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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED MAY 12, 2025

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**Senators McKnight, Burgess, Assemblywomen Haider, Donlon, Ramirez,
Quijano, Peterpaul and Morales**

SYNOPSIS

Makes various changes to provision of preschool aid and facilities requirements; establishes Universal Preschool Implementation Steering Committee; requires full-day kindergarten in all school districts.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 26, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning early childhood education, amending various
2 parts of the statutory law, and supplementing P.L.2007, c.260
3 ¹and chapters 26 and 44 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes¹.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. (New section) Sections 1 and 2 ¹**[,]** and¹ 6 through ¹**[12, and**
9 **15]** 11¹ of this act shall be known and may be cited as the “New
10 Jersey Universal Preschool and Kindergarten Act.”
11

12 2. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

13 a. Research is clear that high-quality preschool can change the
14 educational trajectories of young children, particularly
15 economically disadvantaged children and multilingual learners.
16 Improvements in literacy, numeracy, social-emotional and self-
17 regulatory development, and lifetime earnings have been
18 demonstrated among individuals who attend high-quality preschool
19 compared to their peers.

20 b. New Jersey leads the nation in expanding access to high-
21 quality preschool opportunities. The State has achieved a unique
22 and world-class combination of significant financial investment and
23 rigorous quality standards. New Jersey State-funded preschools are
24 required to serve three- and four-year olds in full-day programs
25 featuring small class sizes led by quality instructors with ample
26 curriculum support, professional development, and accommodations
27 for students with special needs. New Jersey’s State spending on
28 preschool is among the highest in the country, with clear,
29 significant impacts on our public school system: tens of thousands
30 of three- and four-year olds in hundreds of communities around the
31 State attend transformative high-quality early education programs.

32 c. District-operated preschool programs, licensed childcare
33 centers, and Head Start programs form an interrelated and
34 interdependent early childhood ecosystem. Each component is made
35 stronger by the other, and the system is greater and more impactful
36 than the sum of its parts. No component can reach its full potential
37 without the facilities, staff, resources, and expertise of the others.
38 Together, the system represents a continuum of education and care
39 services from birth through age five necessary not only for children
40 to realize their full life potential, but for families to participate fully
41 in economic and civic society. To lift up this system is a moral and
42 economic imperative.

43 d. To build on the State’s preschool expansion progress to date
44 and to realize the full benefits of high-quality preschool, it is fitting

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹ Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 26, 2025.

1 and proper for the State to enshrine certain policies and values in
2 State law, including:

3 (1) providing sustainable, annual financial support for
4 expanding access to high-quality preschool;

5 (2) codifying preschool education aid provisions previously
6 implemented through language in various annual appropriations
7 acts and harmonizing New Jersey law accordingly;

8 (3) prioritizing expansion for economically disadvantaged
9 families and communities;

10 (4) requiring State-funded preschool programs to make every
11 effort to partner with local ready, willing, and able licensed
12 childcare providers and Head Start programs; and

13 (5) conducting ongoing evaluations of the State's approach to
14 early childhood and preschool education to ensure that policy
15 continues to reflect stakeholder expertise and evolving research.

16 e. In addition to high-quality preschool education, full-day
17 kindergarten is necessary not only to unlock a child's full learning
18 potential, but to facilitate a smooth transition from high-quality
19 preschool into elementary programs.

20

21 3. Section 3 of P.L.2007, c.62 (C.18A:7F-38) is amended to read
22 as follows:

23 3. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the
24 contrary, a school district shall not adopt a budget pursuant to sections
25 5 and 6 of P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-5 and 18A:7F-6) with an
26 increase in its adjusted tax levy that exceeds, except as provided in
27 subsection e. of section 4 of P.L.2007, c.62 (C.18A:7F-39), the tax
28 levy growth limitation calculated as follows: the sum of the prebudget
29 year adjusted tax levy and the adjustment for increases in enrollment
30 multiplied by 2.0 percent, and adjustments for an increase in health
31 care costs, increases in amounts for certain normal and accrued
32 liability pension contributions set forth in sections 1 and 2 of P.L.2009,
33 c.19 amending section 24 of P.L.1954, c.84 (C.43:15A-24) and section
34 15 of P.L.1944, c.255 (C.43:16A-15) for the year set forth in those
35 sections, **[and,]** in the case of an SDA district as defined pursuant to
36 section 3 of P.L.2000, c.72 (C.18A:7G-3), during the 2018-2019
37 through the 2024-2025 school years, increases to raise a general fund
38 tax levy to an amount that does not exceed its local share , and, in the
39 case of a school district first receiving preschool education aid in the
40 2025-2026, 2026-2027, or 2027-2028 school years and participating in
41 the pilot program established by the commissioner pursuant to
42 subsection h. of ¹section¹ 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54),
43 increases to raise a general fund tax levy for the local share of
44 preschool education costs.

