

Special Board of Education Meeting
PPMS Library
March 24, 2022 7PM

1. Call to Order

Dr. Nugent, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Other Members present: Cindy Luty, Cindy Dupointe, Deborah Burke-Grabarek, Charles Raymond and Dan Harris. Megan Gallant was excused. Also present: Dr. Seitsinger; Superintendent, and Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary.

Dr. Nugent stated that BOE Members just received copies of the proposed budget yesterday. Tonight is their first opportunity to discuss it. The Board will not vote on the budget until March 31, 2022 at another Special Meeting.

2. Public Comment

Dr. Nugent read aloud excerpts of 25 emails received by the BOE. The letters were written in support of our PreK program by parents and staff. All emails will be posted along with these minutes.

Dr. Nugent then asked if members in the audience wished to speak.

Bertie Savage: She is a parent of a young daughter with special needs. Her family moved from the South as a military family. Although they miss their family desperately, the education system in the South does not compare to the education system in the northeast. Preston staff have done a wonderful job with her daughter and she wants to see the PK Program continue. She also has a younger son with special needs and a third child on the way. She shared the number of children in the current program with various special needs.

Rob Martin: He is a parent of a young son in grade 1 and has another child entering school soon. He is also an educator. He was very frustrated and expressed his concern about how difficult the pandemic was on children. PK can help them socially, emotionally and cognitively. Many families moved to Preston because of its renowned school system. They do not want to lose that.

Courtney Ennis: She is a parent of an elementary aged son. She is also very frustrated. She attended the BOE Meeting on 3-14-22 and was concerned that PK was even being discussed at that meeting. She stated that parents are looking for better communication. They want to be a part of their children's education.

Susan Strader: She is a teacher and resident of Preston for 26 years. Each and every budget season is frustrating and challenging. She asked that the Board remember their mission – that is to offer the very best opportunities for students and staff. She asked that they support and campaign for the budget. Each and every staff member is needed for the necessary recovery and revitalization of students. It has been a very difficult couple of years for everyone.

Kristine Cuoco: She is a parent of 2 young children in the school system. Older members of the community don't want their taxes to go up because their kids are no longer in the

system. This mentality must end. Expectations for our children are set much higher than ever before. We must keep the PK Program fully intact.

Dr. Nugent thanked all those who took the time to write emails and to attend tonight's meeting. He asked that parents and staff come to the budget meetings that will follow to show their support.

Courtney Ennis asked for a schedule of the next meetings:

Special BOE Meeting 3-31-2022 BOE will vote on their budget (PPMS 7pm)
BOS will present to BOF on 4-13-2022 (PPMS 7:30pm)
BOE will present to BOF on 4-14-2022 (PPMS 7:30pm)
Public Hearing 5-19-2-2022 PVMS 7:30pm
Town Meeting 6-2-2022 PVMS 7:30pm
Referendum 6-14-2022 PPMS

Dr. Seitsinger also thanked everyone for coming and for writing their emails. He stated that the emphasis of the FY23 Budget is to Recover and Revitalize. There is no plan to cut PK. The FY23 Budget does not include anything new. The goal is to maintain the current standards that we have set in place. Mental and physical health, SEL, curriculum, technology and our innovative summer school that partners with Mystic Seaport are all necessities. PreK, equity, and developing shared services are also crucial.

After meeting with administrators etc. Dr. Seitsinger and his staff cut \$499,184.00 from the proposed budget before presenting it to the full board this evening. Over 90% of the budget is fixed cost: contracted salaries, health insurance, and tuitions.

Many districts are facing similar increases but are using things like non-recurring funds to help combat their increases. Incremental mil rate increases, higher collection rate for taxes, and use of fund balances can also help.

Things have shifted significantly since the beginning of our FY23 budget process a month ago. The country is worried about war. Inflation is now at 7.9%, and gas prices and other goods and services are rising. All the while, we are continuing to monitor the pandemic and its permanent impact on our students, families and staff.

There is nothing more important than sustaining staffing and creating programs that support student and staff recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

Our shared experience has reinforced the need to focus on wellbeing, mental health and academic recovery.

3. New Business FY23 BOE Budget Review

The Board reviewed and discussed the following areas of the budget: salaries, health, utilities, special education, plant operations, secondary education, transportation, administrative costs, operational support and IT.

A lengthy discussion followed.

Dr. Nugent asked that Board members review the budget, call with any questions and come to the 3-31-2022 meeting prepared to vote.

