

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: New Jersey Department of Education Announces \$40 Million in Funding Available to Expand High-Quality Preschool into More School Districts

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Governor Murphy Provides Opportunity for Additional Districts to Apply for State Funded Preschool

Trenton – As part of the initiative toward universal preschool, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today invited school districts to apply for a share of \$40 million in funding available to help districts expand or establish new high-quality preschool programs.

The NJDOE has now broadened the number of districts that can apply for funding from those that have 20 percent of their students are from lower-income families (as defined by being eligible for free or reduced priced lunch) to districts with 10 percent of students who meet the income eligibility standards.

After school districts apply to the notice of funding opportunity, the NJDOE is expected in September to notify the districts that have been approved for funding, allowing schools to implement their new high-quality preschool programs in October of this year.

“Expanding high-quality preschool to more and more communities has been a priority of Governor Murphy’s administration,” said Acting Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. “This funding is the latest step in a bold campaign to meet our vision of universal preschool for all of New Jersey.”

Indeed, since 2018 an additional 152 school districts have received state funding to create a new high-quality preschool program or to expand an existing preschool to a high-quality program, opening preschool seats for nearly 9,000 children – numbers that will continue to grow when the \$40 million in preschool expansion aid is awarded this year.

“This funding will substantially impact the lives of thousands of young children and their families this year and far into the future,” said Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan. “Research has shown that children who attend New Jersey’s high-quality preschool program have higher achievement from kindergarten through high school in language arts and literacy, math, and science. We are grateful for Governor Murphy’s continued investment to bring high-quality preschool to even more communities.”

Governor Murphy’s Fiscal 2023 budget includes an additional \$68 million for state-funded preschool, for a total of \$991.8 million in preschool aid. Of the new funding, \$40 million will help school districts create new high-quality preschool programs or to help districts transform their existing preschool to a high-quality program. The remaining \$27.6 million will help those districts that have already implemented a high-quality preschool add additional seats to serve more children. A high-quality preschool is a full-day program with a certificated teacher, an aide, and small classes that are inclusive of children with special needs who have an individualized education program.

For more information, go to the NJDOE’s Division of Early Childhood Education webpage (https://www.nj.gov/education/ece/)

Governor Phil Murphy

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