45 b. (1) The allowable adjustment for increases in enrollment
46 authorized pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall equal the per
47 pupil prebudget year adjusted tax levy multiplied by EP, where EP
48 equals the sum of:

- 1 (a) 0.50 for each unit of weighted resident enrollment that
2 constitutes an increase from the prebudget year over 1%, but not more
3 than 2.5%;
- 4 (b) 0.75 for each unit of weighted resident enrollment that
5 constitutes an increase from the prebudget year over 2.5%, but not
6 more than 4%; and
- 7 (c) 1.00 for each unit of weighted resident enrollment that
8 constitutes an increase from the prebudget year over 4%.
- 9 (2) A school district may request approval from the commissioner
10 to calculate EP equal to 1.00 for any increase in weighted resident
11 enrollment if it can demonstrate that the calculation pursuant to
12 paragraph (1) of this subsection would result in an average class size
13 that exceeds 10% above the facilities efficiency standards established
14 pursuant to P.L.2000, c.72 (C.18A:7G-1 et al.).
- 15 c. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2010, c.44)
- 16 d. (1) The allowable adjustment for increases in health care costs
17 authorized pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall equal that
18 portion of the actual increase in total health care costs for the budget
19 year, less any withdrawals from the current expense emergency
20 reserve account for increases in total health care costs, that exceeds 2.0
21 percent of the total health care costs in the prebudget year, but that is
22 not in excess of the product of the total health care costs in the
23 prebudget year multiplied by the average percentage increase of the
24 State Health Benefits Program, P.L.1961, c.49 (C.52:14-17.25 et seq.),
25 as annually determined by the Division of Pensions and Benefits in the
26 Department of the Treasury.
- 27 (2) The allowable adjustment for increases in the amount of
28 normal and accrued liability pension contributions authorized pursuant
29 to subsection a. of this section shall equal that portion of the actual
30 increase in total normal and accrued liability pension contributions for
31 the budget year that exceeds 2.0 percent of the total normal and
32 accrued liability pension contributions in the prebudget year.
- 33 (3) In the case of an SDA district, as defined pursuant to section 3
34 of P.L.2000, c.72 (C.18A:7G-3), in which the prebudget year adjusted
35 tax levy is less than the school district's prebudget year local share as
36 calculated pursuant to section 10 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-52),
37 the allowable adjustment for increases to raise a tax levy that does not
38 exceed the school district's local share shall equal the difference
39 between the prebudget year adjusted tax levy and the prebudget year
40 local share.
- 41 (4) In the case of a school district first receiving preschool
42 education aid in the 2025-2026, 2026-2027, or 2027-2028 school years
43 and participating in the pilot program established by the commissioner
44 pursuant to subsection h. of ¹section¹ 12 of P.L.2007, c.260
45 (C.18A:7F-54), the allowable adjustment for increases to raise a
46 general fund tax levy for the local share of preschool education costs
47 shall be equal to the actual increase required to provide preschool

1 education under the pilot program less State aid provided pursuant to
2 subsection h. of ¹section¹ 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54).

3 A school district first receiving preschool education aid in the
4 2025-2026 school year and participating in the pilot program
5 established by the commissioner pursuant to subsection h. of ¹section¹
6 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) may, prior to the delivery of tax
7 bills pursuant to R.S.54:4-64, recertify to the county board of taxation
8 the sum to be raised in the district during the ensuing school year if the
9 change in the amount to be raised is equal to the district's local share
10 of preschool education costs for that school year.

11 e. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2010, c.44)

12 f. The adjusted tax levy shall be increased or decreased
13 accordingly whenever the responsibility and associated cost of a
14 school district activity is transferred to another school district or
15 governmental entity.

16 (cf: P.L.2018, c.67, s.6)

17

18 4. Section 3 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-45) is amended to
19 read as follows:

20 3. As used in **[this act]** P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-43 et al.)
21 and P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-1 et al.), unless the context clearly
22 requires a different meaning:

23 "At-risk pupils" means those resident pupils from households
24 with a household income at or below the most recent federal
25 poverty guidelines available on October 15 of the prebudget year
26 multiplied by 1.85;

27 "Base per pupil amount" means the cost per elementary pupil of
28 delivering the core curriculum content standards and extracurricular
29 and cocurricular activities necessary for a thorough and efficient
30 education;

31 "Bilingual education pupil" means a resident pupil enrolled in a
32 program of bilingual education or in an English as a second
33 language program approved by the State Board of Education;

34 "Budgeted local share" means the district's local tax levy
35 contained in the budget certified for taxation purposes;

36 "Capital outlay" means capital outlay as defined in GAAP;

37 "Combination pupil" means a resident pupil who is both an at-
38 risk pupil and a bilingual education pupil;

39 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education;

40 "Concentration of at-risk pupils" shall be based on prebudget
41 year pupil data and means, for a school district or a county
42 vocational school district, the number of at-risk pupils among those
43 counted in resident enrollment, divided by resident enrollment;

44 "County special services school district" means any entity
45 established pursuant to article 8 of chapter 46 of Title 18A of the
46 New Jersey Statutes;

1 "County vocational school district" means any entity established
2 pursuant to article 3 of chapter 54 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes;

4 "CPI" means the increase, expressed as a decimal, in the average
5 annualized consumer price index for the New York City and
6 Philadelphia areas in the fiscal year preceding the prebudget year
7 relative to the previous fiscal year as reported by the United States
8 Department of Labor;

