

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Commitment to Universal Pre-K for New Jersey

09/16/2021

Governor Also Announces \$17 Million in Funds to Bring High-Quality Pre-K to 19 More School Districts

PALISADES PARK – Building on his commitment to expand early childhood education in New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy today announced that the state will commit to providing universal pre-K to all families across the state over the next several years. Today's round of funding establishes or expands high-quality pre-K programs in 19 additional school districts across the state. The Department of Education will develop a Strategic Plan that will set a roadmap for further pre-K expansion throughout the state.

"Investing in early childhood education lays the foundation for a bright future for our early learners," **said Governor Murphy**. "Our Administration is committed to ensuring that every New Jersey child receives a high-quality education starting with pre-K. While we still have a long way to go to achieve pre-K for all, today's expansion further demonstrates our commitment to reaching as many students as possible."

The Governor's Universal Pre-K Strategic Plan, led by the Department of Education, will focus on the following:

- Prioritizing districts and setting a timeline for expansion;
- Ensuring students have appropriate facilities and quality programming;
- Involving childcare providers and Head Start in planning to avoid displacing existing high-quality early learning centers;
- Optimizing funding streams, including federal funds from the federal Build Back Better Plan; and
- Utilizing best practices from other states that offer expanded/universal pre-k programs.

In addition to vision for pre-K statewide, Governor Murphy announced 19 school districts have been awarded \$17 million in pre-K expansion funding for the 2021-2022 school year. This latest round of funding was announced during a visit today to the Dr. Charles Smith Early Childhood Center in Palisades Park, which received \$823,860 in state funding.

"Research has shown that children's trajectory for academic success starts early, and continues throughout their life," **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "Investing in preschool education pays dividends for our students and future of the State of New Jersey."

"Early childhood education is pivotal in shaping a child's academic career. High quality universal preschool programs have been proven to have a lasting impact well into adulthood. Today's announcement helps us move one step closer to providing all of our state's children with the foundation they need to be successful," **said Senator Teresa Ruiz, chair of the Senate Education Committee**. "Universal preschool has been a cornerstone of my priorities legislatively since I took office and now more than ever we have seen the importance of this infrastructure and the role it plays in ensuring working families have the support they need."

"Pre-k is a critical investment in our children's future, providing them with the educational foundation they need to thrive," **said Assemblywoman Pam Lampitt**. "Every child deserves the essential social and educational development offered by pre-k education. By expanding existing pre-k programs and creating new ones, we build upon New Jersey's strong foundation in ensuring that all children have access to the fundamental curriculum they need to succeed academically. I applaud the Governor for his forward-thinking vision in the area of universal pre-k in New Jersey."

"We commend Gov. Murphy for his steadfast commitment to giving every New Jersey child this important head start in life," **said NJEA President Sean M. Spiller**. "We know that every child has incredible potential, but not every child has the same opportunities and resources to fulfill that potential. This investment in our youngest students is another

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important step in our shared work to build a more just and equitable future.”

“Today’s announcement represents five years of consistent expansion of New Jersey’s state-funded, full day pre-k for working families throughout our state,” **said Sam Crane from Pre-K Our Way.** “We want to thank the Governor and Legislature for their leadership in expanding NJ’s pre-K.”

Each year in office, Governor Murphy has emphasized early childhood education with the announcement of a new round of state funding. During the Murphy Administration, 140 school districts have received funding for either a new high-quality preschool program or to expand an existing preschool to a high-quality program. The expansion has opened preschool seats for over 9,000 children throughout New Jersey.

Districts that received new state funding to expand or create a high-quality preschool program in the 2021-2022 school year include:

County	District	Amount
Atlantic	Mullica Township	\$512,823
Bergen	Palisades Park	\$823,860
Camden	Audubon Boro (Audubon Park)	\$440,319
Camden	Berlin Township	\$336,713
Cape May	Cape May City	\$376,033
Cumberland	Commercial Township	\$563,112
Cumberland	Deerfield Township	\$415,831
Gloucester	Monroe Township	\$1,399,892
Gloucester	Washington Township	\$1,113,420
Gloucester	Westville	\$655,573
Hudson	East Newark	\$337,039
Ocean	Jackson Township	\$3,173,040
Ocean	Ocean Gate	\$264,462
Ocean	Stafford Township	\$3,245,355
Passaic	Bloomingdale	\$540,600
Salem	Penns Grove-Carney’s Point Regional	\$1,138,728
Salem	Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional	\$1,067,165

Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Township	\$672,760
Sussex	Hamburg	\$579,984

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
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