

**Governor Phil Murphy**

# Governor Murphy Announces \$120 Million for Preschool Facilities, Brings High-Quality Pre-K to 16 More School Districts

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**SOUTH BRUNSWICK** – As part of the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts to provide universal access to high-quality, full-day preschool throughout the state, Governor Phil Murphy today announced the availability of \$120 million in grants for preschool facility expansion and highlighted the funding 16 school districts recently received to establish or grow their preschool programming. Alongside Acting Commissioner of Education Angelica Allen-McMillan, Senator Andrew Zwicker, Assemblyman Roy Freiman, and other officials at Brooks Crossing and Deans Elementary School, the Governor also announced an additional \$2.6 million to assist 33 school districts with supplementary start-up funding.

Providing free early childhood education to every three and four-year-old in New Jersey remains an important goal of the Murphy Administration. Since Governor Murphy took office, high-quality preschool programs have been introduced to over 160 school districts, opening seats for more than 12,000 additional children.

"Expanding access to free, full-day preschool programs represents an investment in the future of New Jersey's children," **said Governor Murphy**. "More families are benefiting from our increased support for early childhood education every year. A quality preschool education provides students with the foundational skills they need to learn and succeed as they advance through life, which is why we must – and will – continue to work towards universal pre-K throughout New Jersey."

"Today's announcement represents another step in Governor Murphy's efforts to expand access to preschool education by adding 16 more communities to the list of those that now have a high-quality preschool option," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "The preschool facilities grants are another important part of these efforts, and a first for New Jersey. Adequate preschool facilities can often be one of the obstacles that school districts face in implementing high-quality programs, so this funding will help more school communities overcome those barriers."

"I applaud the Governor's continued commitment to pre-K expansion. We share that commitment in the Assembly," **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. "Early childhood education is not only critical to helping children get a head start on their education, but also their mental and social development. This type of investment in the future will reap benefits for decades to come."

"Early childhood development is the very foundation upon which any effective and comprehensive education system is built. Basic skills that our children are exposed to in a solid pre-school environment are essential to their learning journey," **said Senator Zwicker**. "I am proud to stand with Governor Murphy today in recognizing this signature investment in pre-K funding in South Brunswick and in other districts throughout the state. Our state will only continue to be a growth leader and meet this moment of emerging technologies if we continue to invest in our public schools, and especially in the continued expansion of our pre-K education capacities."

"Attending preschool helps children develop academic, social and emotional skills that will allow them to excel when they start school," **said Assemblyman Roy Freiman**. "With additional funding to grow preschool programming in communities throughout the state, more children will have the opportunity to begin their education earlier and enjoy the numerous benefits preschool offers."

**Preschool Facilities Grants**

The \$120 million in grant funding – made possible through an allocation of federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars in the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget – marks the first time that preschool facility expansion grants will be available to Regular Operating Districts (RODs).

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will be accepting grant applications from RODs from March 1 to May 31, 2023.

Eligible proposals will be prioritized by category in the following order:

1. Proposals to increase available preschool seats by at least 10 percent, ranked by percentage of increased seats.
2. Proposals to enhance preschool facilities by increasing the capacity of existing classrooms or by constructing/rehabilitating restrooms.
3. Proposals to expand preschool programs from half-day to full-day.
4. Proposals to expand classroom capacity to house new preschool programs and guarantee additional seats.

**Preschool Expansion and Start-Up Funding**

The more than \$11.4 million recently allocated to 16 school districts to create or expand their preschool programming during the 2022-2023 school year has enabled the addition of 1,081 full-day, high-quality preschool seats.

The following school districts received a portion of the \$11,412,493 in total funding:

- Atlantic County – Folsom School District – \$165,322
- Bergen County – Little Ferry School District – \$1,245,045
- Burlington County – Washington Township School District – \$82,260
- Burlington County – Westampton Township School District – \$456,765
- Camden County – Gibbsboro School District – \$582,793

- Camden County – Lawnside School District – \$382,840
- Cumberland County – Downe Township School District – \$445
- Gloucester County – South Harrison Township School District – \$621,414
- Middlesex County – South Brunswick Township School District – \$2,041,95
- Middlesex County – South Plainfield School District – \$1,765,380
- Monmouth County – Allenhurst School District – \$13,857
- Morris County – Jefferson Township School District – \$1,034,483
- Ocean County – Island Heights School District – \$188,636
- Salem County – Andover Regional School District – \$522,310
- Sussex County – Elsinboro Township School District – \$108,072
- Union County – Linden City School District – \$2,200,915

In addition to the \$11.4 million for the second round of preschool expansion aid this school year, an additional \$2.6 million in start-up funding was made available to six of the 16 school districts that had been operating partially state-funded preschool at the start of the school year (Folsom, Little Ferry, Lawnside, Downe, South Plainfield, and Linden), as well as all 27 districts from the first round of FY23 awards announced earlier this school year, which began operating their full-day programs in October.

“Free, full day preschool not only sets our children up for successful futures, it also helps make life more affordable for working parents in our community,” said **South Brunswick Mayor Charles Carley**. “I thank Governor Murphy, our legislators, and the dedicated teachers and school officials who are working to make high-quality preschool a reality for South Brunswick families and many other families throughout our state.”

“This is an investment in our future that will produce economic and educational benefits for years to come,” said **Senator Paul Sarlo, Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee**. “It will put people to work upgrading the school infrastructure and support the pre-K programs that are so important for academic achievement.”

“Decades of research have made clear the critical role that pre-K education plays in the emotional and educational well-being of our children. In New Jersey we continue to do more and more to grow out pre-school programming until it reaches every child in the state. This vision and commitment will pay for itself, and reap huge societal and financial benefits well into the future,” said **Senator Vin Gopal, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee**.

“Investments into education help ensure children in New Jersey can reach their full potential,” said **Assembly Majority Leader Louis D. Greenwald**. “During the FY23 budget process, we prioritized investments that will strengthen our communities, such as funding to expand access to quality preschool programs for families across the state. With new preschool programs available, more young learners in New Jersey will be better prepared for the challenges they will face during their school careers.”

“Every student in New Jersey deserves a strong start to their education,” said **Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin, Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee**. “I am proud that the FY23 budget made record investments into education, providing current and future students with the resources they need to succeed in the classroom. Expanding access to high quality, affordable preschool programs will directly benefit children in our state.”

“By expanding access to high-quality preschool programs, we ensure more students throughout New Jersey can take advantage of the social and emotional development that comes with early education,” said **Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee**. “This is not just an investment into our schools; it’s a commitment to our children’s futures. I am proud that the State continues to find new ways to uplift young learners.”

“The growth of our South Brunswick preschool program and other programs around the state will undoubtedly increase opportunities for our youngest learners, creating a foundation for the rest of their educational career,” said **South Brunswick preschool teacher Rachel Kline**. “On behalf of my current and future students, their families, and our community, thank you to Governor Murphy and the State Legislature for recognizing the importance of early childhood education and shining a light on the work that we are doing.”

## Governor Phil Murphy

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