

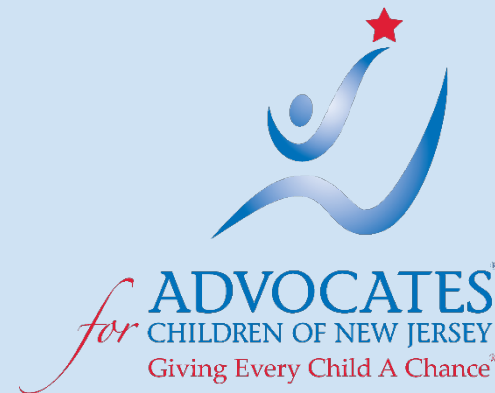
# **New Jersey's State Funded Preschool Program: A Parent's Role in Bringing it to Their Community**

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**National Institute for Early Education Research**

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# Why is Quality Preschool Important?

- By age 5, children have already developed 85 percent of their intellect, personality and skills
- Exposing young children to structured, enriching environments are critically important to brain development
- At a young age, children easily adapt to environments in which they are exposed
- NJ state-funded preschool has shown to result in substantial reductions in grade retention and special education placements

# Early Childhood in New Jersey: Where are We?

- There are currently more than 200 school districts offering state-funded preschool through the NJ Department of Education
- Proposed FY 2024 budget includes an additional \$109 million for preschool expansion, \$40 million of which will go towards expanding public preschool in new districts, bringing the total state spending to over \$1 billion
- The program can be implemented through a “mixed delivery model” of public preschool, child care and Head Start classrooms
- Funding becomes part of a district’s state aid—IT IS NOT A GRANT!
- The list of eligible districts has varied slightly from year to year and eligible districts must apply to DOE for funding.
- Advocacy from individual communities is needed to encourage more eligible districts to apply

# Preschool Expansion and the Budget Timeline

- On February 28<sup>th</sup> Governor Murphy gave his annual budget address outlining his funding vision for FY 2024, including funding for preschool expansion
- Budget process will continue until the budget is approved on or around June 30<sup>th</sup>
- NJ Department of Education (DOE), Division of Early Childhood Services announces a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) and holds mandatory meetings during the first/second week of July
- District applications are required to be submitted to DOE on or about **August 1** with funding awards announced on or around **September 1**

# List of Districts Eligible in 2022-23 School Year\*

- **Atlantic:** Corbin City
  - **Bergen:** Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Edgewater Boro, Elmwood Park, Fair Lawn, Fort Lee, Hasbrook Heights, Leonia, Lyndhurst, Maywood, New Milford, Ridgely, Rochelle Park, Saddle Brook, South Hackensack, Wallington, Westwood
  - **Burlington:** Bass River, Bordentown, Cinnaminson, Delanco, Delran, Florence Twp., Hainesport, Riverton, Southampton, Woodland
  - **Camden:** Barrington, Berlin, Cherry Hill, Haddon Twp., Hi Nella, Laurel Springs, Stratford
  - **Cape May:** Sea Isle City, West Cape May, West Wildwood
  - **Essex:** Bloomfield
  - **Gloucester:** Greenwich, Harrison Twp., Kingsway, Newfield, Franklin, Woodbury Heights
  - **Hudson:** Secaucus
  - **Hunterdon:** Bloomsbury, East Amwell, Flemington-Raritan, Frenchtown, Lebanon
  - **Mercer:** East Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton Twp.
  - **Middlesex:** Dunellen, East Brunswick, Edison, Middlesex, Milltown, Old Bridge, Spotswood, Woodbridge
  - **Monmouth:** Deal, Hazlet, Middletown, Tinton Falls
  - **Morris:** Butler, Lincoln Park, Mine Hill, Mount Arlington, Mount Olive, Parsippany-Troy Hill, Riverdale, Rockaway Twp., Rockaway Borough, Roxbury
  - **Ocean:** Lacey Twp., Long Beach Island, Point Pleasant Beach, Seaside Park, Toms River
  - **Passaic:** Hawthorne, Little Falls, North Haledon, Pompton Lakes, Totowa, Wanaque, West Milford
  - **Salem:** Oldman's Twp.
  - **Somerset:** Bedminster Twp., Bridgewater-Raritan, Somerset Hills, South Bound Brook
  - **Sussex:** Lafayette, Sandyston-Walpak, Stanhope, Sussex-Wantage, Vernon
  - **Union:** Garwood, Kenilworth, Summit City
  - **Warren:** Alpha, Blairstown, Hackettstown, Knowlton, Mansfield, Washington Twp., White Twp.
- \*Note that this list does not include partially funded districts that are also eligible to expand and that a list of eligible districts for 2023-2024 school year has not yet been released by DOE.



# What Does This Mean for Parents?

- Parents in eligible districts can be advocating for this program NOW through “formal” and “informal” conversations.

## FORMAL

- Meeting with other parents
- Speaking at School Board meetings
- Meeting with the Superintendent
- Sending a “Letter to the Editor”

## INFORMAL

- Meeting with Board Members you know
- Meeting with administrators/teachers you know

# Don't Hesitate to Reach Out!

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# *Pre-K Advocacy*

**Tezeta "Tez" Roro**

**President - West Orange Council of PTA's**  
**MBA, REALTOR**

**WEST ORANGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
AWARDED \$1.89M IN PRESCHOOL  
EXPANSION AID BEGINNING WITH  
THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR.**



# The Pre-K advocacy story timeline

OCT 2019

NJPTA Leg Con where I learned about universal Pre-K & qualified districts. Presenter - Cynthia Rice, ESQ. - Senior Policy Analyst for ACNJ (Advocates for Children of New Jersey)

