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

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April 5, 2023
New Jersey’s Preschool Story Started with A Court Case ....

New Jersey Supreme Court Case, Abbott v. Burke

- Two preschool decisions (1998 and 2000) mandated preschool implementation with quality standards
- 31 districts affected by the Court decisions
- Most districts implemented mixed delivery
State Funded Preschool: Chapter 2

School Funding Reform Act of 2008
• Preschool expansion included in the formula
• Funding stalled until FY 2018 state budget

Preschool Expansion Aid
• Included in last seven state budgets
• Political climate for expansion is positive
• Districts must be “eligible” to receive funding
Early Childhood in New Jersey: Where are We?

• There are currently more than 200 school districts offering state-funded preschool.

• 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 list of eligible districts has only slightly varied from year to year is Little is known about which children are benefiting from preschool.

• “External” advocacy in trying to convince eligible districts to apply has not been successful.

• “Internal” advocacy, i.e. from individual communities is needed.
List of Eligible Districts for 2022-23 School Year

- **Bergen**: Carlstadt, Edgewater Boro, Fort Lee, Maywood, New Milford, Ridgefield, Saddle Brook Twp.
- **Burlington**: Bordentown, Delran, Florence Twp., Riverton, Southampton, Westampton, Woodland
- **Camden**: Cherry Hill, Haddon Twp.
- **Cape May**: Sea Isle City, West Cape May
- **Gloucester**: Harrison Twp., South Harrison
- **Hudson**: Secaucus
- **Hunterdon**: Flemington-Raritan, Frenchtown, Lebanon
- **Mercer**: Hamilton Twp., Lawrence Twp.,
- **Middlesex**: East Brunswick, Edison, Milltown, Old Bridge Spotswood
- **Monmouth**: Deal, Hazlet, Middletown, Tinton Falls
- **Morris**: Butler, Lincoln Park, Mine Hill, Mount Arlington, Mount Olive, Parsippany Troy Hill, Riverdale, Rockaway, Roxbury
- **Ocean**: Lacey Twp., Long Beach Island, Toms River
- **Passaic**: North Haledon, Wanaque, West Milford
- **Salem**: Elsinboro, Oldmans Twp.
- **Somerset**: Bedminster Twp., Somerset Hills Regional
- **Sussex**: Lafayette, Stanhope, Sussex-Wantage, Vernon
- **Union**: Garwood, Kenilworth, Summit City
Preschool Expansion and the Budget Timeline

• On February 28th Governor Murphy gave his annual budget address outlining his funding vision for FY 2024, which included an additional $109 million for preschool expansion

• Budget process will continue and eventually end on or around June 30th

• 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
What Does That Mean for Parents?

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

**FORMAL**
• Speaking at School Board meetings
• Meeting with the Superintendent
• Sending a “Letter to the Editor”
• Meeting with other parents, including educating and meeting with them

**INFORMAL**
• Meeting with Board Members you know
• Meeting with administrators/teachers you know
Don’t Hesitate to Reach Out!

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