

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy, Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan, and U.S. Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill Visit Pre-K Classroom in Boonton, Governor Murphy Has Coffee with Local Pre-K Mothers

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### PRINT:

BOONTON — Gov. Phil Murphy, Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan and U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill touted the Murphy administration's expanded investments in pre-kindergarten on Wednesday.

The officials toured a preschool academy housed in Boonton High School visiting classrooms and taking part in some drawing activities with the students. Murphy later went to the Boonton Coffee Co. café for a roundtable discussion with four local pre-k mothers.

According to the governor's office, Murphy's FY2023 budget proposal includes an increase of \$68 million in pre-K aid over last year, for a total of \$991.8 million spent on pre-k. Boonton is set to receive over \$1.8 million in preschool aid this year.

"Hello ladies and gentlemen" Murphy greeted the three and four-year-olds seated on a rug in the first classroom. Most of the children laughed. "That wasn't intended to be a laugh line," Murphy joked.

In the next classroom, some students asked the governor questions including: "how is the office?" and "can I be governor too?"

"Yeah, you want to do that today?" Murphy offered the boy, Christian, who had asked to take over the state leadership role.

Hearing the response, several other students asked if they too could be governor.

"You all can," Murphy said.

One student told Murphy "I love you."

Murphy responded "thank you for that man, love you right back...I only wish you could vote."

The teacher told Christian she would give his phone number to Murphy's people.

In the final classroom students practiced drawing shapes and naming things that were those shapes. Students said triangles could be pizza, a tent or watermelon. Squares could be windows, presents or a fish tank.

One kid, who had drawn on himself in black marker, told Murphy "your head is red."

"Yeah it is I got sunburned," Murphy said.

After the classroom visits, Murphy talked with the head of school who said the pre-k's integration within the high school building has been good. Some high school students have siblings in the pre-k and the school has a program set up for the 12th graders to work with the younger kids and graduate with a Child Development Associate (CDA) Educational Certificate of Achievement.

At the coffeeshop after the school tour, Murphy talked with four mothers whose students are enrolled in the pre-k program.

They spoke about how the Covid-19 pandemic affected their children and how important being back in school in-person has been for their families.

Murphy said though his administration has expanded pre-k funding, "we still have a ways to go." He estimated "realistically" there would be three or four more years to get to universal pre-k across the state.

"We'd love the federal government to come in and help us fund it but either way we'll get there," Murphy said.

The governor took photos with the moms.

Carly Sitrin

POLITICO

### VIDEO

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