4. Adjournment

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45PM. Luty/Burke-Grabarek. Unanimous. Motion Carries.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

BOE Meeting

1 message

Sarah Bolles <sarah.c.bolles@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 12:48 PM

To: "homiskig@prestonschools.org" <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Good afternoon Gloria. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the BOE meeting this evening because I will be at work, but I just wanted to share some thoughts in hopes that they may be considered in any voting that may occur tonight.

I have heard that tonight's meeting may be oriented around removing the pre-school program from PVMS. This would be an incredible injustice to parents and students in our town who have highly regarded our school system for generations. I have one stepdaughter who went through the pre-school program last year, and another stepdaughter who is currently in the program. Both of them have flourished in this program, and I know many other parents feel the same way about their children.

My husband and I, along with several of our friends, have grown up in Preston. We are all raising families now, and we would hate to see the pre-school program be removed as we have seen our children succeed in the program, and many of us have plans for the future to put more children through the program. Many families have moved into Preston just for the school system in itself.

I can only hope that these thoughts will be considered for tonight's meeting, and I appreciate your time. Thank you.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Preschool program

1 message

Brittany Hillyer <britt.hillyer@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 12:27 PM

To: "homiskig@prestonschools.org" <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

I am in complete support of continuing the preschool program, and am honestly surprised that this is under consideration. The school system is a reason that people move to this town (us included), since we're all aware how integral early education is to a child's overall success. Parents pay to send their children, so I don't understand the problem. I voiced my support earlier, when adding extra classes was up for debate, even though my kids are older and weren't affected. Now I have a baby and was thrilled that there is a full day preschool program to eventually send my child to. As working parents it's important to have that full day option because we're not available to pick up during the middle of the day. I would happily pay more to be able to give my child this experience.

Thank you,
Brittany Hillyer



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

BOE Letter

1 message

Haleigh Bresnan <bresnanh@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:57 AM

To: Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Hi Gloria!

I have written a letter for the BOE to be presented at tonight's meeting. I'm sorry it's so lengthy, but with a child who will hopefully be in the program soon I can't help, but speak up.

Have a great day,
Haleigh Bresnan



BOE Letter.docx

14K

Preschool provides some of the first academic and social experiences a child will have in their life. It fosters a love for learning, but also teaches social skills and social emotional development that will be carried through adulthood. Preschool is not what it used to be, meaning it's no longer just learning shapes and colors. Our preschool teachers base their curriculum off of the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards. Within these early learning and development standards there are many domains including math, literacy, social emotional and behavioral skills, gross and fine motor and so much more. With that being said students are learning all of the necessary skills they need to be successful in Kindergarten and in the years to follow. Our preschool program is essential in ensuring students have the skills they need to be successful in their elementary school years.

As someone who teaches at PVMS and a parent of a 2-and-a-half-year-old, I get the best of both worlds. I would be troubled to see my child shipped off to another preschool program. We ultimately moved to Preston knowing the schools provide endless opportunities that we would one day take advantage of. Knowing Preston provides a preschool program gave us some comfort if we ever had a child who needed early intervention or any type of services. We have many preschool aged children in our community who have missed a significant amount of social interactions with other children due to COVID 19. They benefit greatly from not only the services but the expertise of our amazing staff.

Up until about a month ago, I was concerned with my son's speech and specifically his articulation. He was born in October of 2019 just months before the world started wearing masks. As someone in the education field and who studied Speech and Language Pathology, I always knew if he required services Preston would be there to help guide us. To take these services away and make parents look for a different solution would be incredibly unfortunate and a disservice to our youth. With this being said, eliminating preschool takes away more than can ever be explained.

Preston has offered a consistent preschool program for our children and taking it away would be unfair to families who have waited for their children to approach school age. The world is changing, education is evolving and our children need stability. In order for our children and our students to be provided with the best opportunities, we need to vote in favor of them and what they need. Not what was acceptable ten years ago; not what was acceptable even three years ago.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the needs of our children, both now and in the future. They are relying on us to defend and support their learning.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

About the preschool budget being discussed tonight

1 message

Robert Hardesty <robert@hardesty.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:59 AM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Gloria Homiski,

I was surprised to hear that the BOE is seriously considering dropping the Preschool program from the Preston School system. There have been so many studies published by scientists and sociologists about the benefits of an early education that this action seems counter intuitive. Even our famous UConn has published articles on the overwhelming benefits of an organized education system for children before the age of 5. The article is entitled "[The Payoff of Preschool: Investing in CT's Youngest Residents.](#)" It is a worthy read and drives home the importance of an early education.

I recently moved to this town and have one child in the school system and I have been impressed with the education that she has been given. I am not sure what the issue is on why the preschool program needs to be reduced or even cut. I do not see how the monetary savings by doing this outweighs the long-term benefits of this program. It does not seem that expensive. Parents value it enough that they are willing to pay for a portion of this program's costs.

