." *Economics of Education Review*, (2007), 26(1): 126-144. Perry participants were also less likely to be retained or placed in special education classes. *Id.* Head Start results also indicate the program reduces rates of special education and grade repetition. See Currie, Janet, "Early Childhood Education Programs." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, (2001) 15(2): 213-238.

Ultimately, **conservative estimates have equated the overall savings in early childhood education to be between \$3 and \$7 dollars for every \$1 spent.**

Beyond Socio-economics

Moreover, the benefits eclipse socio-economics. While early research almost exclusively focused on low-income children, more recent research examines benefits across lower and middle income stratus. See Duncan at 111. What the evidence shows is that even middle-class students benefit from early childhood programs and that the benefit also outweighs the cost in middle income brackets as well.

Why

Why the difference is a curious question. What researchers now believe is that the brain's early architectural mapping is extremely sensitive to external influence. Medical research shows that 90% of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life. The quality of adult and child interaction from birth to age five spurs brain development and forms the foundation for the ability to learn, interact with people and apply knowledge. Families play the biggest role in developing these skills, but, preschool programs helping parents accelerate learning and socialization to prepare their children for school.

Basically, early experiences interact with our biology to set the table or develop the framework for what comes next. So, interventions in the early years, can lead to huge cognitive (literacy, language, and math), social/emotional, resilience, focus and self-regulation gains. Learning relies on these skills – building cumulatively upon them. Ultimately, an early investment helps establish a strong frame for future learning.

What next?

These studies bear witness to the success society and the taxpayer reaps from early childhood investment. But, to reap true benefit we must ensure that any investment is consistent and comprehensive.

- Teachers and school leaders must receive curricular training and support
- Programs must be monitored to ensure they provide the types of interventions that benefit
- Programming must be seamless, running from age three up through the early grades, including not just pre-school but also a full-day kindergarten program
- Parents must be engaged in the process to help ensure even higher gains

With me today is someone who is making these gains a reality for the students in her school. Fidelia Sturdivant serves as the Principal of the Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy in East Orange. Ms. Sturdivant is also Past President of NJPSA and a past Shirley Chisholm Award recipient for her work in Early Childhood Education.

Statement of Fidelia Sturdivant
Principal, Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy, East Orange
on the
Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Education
before the
Senate Education Committee
September 21, 2015

Good morning. My name is Fidelia Sturdivant. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the benefits of investing in early childhood education.

I currently serve as the Principal of Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy in East Orange. Wahlstrom is a one of the first schools of its kind - specializing in early childhood education in the State of New Jersey. I am proud to tell you that I opened the Academy over a decade ago.

The overall goal of Wahlstrom is to ensure that every child enters first grade with the language skills, early literacy, number concepts, social skills, self-help skills, and self-confidence necessary for success in the elementary grades, and in life.

Wahlstrom Early Childhood Academy is more than a school, it is an opportunity to experience the "joy of learning" - and that is what we strive to instill in our students.

Your question is how do we do that?

I point to our 'Special Formula': Supportive parents + Highly Qualified Teachers + Research Based Instructional Program + Nurturing Environment = Academic Success

Wahlstrom provides a learning environment for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students in which each child's intellectual, emotional, and social growth is carefully cultivated and guided. Our program focuses on 5 key concepts:

- 1) Learning is fun;
- 2) Learning is a constructive process;
- 3) Learning takes place in a community;
- 4) Young children need to be engaged in activities that are developmentally and culturally appropriate; and
- 5) Language and literacy development are the building blocks of cognitive, social and personal development.

Our full-day kindergarten uses a constructive kindergarten program that includes a detailed curriculum. The classes foster each child's language, cognitive, mathematical, emotional, interpersonal, creative, and physical development. Children learn basic science and social studies concepts through rich thematic units.

Even the building is designed for Early Childhood Education. As you enter the Academy, the bold colors of the interior makes the building come alive. The large windows in each classroom add natural light and a park like setting that enhances the ambiance of the school. Our auditorium area is the showcase of the school. The cylindrical built amphitheater allows the children to have a magnificent staging area to display their musical and theatrical abilities.

