



ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS



Support and Additional Considerations for Successful Universal Prekindergarten Expansion

The six education leadership groups listed above and below applaud the Executive Budget’s proposal to expand and streamline Universal Prekindergarten funding.

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, the Executive proposal would raise the minimum per-pupil state allocation to the greater of \$10,000 or the district’s selected Foundation Aid per pupil for all new and existing full day 4-year-old seats. Studies have shown that universal prekindergarten leads to greater academic and social-emotional success, closing achievement gaps, and reductions in intervention and special education services. We are hopeful that the meaningful funding boosts will help allow all districts to successfully open and grow those important programs.

However, we recognize that simply increasing and streamlining the per-pupil allocation will not eradicate every barrier school districts currently face in trying to provide prekindergarten for every student whose family seeks it. We urge continued focus to ensure that universal prekindergarten is an educationally based program.

Specifically:

- **Support the Senate One-House Proposal to Make Prekindergarten Transportation Aidable.** School districts should receive the same support through Transportation Aid for prekindergarten children as for students in other mandated grades. As we work towards ensuring truly universal prekindergarten, this barrier must be eliminated. Ignoring this key funding stream will lead to inequities for families, as not all districts will be able to provide the transportation without guaranteed state aid.
- **Expand Building Aid Eligibility for Prekindergarten Classrooms.** In 2024, NYSED published guidance that clarified how districts can use Building Aid for expanding prekindergarten space, as allowed under law. Under that guidance, certain nontraditional education spaces, such as STEM labs, which are not exclusively classrooms, must be exhausted and repurposed before prekindergarten spaces can generate Building Aid. These limitations should be removed so that districts are not forced to reduce existing K-12 educational programs or space to accommodate prekindergarten.
- **Ensure that “grow your own” teaching programs and other workforce development efforts include the early education workforce.** As demand for early education teachers, aides, and support staff grows rapidly, New York State needs to ensure a robust workforce is ready to meet the needs of students and families.

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While fully supporting the statewide implementation of universal prekindergarten, it is important to recognize the continued inconsistencies and disconnects in early education programs, especially regarding ages of compulsory education and kindergarten requirements.

The increase in per-pupil prekindergarten funding is a long-sought funding proposal that will significantly expand access to children and address inequities that currently exist. Our groups appreciate this investment and looks forward to working with the Governor and Legislature to continue to improve the entire prekindergarten delivery system.