9 "Debt service" means payments of principal and interest upon
10 school bonds and other obligations issued to finance the purchase or
11 construction of school facilities, additions to school facilities, or the
12 reconstruction, remodeling, alteration, modernization, renovation or
13 repair of school facilities, including furnishings, equipment,
14 architect fees, and the costs of issuance of such obligations and
15 shall include payments of principal and interest upon bonds
16 heretofore issued to fund or refund such obligations, and upon
17 municipal bonds and other obligations which the commissioner
18 approves as having been issued for such purposes;

19 "District income" means the aggregate income of the residents of
20 the taxing district or taxing districts, based upon data provided by
21 the Division of Taxation in the New Jersey Department of the
22 Treasury and contained on the New Jersey State Income Tax forms
23 for the calendar year ending two years prior to the prebudget year.
24 The commissioner may supplement data contained on the State
25 Income Tax forms with data available from other State or federal
26 agencies in order to better correlate the data to that collected on the
27 federal census. With respect to regional districts and their
28 constituent districts, however, the district income as described
29 above shall be allocated among the regional and constituent districts
30 in proportion to the number of pupils resident in each of them;

31 "Equalized valuation" means the equalized valuation of the
32 taxing district or taxing districts, as certified by the Director of the
33 Division of Taxation on October 1, or subsequently revised by the
34 tax court by January 15, of the prebudget year. With respect to
35 regional districts and their constituent districts, however, the
36 equalized valuations as described above shall be allocated among
37 the regional and constituent districts in proportion to the number of
38 pupils resident in each of them. In the event that the equalized table
39 certified by the director shall be revised by the tax court after
40 January 15 of the prebudget year, the revised valuations shall be
41 used in the recomputation of aid for an individual school district
42 filing an appeal, but shall have no effect upon the calculation of the
43 property value rate, Statewide average equalized school tax rate, or
44 Statewide equalized total tax rate;

45 "Full-day preschool" means a preschool day consisting of a
46 minimum six-hour comprehensive educational program in
47 accordance with the district's kindergarten through grade 12 school
48 calendar;

1 "GAAP" means the generally accepted accounting principles
2 established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board as
3 prescribed by the State board pursuant to N.J.S.18A:4-14;

4 "General special education services pupil" means a pupil
5 receiving specific services pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of
6 the New Jersey Statutes;

7 "Geographic cost adjustment" means an adjustment that reflects
8 county differences in the cost of providing educational services that
9 are outside the control of the district;

10 "Household income" means income as defined in 7 CFR ss.245.2
11 and 245.6 or any subsequent superseding federal law or regulation;

12 "Net budget" means the sum of the district's general fund tax
13 levy, State aid received pursuant to the provisions of this act other
14 than preschool education aid, miscellaneous revenue estimated
15 pursuant to GAAP, and designated general fund balance;

16 **["Prebudget year" means the school fiscal year preceding the
17 year in which the school budget is implemented;]**

18 "Nonpreschool ECPA" means the amount of early childhood
19 program aid, excluding prior year carry-forward amounts, included
20 in a district's 2007-2008 school year budget certified for taxes that
21 was allocated to grades K through 3;

22 "Prebudget year" means the school fiscal year preceding the year
23 in which the school budget is implemented;

24 "Preschool expansion grant" means any grant funded by a
25 portion of preschool education aid allocated by the Commissioner
26 of Education or any other State funds appropriated for the purpose
27 of expanding free access to high-quality preschool for resident
28 three- and four-year old children in districts that do not, at the time
29 of application for a grant, provide State-funded, high-quality, free
30 preschool programs;

31 "Report" means the Educational Adequacy Report issued by the
32 commissioner pursuant to section 4 of this act;

33 "Resident enrollment" means the number of pupils other than
34 preschool pupils, post-graduate pupils, and post-secondary
35 vocational pupils who, on the last school day prior to October 16 of
36 the current school year, are residents of the district and are enrolled
37 in: (1) the public schools of the district, excluding evening schools,
38 (2) another school district, other than a county vocational school
39 district in the same county on a full-time basis, or a State college
40 demonstration school or private school to which the district of
41 residence pays tuition, or (3) a State facility in which they are
42 placed by the district; or are residents of the district and are: (1)
43 receiving home instruction, or (2) in a shared-time vocational
44 program and are regularly attending a school in the district and a
45 county vocational school district. In addition, resident enrollment
46 shall include the number of pupils who, on the last school day prior
47 to October 16 of the prebudget year, are residents of the district and
48 in a State facility in which they were placed by the State. Pupils in

1 a shared-time vocational program shall be counted on an equated
2 full-time basis in accordance with procedures to be established by
3 the commissioner. Resident enrollment shall include regardless of
4 nonresidence, the enrolled children of teaching staff members of the
5 school district or county vocational school district who are
6 permitted, by contract or local district policy, to enroll their
7 children in the educational program of the school district or county
8 vocational school district without payment of tuition. Disabled
9 children between three and five years of age and receiving programs
10 and services pursuant to N.J.S.18A:46-6 shall be included in the
11 resident enrollment of the district;

12 "School district" means any local or regional school district
13 established pursuant to chapter 8 or chapter 13 of Title 18A of the
14 New Jersey Statutes;