But while the space matters, faculty, parental and community support is critical.

I believe that our formula begins with a collaborative partnership with parents. This process begins even before school starts with a meet and greet with parents that sets the stage for the school year. This year we focused on attendance, and coupled our meet and greet with a health fair to help ensure that student and family health needs are addressed. By working preventively with parents around budding health issues we can help ensure that students are ready and able to learn. It simply makes sense.

The formula continues with my teachers who are committed to providing the best education possible for our youth. I believe in a collaborative team approach. It is why my staff meetings are dubbed, 'Community Leaders Meeting' – with each staff member playing an integral role in ensuring we are providing high quality instruction. And, this instruction is cross-curricular. Student may learn their numbers or letters from one staff member but other staff members, like Mr. Foote, my physical education teacher, is reinforcing those skills in class by simply calling off colors or even asking his class to do 10 jumping jacks. Each of my staff wears different hats and we work collaboratively to instill good learning habits and life lessons.

We've invested in a high quality curriculum, but, we also couple that with diagnostic tools / assessments that help us determine where a young child may be struggling. While 'testing' can be viewed as a negative – we look at it as a tool to help determine the best direction to take with our kids. These tools are used in conjunction with a strong, supportive curriculum.

The formula ends with ensuring a nurturing environment or 'supportive school climate.' School must be a welcoming, tranquil, structured place for students to succeed. Focusing on social / emotional learning in the early grades helps foster this environment.

And, our work is paying off. Students who attended Wahlstrom have gone on to pass third grade standardized tests at a better than 98 percent rate.

In 1985, I founded the First Day Care Academy in East Orange, New Jersey for children ages 2 and a half to 6. Some have said that I enjoyed teaching kids this young because most of them were my height. But the truth is that these students, even at that age, were engaged and motivated as they moved on to grade school fully prepared to succeed. THIS is the model for our educational system – each level prepares the students to thrive in the next. And it all begins with a strong foundation. A foundation that an investment in early childhood education provides.

Early childhood education is the foundation of all learning. It should not be optional; it should be a guarantee. But, it must be more than day care without instruction.

There must be curriculum. There must be a more formal setting in order for children to succeed in the Common Core. It must be connected with their future learning opportunities. School leaders at this level need to know what behaviors are age and developmentally appropriate. We need to challenge our students in the early grades, while understanding and allowing for age-appropriate behaviors.

I am proud to say that my students stay in touch with me and my teachers at Wahlstrom because we value the relationships we have built. Creating and fostering these connections with students are part of a paramount strategy to ensuring our kids become resilient, productive citizens. I am blessed to be part of that process. Thank you.

DEMOCRATS for EDUCATION REFORM

Testimony in support of increasing access to high-quality preschool options in New Jersey September 21, 2015

Thank you, Chairwoman Ruiz, for holding this hearing today and for your strong commitment to our state's youngest learners and the expansion of high-quality preschool options to communities across the state. Thank you, too, to the members of the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to present this testimony in writing today.

My name is Kathleen Nugent Hughes. I am the New Jersey state director of Democrats for Education Reform, a national education advocacy organization with chapters in 11 states throughout the country. I write in support of increased preschool access for New Jersey communities and the full implementation (including funding) of the existing preschool initiative embedded in the School Funding Reform Act. This would include expanding the high-quality Abbott preschool program to three- and four-year-olds in 90 districts and all low-income children in the remaining districts across the state.