NOV 2019

BOE convo

MAR 2020

PTA Capitol Hill National PTA Leg Con meeting in DC

JAN 2021

Post in moms group - Met Sue Dannermiller (invited Cynthia Rice)

FEB 2021

First committee call Google Form

# The Pre-K advocacy story timeline

APR 2021

Private provider virtual meeting (curriculum, space etc worksheet)

MAY 2021

Joined district internal team

JUNE 2021

More committee calls, updates to committee and larger community via email

SEP 2021

(Pre-K adopted as district and board goal)

\*Consult with Cynthia and team, referred other SI's, kept SI updated on developments and resources, then handed them off to the district to Beth Ann Gardiner - National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

# The Pre-K advocacy story timeline

MAR 2022

NEW INTERIM  
SUPERINTENDENT

JUL 2022

District applied for Pre-  
K funds

SEP 2022

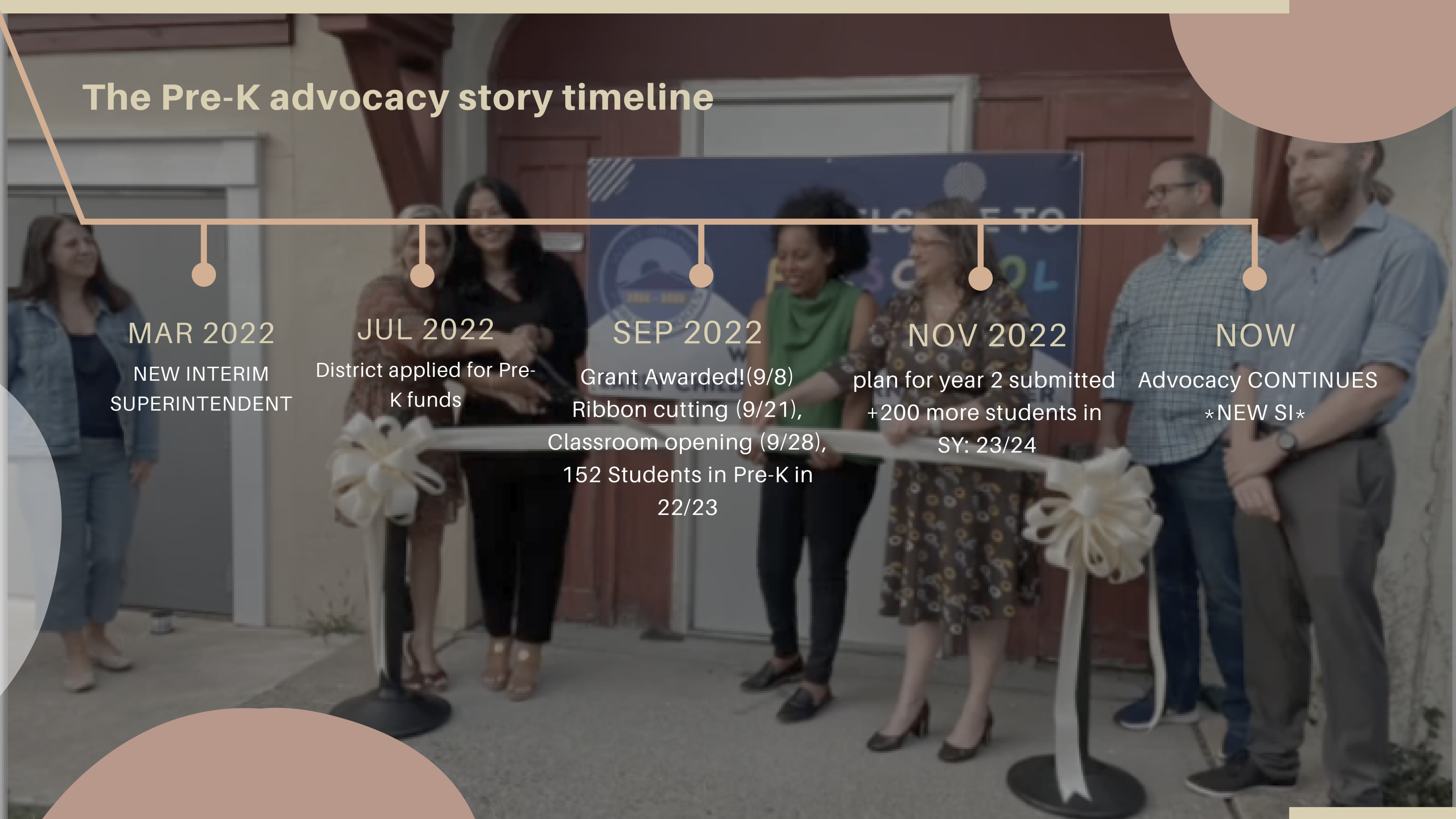
Grant Awarded!(9/8)  
Ribbon cutting (9/21),  
Classroom opening (9/28),  
152 Students in Pre-K in  
22/23

NOV 2022

plan for year 2 submitted  
+200 more students in  
SY: 23/24

NOW

Advocacy CONTINUES  
\*NEW SI\*





# Keys to Success

- Join the PTA & participation in the PTA convention
- Take action, small actions have impact
- Grassroots movements
- Ability to mobilize a community and give them tools
- Template email messages, social media movement, zoom meetings, regular updates, and next steps
- Keeping the district consistently updated
- Fine balance of advocacy and accountability



# Benefits

- Early childhood education for kids
- Financial relief for families
- Opportunity for parents to work outside of the home
- Opportunity to volunteer, attend school, etc.
- Positive impact on family (power) dynamics
- Social-emotional benefits for kids
- Maintain and increase property values



# LET'S CONNECT!

PRESIDENT - WEST ORANGE COUNCIL OF PTA'S

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