15 "State facility" means a State developmental center, a State
16 Division of Youth and Family Services' residential center, a State
17 residential mental health center, a Department of Children and
18 Families Regional Day School, a State training school/secure care
19 facility, a State juvenile community program, a juvenile detention
20 center or a boot camp under the supervisory authority of the
21 Youth Justice Commission pursuant to P.L.1995, c.284 (C.52:17B-
22 169 et seq.), or an institution operated by or under contract with the
23 Department of Corrections, Children and Families or Human
24 Services, or the Youth Justice Commission;

25 "Statewide equalized school tax rate" means the amount
26 calculated by dividing the general fund tax levy for all school
27 districts, which excludes county vocational school districts and
28 county special services school districts as defined pursuant to this
29 section, in the State for the prebudget year by the equalized
30 valuations certified in the year prior to the prebudget year of all
31 taxing districts in the State except taxing districts for which there
32 are not school tax levies;

33 "Tax levy growth limitation" means the permitted annual
34 increase in the adjusted tax levy for a school district as calculated
35 pursuant to sections 3 and 4 of P.L.2007, c.62 (C.18A:7F-38 and
36 18A:7F-39).
37 (cf: P.L.2025, c.35, s.37)
38

39 5. Section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 12. a. **【**District factor group A and B school districts, and district
42 factor group CD school districts with a concentration of at-risk
43 pupils equal to or greater than 40%, shall provide free access to
44 full-day preschool for all three- and four-year old pupils. All other
45 school districts shall provide free access to full-day preschool for
46 at-risk pupils. Preschool education aid shall reflect the cost of the
47 pupil's placement in either a district program, a licensed child care
48 provider program, or a Head Start Program.**】** (Deleted by

1 amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the Legislature as this
2 bill)

3 (1) **【Preschool】** In the case of a school district that received
4 preschool education aid in the 2024-2025 school year, preschool
5 education aid shall be calculated **【for district factor group A and B**
6 **school districts, and for district factor group CD school districts**
7 **with a concentration of at-risk pupils equal to or greater than 40%,】**
8 as follows:

9
$$\text{Aid} = (\text{IDE} \times \text{IDA}) + (\text{PRE} \times \text{PRA}) + (\text{HSE} \times \text{HSA})$$

10 where

11 IDE is the **【number】** projected FTE enrollment for the upcoming
12 school year of district pupils, other than preschool disabled pupils,
13 in an in-district preschool program;

14 IDA is the per pupil aid amount for an in-district preschool
15 program;

16 PRE is the **【number】** projected FTE enrollment for the upcoming
17 school year of district pupils, other than preschool disabled pupils,
18 in a preschool program operated by a licensed child care provider;

19 PRA is the per pupil aid amount for a preschool program
20 operated by a licensed child care provider;

21 HSE is the **【number】** projected FTE enrollment for the
22 upcoming school year of district pupils, other than preschool
23 disabled pupils, in a Head Start Program; and

24 HSA is the per pupil aid amount for a Head Start Program.

25 **【A CD school district with a concentration of at-risk pupils equal to**
26 **or greater than 40% shall be eligible to receive preschool education**
27 **aid pursuant to the provisions of this paragraph for a minimum of**
28 **three school years from the time of initial determination of**
29 **eligibility even if the district's concentration of at-risk pupils falls**
30 **below a 40% concentration of at-risk pupils. In the event that the**
31 **district falls below a 40% concentration of at-risk pupils for two**
32 **consecutive school years, in the third school year the district shall**
33 **receive preschool education aid for each at-risk pupil and for any**
34 **four-year old pupil for whom the district received preschool**
35 **education aid in the prior school year, and that pupil shall receive**
36 **free preschool education.】**

37 (2) **【Preschool education aid shall be calculated for all other**
38 **districts as follows:**

39
$$\text{Aid} = (\text{ARID} \times \text{IDA}) + (\text{ARP} \times \text{PRA}) + (\text{ARHS} \times \text{HSA})$$

40 where

41 ARID is the number of at-risk district pupils, other than
42 preschool disabled pupils, in an in-district preschool program;

43 IDA is the per pupil aid amount for an in-district preschool
44 program;

45 ARP is the number of at-risk district pupils, other than preschool
46 disabled pupils, in a preschool program operated by a licensed child
47 care provider;

1 PRA is the per pupil aid amount for a preschool program
2 operated by a licensed child care provider;

3 ARHS is the number of at-risk district pupils, other than
4 preschool disabled pupils, in a Head Start Program; and

5 HSA is the per pupil aid amount for a Head Start Program.】
6 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the
7 Legislature as this bill)

8 b. 【In accordance with regulations adopted by the
9 commissioner, all districts shall submit a five-year plan that
10 provides for the full implementation of full-day preschool for all
11 eligible three- and four-year olds by the 2013-2014 school year. For
12 the purposes of this section, "full implementation" means serving
13 90% of eligible pupils in accordance with the preschool quality
14 standards adopted by the commissioner or such greater percentage
15 as determined by the commissioner. A school district shall annually
16 update the five-year plan based on actual implementation
17 experience and shall revise its pupil projections in accordance with
18 that experience.】 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
19 before the Legislature as this bill)

20 c. (1) 【In the case of a school district that did not receive any
21 form of preschool aid in the 2007-2008 school year, the 2008-2009
22 school year shall be a preschool planning year. Beginning in the
23 2009-2010 school year, the school district shall receive preschool
24 education aid calculated in accordance with the provisions of
25 subsection a. of this section based upon projected preschool
26 enrollment.