To be sure, it is undeniable that high-quality preschool education is a fundamental building block for students' lifelong learning trajectory:

1. "Early childhood education is an efficient and effective investment for economic and workforce development. The earlier the investment, the greater the return on investment."¹
2. Outcomes of quality early childhood education include higher education attainment, higher wages, healthier lifestyles, better health, greater productivity and stronger families.^{2 3}

New Jersey's Abbott Pre-school Program is held up as a national model for quality. An extensive 2013 study by National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers on the Abbott Preschool Program found significant long-term benefits for students:

- "The magnitude of 4th and 5th test score gains for students who participated in Abbott pre-K for one year are equivalent to roughly 10 to 20 percent of the achievement gap between minority and white students."⁴
- "The 4th and 5th grade gains for students who participated in Abbott for two years are equivalent to 20 to 40 percent of the achievement gap between white and non-white students"⁵

¹ <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/invest-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-economy>

² Zalkind, Cecilia. "The ABCs of Preschool: Lessons Learned from New Jersey." The ABCs of Preschool: Lessons Learned from New Jersey (2013): n. pag. BuildInitiative.org. Advocates for Children of New Jersey, May 2013. Web.

³ http://jenni.uchicago.edu/papers/Heckman_Moon_etal_2010_JPubEc_v94_n1.pdf

⁴ <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

- “[The program] also is found to decrease grade retention and special education placement rates. Decreases in grade repetition and special education can significantly reduce the costs of education from kindergarten through 12th grade, and a substantial percentage of the cost of high-quality pre-K may be recovered as a result.”⁶
- “[High-quality] preschool education can significantly improve children’s learning and development over the long term” and “public pre-K programs can produce meaningful long-term educational gains on a large scale.”⁷

In an exciting and positive development for New Jersey, the new advocacy group called Pre-K Our Way is calling new attention to the importance of high-quality early childhood education and bringing together a robust community of advocates. According to a poll they conducted in February and March of 2014, “nearly 9 in 10 New Jersey voters think it’s important that all 3 and 4-year olds have access to preschool. This includes 62% who say access is very important.”⁸ Clearly, increasing high-quality preschool access is a popular concept and supported by voters statewide.

New Jersey has taken bold leadership in preschool education before. Now is the time to redouble efforts and lead again. The National Institute for Early Education Research’s report on our Abbott Preschool Program included two suggestions:

1. “[Participation] rates in two-years of pre-K should be increased to above 90 percent in the Abbott districts;”⁹
2. “[As] required by the New Jersey School Funding Reform Act of 2008, high-quality pre-K should be expanded to offer a comparable program to all low-income children. In addition, plans should be developed to extend the opportunity for high-quality pre-K to all of the state’s children.”¹⁰

We agree with these recommendations so that one day in the near future, all low-income students in New Jersey can gain access to these critical programs that will help enable them to realize their full potential.

One important note: it is imperative that the same thoughtful implementation of the Abbott Preschool Programs, notably focused on rigor and high standards for implementation, is maintained. Growth of the program alone is not acceptable. Simply expanding the quantity of participants without consistently monitoring the quality of the programs offered will lead to a waste of resources and eliminate the benefits to the young children participating. There must

⁵ Barnett et al., Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up; National Institute for Early Education Research Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey: March, 2013. www.nieer.org

⁶ <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

⁷ <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

⁸ <https://prekourway.org/assets/Pre-KOurWayPublicOpinion120514.pdf?221a87>

⁹ <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

be proper program monitoring on an ongoing basis and sufficient funding, maintenance of the right class sizes, and a high bar for teacher quality.

I look forward to supporting the next steps of this committee and our legislative leadership as New Jersey once again leads the country in increased access to high-quality preschool education for all students, notably those who are low-income. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Contact: Kathleen Nugent Hughes

Cell: (646) 221-3463

Email: kathleen@dfer.org

ADDITIONAL APPENDIX MATERIALS
SUBMITTED TO THE
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
for the
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 MEETING

Submitted by M. Brian Maher, Member, Leadership Group, Pre-K Our Way:

Tom Kean and Cecelia Zalkind, "Opinion: Find a way to bring pre-K our way," *The Record*, April 19, 2015, 2015 northjersey.com.

Lynda Anderson-Towns and Brian Maher, "Guest Column: It's time to expand pre-K education to more New Jersey school children," *South Jersey Times*, April 5, 2015, 2015 New Jersey Online LLC.

James J. and Lucinda Florio, "Preschool is foundation for success," *Courier-Post*, April 3, 2015, 2015 www.courierpostonline.com