27 In the 2009-2010 school year the school district may also receive
28 start-up funds in accordance with regulations adopted by the
29 commissioner.】 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
30 before the Legislature as this bill)

31 (2) In the case of a school district that received Early Launch to
32 Learning Initiative aid in the 2007-2008 school year, 【for the 2008-
33 2009 school year the district shall receive preschool education aid
34 in an amount equal to the district's allocation of Early Launch to
35 Learning Initiative aid in the 2007-2008 school year. Beginning in
36 the 2009-2010 school year,】 the school district shall receive
37 preschool education aid calculated in accordance with the
38 provisions of paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this section 【based
39 upon projected preschool enrollment.

40 In the 2009-2010 school year the school district may also receive
41 start-up funds in accordance with regulations adopted by the
42 commissioner】 pending a determination by the commissioner that
43 the district is prepared to meet all program requirements for high-
44 quality preschool pursuant to regulations adopted by the
45 commissioner.

46 (3) In the case of a school district that received early childhood
47 program aid in the 2007-2008 school year but did not receive

1 preschool expansion aid or education opportunity aid in that year,
2 **【**for the 2008-2009 school year the district shall receive preschool
3 education aid equal to the greater of the district's 2007-2008 amount
4 of early childhood program aid for preschool or the district's 2007-
5 2008 per pupil allocation of early childhood program aid as
6 included in the district's original 2007-2008 budget certified for
7 taxes, inflated by the CPI, and multiplied by the district's projected
8 preschool enrollment; except that if the district is able to
9 demonstrate in the five-year plan submitted to the commissioner
10 that it has the capacity to offer a full-day three- or four-year-old
11 program, or a full-day three- and four-year-old program, in the
12 2008-2009 school year, the commissioner may approve the funding
13 of the full-day program calculated in accordance with the provisions
14 of subsection a. of this section based upon projected preschool
15 enrollment. The district shall be informed of the commissioner's
16 determination upon approval of the five-year plan. Beginning in the
17 2009-2010 school year,**】** the school district shall receive preschool
18 education aid calculated in accordance with the provisions of
19 paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this section **【**based upon projected
20 preschool enrollment.

21 In the 2009-2010 school year the school district may also receive
22 start-up funds in accordance with regulations adopted by the
23 commissioner**】** pending a determination by the commissioner that
24 the district is prepared to meet all program requirements for high-
25 quality preschool pursuant to regulations adopted by the
26 commissioner.

27 (4) **【**In the case of a school district that received preschool
28 expansion aid or education opportunity aid in the 2007-2008 school
29 year, for the 2008-2009 school year the district shall receive
30 preschool education aid in an amount equal to the preschool budget
31 approved by the commissioner for the 2008-2009 school year.
32 Preschool education aid for the 2008-2009 school year shall be
33 adjusted following receipt of the Application for State School Aid
34 in October 2008. Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, the
35 school district shall receive preschool education aid calculated in
36 accordance with the provisions of subsection a. of this section based
37 upon projected preschool enrollment; except that for any school
38 year the district shall not receive preschool aid in an amount less
39 than either the total amount of preschool aid the district received in
40 the 2008-2009 school year after the State aid adjustment or the
41 district's 2008-2009 school year preschool per pupil aid amount
42 multiplied by the projected number of preschool pupils after the
43 State aid adjustment, whichever is greater.

44 In the 2009-2010 school year the school district may also receive
45 start-up funds in accordance with regulations adopted by the
46 commissioner.**】** (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
47 before the Legislature as this bill)

1 d. For the 2008-2009 school year, the preschool per pupil aid
2 amounts shall be \$11,506 for pupils enrolled in an in-district
3 program, \$12,934 for pupils enrolled in a licensed child care
4 provider program, and \$7,146 for pupils enrolled in a Head Start
5 Program. The preschool per pupil aid amounts shall be adjusted by
6 the CPI in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years as required
7 pursuant to subsection b. of section 4 of this act. For subsequent
8 school years, the preschool per pupil aid amounts shall be
9 established in the Educational Adequacy Report, with the amounts
10 adjusted by the CPI for each of the two school years following the
11 first school year to which the report is applicable.

12 e. A district shall appropriate preschool education aid in a
13 special revenue fund for expenditure. In the event that any
14 preschool education aid is not expended during the budget year, the
15 aid may be carried forward in accordance with regulations adopted
16 by the commissioner.

17 f. In the event that a district has fully implemented a full-day
18 preschool program for three- and four-year old pupils [in
19 accordance with its five-year plan] and meets the preschool quality
20 standards or has provided preschool education to the number of
21 eligible students to be served during a school year in accordance
22 with [that plan and its annual updates and] the preschool quality
23 standards, the district may appropriate preschool education aid [to
24 support kindergarten through grade 12 or to provide preschool
25 education for three- and four-year old pupils for whom the district
26 is not required to provide preschool education upon the approval of
27 the commissioner. The district shall request approval in its annual
28 plan update and any approval granted by the commissioner shall be
29 made during the annual school budget process] for additional
30 purposes that may be designated by the commissioner, which
31 purposes shall include, but not be limited to, providing summer
32 programming for preschool students, professional development for
33 preschool staff, preschool facilities improvements, and
34 transportation services for preschool pupils.

35 g. A school district shall maintain the preschool quality
36 standards as adopted by the commissioner as a condition of receipt
37 of preschool education aid.

38 h. In the case of a school district that first receives preschool
39 education aid in the 2025-2026, 2026-2027, or 2027-2028 school
40 years, the aid shall be provided, within the limit of available
41 appropriations, pursuant to a three-year pilot program established
42 by the commissioner that includes a cost sharing methodology
43 between the State and the school district such that the amount of
44 preschool education aid allocated to the district shall be calculated
45 by multiplying the district aid percentage by the amount calculated
46 pursuant to the formula in paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this
47 section, where the district aid percentage shall be equal to the

1 greater of the district aid percentage as defined pursuant to section 3
2 of P.L.2000, c.72 (C.18A:7G-3) or 40 percent of eligible costs.

3 i. A school district receiving preschool education aid shall
4 obtain approval by the Commissioner of Education, in a manner
5 prescribed by the commissioner, prior to implementing any
6 significant redistribution, as defined by the commissioner, of State-
7 funded preschool seats among district-operated programs, licensed
8 child care providers, and Head Start programs.

9 (cf: P.L.2007, c.260, s.12)

10
11 6. (New section) a. The Department of Education shall, within the
12 limit of funds appropriated, annually provide at least one opportunity
13 to award preschool expansion grants in accordance with the provisions
14 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).
15 A school district shall be eligible to apply for and receive a preschool
16 expansion grant if the district provides full-day kindergarten at the
17 time of application and meets any other criteria the Commissioner of
18 Education deems appropriate. An eligible school district shall submit
19 an application to the commissioner, in a manner and form determined
20 by the commissioner, which application shall include, but not be
21 limited to, the following:

22 (1) a general overview of the district's proposed preschool
23 program operational plan;

24 (2) enrollment projections for preschool students, other than
25 preschool students with disabilities, for the next five years;

26 (3) a description of the district's proposed preschool curriculum;

27 (4) a description of intended strategies to ensure the inclusion of
28 preschool children with disabilities in general education settings to the
29 maximum extent possible;

30 (5) a description of intended strategies to annually identify and
31 recruit families of at-risk pupils and other hard-to-reach populations,
32 and subsequently ensure these children receive priority placement in
33 the preschool program;

34 (6) a demonstration of due diligence to partner with all ready,
35 willing, and able licensed child care providers and Head Start
36 programs in the district's immediate and neighboring communities ¹,
37 which shall be made in a manner determined by the commissioner and
38 shall include, but not be limited to, documenting all efforts the
39 applicant made to engage with all licensed child care providers and
40 Head Start programs in the applicant's immediate and neighboring
41 communities¹;

42 (7) an analysis of community need and the potential impact of a
43 mixed delivery model of preschool education in a format determined
44 by the commissioner or, if the applicant does not propose a mixed
45 delivery model, justification for the decision not to do so, which
46 justification shall include evidence that the district has adequate
47 facility and staffing resources to implement high-quality preschool
48 education without a mixed delivery model ¹or that extenuating

1 circumstances in the eligible school district's community limit
2 accessibility to, or feasibility of partnership with, licensed childcare
3 centers and Head Start programs¹; and

4 (8) a description of the strategies the district has in place for
5 serving eligible preschool students, with a five-year plan to serve 90
6 percent of the district's universe of three- and four-year olds.

7 b. In determining preschool expansion grant amounts and
8 recipients, the commissioner shall give preference to districts in
9 accordance with the concentration of at-risk pupils, as defined in
10 section 3 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-45). Preference given
11 pursuant to this subsection shall ensure that, all other application
12 criteria being equal, applicants with higher concentrations of at-risk
13 students receive funding priority. The commissioner may prioritize
14 applicants representing a consortium of school districts agreeing to
15 make a high-quality preschool program available in all member
16 districts.

17 c. The Department of Education, the Department of Children and
18 Families, and the Department of Human Services shall maintain on the
19 departments' Internet websites a page that includes:

20 (1) a list of all districts ¹**[receiving preschool expansion grants]**
21 offering State-funded preschool¹ for the school year;

22 (2) a list of all districts eligible to apply for preschool expansion
23 grants for the school year;

24 (3) a list of all licensed child care providers and Head Start
25 programs in each district's community, as well as in neighboring
26 communities; and

27 (4) the contact information for all district-operated preschool
28 programs, licensed child care providers, and Head Start programs.

29 d. The Department of Education, the Department of Children and
30 Families, and the Department of Human Services shall annually update
31 the information required pursuant to subsection c. of this section no
32 later than July 14 of each year. ¹The Department of Education, the
33 Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Human
34 Services shall update the information required pursuant to subsection
35 c. of this section in a timely manner after any preschool expansion
36 grants are awarded.¹

37
38 7. (New section) a. A school district that receives preschool
39 education aid pursuant to section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-
40 54) shall:

41 (1) demonstrate due diligence to partner with all ready, willing,
42 and able licensed child care providers and Head Start programs in
43 the immediate and neighboring communities; and

44 (2) submit to the Department of Education an annual program
45 plan detailing the status of the district's preschool program
46 implementation. The plan shall include information specified by the
47 commissioner, including but not limited to:

- 1 (a) the district's comprehensive curriculum;
- 2 (b) protocol for how students' families can access community
3 services, including services offered by licensed child care providers
4 and Head Start programs;
- 5 (c) a description of how the district conducts outreach to
6 families to determine individual family needs, advocate on their
7 behalf, and obtain appropriate community services; and
- 8 (d) a description of how the district identifies and recruits
9 families of at-risk pupils and other hard-to-reach populations, and
10 subsequently ensures these children receive priority placement in
11 the preschool program.
- 12 b. A school district that receives preschool education aid
13 pursuant to section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) shall
14 participate in a system of self-assessment for continuous quality
15 improvement approved by the Department of Education to inform
16 the school district of the status of its preschool program
17 implementation. The system shall identify program areas in need of
18 improvement based on a self-assessment, and shall include a
19 validation visit by a State team at least once every three years. The
20 department may, based on the results of a district's self-assessment
21 and the validation visit, require the district to complete an
22 improvement plan. The improvement plan shall include a detailed
23 explanation and timeline of the steps the district will take to
24 improve areas identified for improvement.
- 25
- 26 8. (New section) The Department of Education, the Department
27 of Children and Families, and the Department of Human Services
28 shall, in consultation with school districts, licensed child care
29 providers, Head Start program providers, and other stakeholders
30 identified by the Commissioner of Education, submit a report to the
31 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) no
32 later than March 1 next following the date of enactment of P.L. ,
33 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) and each
34 March 1 annually thereafter¹ on the status of preschool education in
35 the State and the efficacy of the mixed delivery method of preschool
36 education. The Department of Education may utilize up to \$250,000 of
37 any appropriation for preschool education aid to contract temporary
38 staff to assist with the preparation of the report issued pursuant to this
39 section.
- 40
- 41 9. (New section) a. There is established in the Department of
42 Education a Universal Preschool Implementation Steering Committee.
43 The members of the committee shall be as follows:
- 44 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee;
- 45 (2) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or a designee;
- 46 (3) the Commissioner of Human Services, or a designee;
- 47 (4) the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, or a
48 designee;

- 1 (5) the Commissioner of Health, or a designee;
- 2 (6) the Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Economic
3 Development Authority, or a designee;
- 4 (7) one member appointed by the President of the Senate, who
5 shall be an employee of the Legislature; and
- 6 (8) one member appointed by the Speaker of the General
7 Assembly, who shall be an employee of the Legislature.
- 8 b. The duties of the committee shall be as follows:
 - 9 (1) recommending to the Governor and Legislature a funding
10 methodology for preschool costs to be implemented for all school
11 districts beginning in the 2028-2029 school year, which may include
12 proposing a Preschool Adequacy Budget and preschool education aid
13 formula modeled after the calculation of equalization aid pursuant to
14 section 11 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-53);
 - 15 (2) evaluating the pilot program established pursuant to subsection
16 h. of section 12 of P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-54) for school districts
17 that first receive preschool education aid in the 2025-2026, 2026-2027,
18 and 2027-2028 school years;
 - 19 (3) proposing methods to incentivize school districts to pursue
20 mixed delivery partnerships with licensed child care providers and
21 Head Start programs;
 - 22 (4) proposing optional methods for school districts to establish
23 centralized enrollment systems that prioritize family choice first in
24 determining a preschool student's placement setting;
 - 25 (5) analyzing whether providing an adjustment to school districts'
26 tax levy growth limitation related to preschool costs is necessary or
27 beneficial to the State's preschool expansion efforts; and
 - 28 (6) recommending any appropriate means by which the State can
29 seek to strengthen and expand the preschool workforce.
- 30 c. The steering committee ¹~~may~~ shall¹ convene one or more
31 local subcommittees to solicit input from local practitioners to
32 facilitate completion of the requirements set forth in subsection b. of
33 this section.
- 34 d. The steering committee shall organize within 90 days of the
35 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
36 as this bill).
- 37
- 38 10. (New section) The Department of Education, in consultation
39 with the Department of Children and Families, shall develop and
40 periodically update a Mixed Delivery Model Preschool Handbook
41 to compile all State requirements and associated guidance
42 documents, organized by topic, deemed relevant by the
43 Commissioner of Education. The topics addressed in the handbook
44 shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 45 a. funding and staffing requirements;
 - 46 b. school district and licensed child care provider program
47 administration;
 - 48 c. eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment;

- 1 d. family engagement;
- 2 e. curriculum;
- 3 f. child assessments;
- 4 g. classroom assessments and program evaluation;
- 5 h. optional strategies for school districts to establish centralized
- 6 enrollment systems that prioritize family choice first in determining
- 7 a preschool student's placement setting; and
- 8 i. strategies for supporting contracted licensed child care
- 9 providers in maintaining access to infant and toddler care.

10

11 11. (New section) In order to strengthen and expand the
12 preschool workforce, the Secretary of Higher Education shall
13 develop guidance encouraging two- and four-year public
14 institutions of higher education to enter into joint dual degree
15 admission agreements that require all credits earned toward Early
16 Childhood Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees to be
17 fully transferable and applicable to course requirements for
18 educator preparation programs at four-year institutions of higher
19 education.

20

21 ¹12. (New section) The Department of Children and Families,
22 in consultation with the Department of Human Services and
23 Department of Education, shall develop guidance for licensed child
24 care providers to establish graduated salary scales for private
25 teachers working toward preschool certification. The guidance
26 shall encourage the development of salary scales that provide salary
27 increases for increased academic preparation, including the
28 completion of a Child Development Associate credential, the
29 attainment of credits toward degree completion, the award of a
30 bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and the receipt of
31 an early childhood teacher certification. ¹

32

33 ¹13. 12.¹ N.J.S.18A:44-2 is amended to read as follows:

34 18A:44-2. a. The board of education of **any** a district **may**
35 serve elementary grades shall establish a kindergarten school or
36 kindergarten department, which in order to receive State aid shall
37 be a one-year program in advance of or in preparation for entrance
38 to first grade, in any school under its control, and **may** admit to
39 such kindergarten school or department any child over the age of
40 four and under the age of five and **shall** admit to **such** the
41 kindergarten school or department any child over the age of five
42 and under the age of six years as of October 1 of that school year
43 who is a resident of the district , but a board of education may, in its
44 discretion, admit any student who turns five after this date if they
45 meet entrance requirements as may be established by the rules and
46 regulations of the board through a board approved policy.

1 b. A kindergarten school or kindergarten department established
2 by a board of education shall provide a full-day kindergarten
3 program no later than the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year;
4 provided, however, that a district not providing a full-day
5 kindergarten program prior to the effective date of P.L. ,
6 c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill) may satisfy the
7 requirements of this subsection by entering a sending-receiving
8 relationship with a kindergarten school or kindergarten department
9 established by the board of education of an adjacent school district.
10 The tuition of students attending a kindergarten school or
11 kindergarten department in another district in accordance with a
12 sending-receive agreement shall be determined in accordance with
13 N.J.S.18A:38-19. Attendance at a kindergarten school or
14 kindergarten department shall be free in accordance with the
15 requirements of N.J.S.18A:38-1.
16 (cf: P.L.1996, c.138, s.72)

17
18 ¹**[14.] 13.**¹ Section 8 of P.L.2000, c.72 (C.18A:7G-8) is
19 amended to read as follows:

20 8. a. The number of unhoused students shall be calculated as the
21 number of FTE students who are projected to be enrolled in
22 **[preschool for children with disabilities, preschool,]** kindergarten,
23 grades 1 through 12, and special education services pupil
24 educational programs provided in a district within five years, which
25 are in excess of the functional capacity of the district's current
26 school facilities or the functional capacity of the school facilities
27 which will be available within five years other than the school
28 facilities for which the preliminary eligible costs are determined,
29 based upon the district's long-range facilities plan. The
30 determination of unhoused capacity shall separately consider
31 projected enrollments and functional capacities at the **[early**
32 **childhood and]** elementary (**[preschool]** kindergarten through
33 grade 5), middle (grades 6 through 8), and high school (grades 9
34 through 12) levels. For the purpose of calculating the district's
35 unhoused students, special education services students shall be
36 considered part of the grade level to which the students'
37 chronological age corresponds. In the event that the commissioner
38 approves a school facilities project which involves the construction
39 of a new school facility to replace an existing school facility, which
40 shall accommodate both the unhoused students and the students in
41 the existing school facility, the calculation of the number of
42 unhoused students shall include the number of students currently
43 attending the existing facility which is to be replaced.

44 b. Approved area for unhoused students (AU) shall be
45 determined according to the following formula:

46 $AU = \mathbf{[(UEC \times SEC) +]} (UE \times SE) + (UM \times SM) + (UH \times SH)$
47 where

1 **【UEC,】** UE, UM, UH are the numbers of unhoused students in
2 the **【early childhood,】** elementary, middle, and high school
3 enrollment categories, respectively; and

4 **【SEC,】** SE, SM, SH are the area allowances per FTE student in
5 **【preschool and】** kindergarten **【, grades 1】** through grade 5, grades
6 6 through 8, and grades 9 through 12, respectively. Area allowances
7 shall be determined based on the grade level of a student regardless
8 of the grade configurations used in the school buildings of the
9 district.

10 The minimum area allowance per FTE student shall be as
11 follows:

12 【Preschool】 <u>Kindergarten</u> through grade 5	125 sq. ft.
13 Grades 6 through 8	134 sq. ft.
14 Grades 9 through 12	151 sq. ft.

15 The commissioner, in consultation with the State Treasurer and
16 the Commissioner of Community Affairs, shall adopt regulations
17 that establish a process for the consideration of special
18 circumstances, in addition to those provided in section 5 of
19 P.L.2010, c.72 (C.18A:7G-5), in which the area allowances per FTE
20 student established pursuant to this subsection may be adjusted.
21 Any decision made by the commissioner pursuant to those
22 regulations shall be made in consultation with the State Treasurer
23 and the Commissioner of Community Affairs.

24 (cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.18)

25

26 ¹**【15.】** 14.¹ (New section) The Commissioner of Education
27 shall adopt, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”
28 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations
29 necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

30

31 ¹**【16】** 15¹. This act shall take effect immediately ¹ ₁