I am sure that there is a way to keep this worthy program and effort should be made to save it.

Regards,

Robert R. Hardesty

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The Payoff of Preschool: Investing in CT's Youngest Residents

- by: [Daron Cyr](#)
- December 23, 2020

- [COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT](#)
- [STUDENTS](#)



Preschool can help ensure that children reach their fullest potential, says doctoral candidate Daron Cyr. (iStock)

Editor's Note: Daron Cyr, Neag School doctoral candidate in the [Learning, Leadership, and Educational Policy](#) program, prepared the following [rapid research brief](#) — in affiliation with the [Center for Education Policy Analysis, Research, and Evaluation](#) (CEPARE) — examining the impact of preschool on children, their families, and society as a whole.

A child's brain reaches approximately 90% of its physical volume by age 5 and in those first five years forms over a million new neural connections every second. The level of cognitive stimulation at age 4 has been found to predict overall intelligence as well as cortical thickness (Brown & Jernigan, 2012; Narr et al, 2007). Unfortunately, children living in poverty not only hear 30 million less words than their peers but are also half as likely to be prepared for kindergarten (Hart & Risley, 2003). The experiences and stresses that occur in a child's first five years not only influence brain structure but also a child's ability to build relationships and acquire knowledge (The Impact of Early Adversity on Children's Development, 2015).

Overall, children in wealthier towns are more likely to attend preschool in Connecticut.

Preschool can help ensure that children reach their fullest potential. **Research suggests that preschool has a strong, positive impact on children's brain development, relationships, and knowledge acquisition, as well as a broader return on investment for society.** This brief summarizes this research and investigates preschool access in Connecticut. Specifically, I analyze preschool exposure in the Connecticut's Alliance districts, the 33 districts with the lowest Accountability index measures, compared to non-Alliance districts. I find a large gap in the percentage of children in Alliance districts who have attended preschool compared to their

counterparts in non-Alliance districts. **Over the past four years, an average of 71.1% of children entering kindergarten in Alliance districts have attended preschool, while, on average, 87.25% of children entering kindergarten in non-Alliance districts have had access to this valuable experience.** I describe academic and social emotional short-term and long-term impacts and summarize research describing potential benefits to specific populations and society at large. I then highlight work that identifies potential returns on investment for each dollar spent on preschool. Finally, I close by providing recommendations to the State regarding expanding access to pre-k⁽¹⁾, especially in districts serving large percentages of children of color and children from low-income households.



CENTER FOR EDUCATION POLICY ANALYSIS,
RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION
(CEPARE)

Who Attends

Preschool in Connecticut?

Overall, children in wealthier towns are more likely to attend preschool in Connecticut. Although only 24% of the total population of 3- and 4-year-olds in Connecticut was enrolled in a state funded preschool in 2016 (Barnett et al, 2018), across the past four years an average of 87.3% of students entering kindergarten in non-Alliance, non-charter schools in Connecticut attended preschool. Meanwhile, an average of only 71.1% of students entering kindergarten in Alliance districts had preschool experience (see Table 1 below). While at first glance these percentages appear high, it is important to recognize that there is a range within these averages. It is also critical to bear in mind that these percentages are children; thousands of children entering kindergarten without preschool experience.

In this time period, the 2016-17 school year registered the lowest percentage of kindergartners with preschool experience in Alliance districts. In that year, 17,251 students entered kindergarten across the 33 Alliance districts, and 5,672 of them had no preschool experience. However, that same year represented one of the highest recorded percentages of kindergartners with preschool experience in non-Alliance districts over the last four years. In 2016-17, 19,416 students entered kindergarten in non-Alliance districts and only 2,542 of them had no preschool experience. When this difference breaks down to students and to classrooms, the implications are powerful. Students without preschool are likely to come to kindergarten lacking foundational skills such as sitting for a story, standing in a line, raising one's hand, and using materials safely and appropriately. In comparison, students who attended preschool are likely to already know some letters and numbers, be able to write their names, and feel more confident in a classroom environment.

In many non-Alliance districts, between 90% and 100% of students enter kindergarten with preschool experience while in some Alliance districts (i.e. East Hartford, Bridgeport, Vernon, East Windsor) barely over 50% of incoming kindergartners attended preschool. Given the short- and long-term impacts of preschool, discussed in detail below, this difference of over 16 percentage points between students in Alliance and non-Alliance districts has significant ramifications for school readiness skills and behavior in Alliance Districts.

Table 1: Weighted percent of kindergartners with preschool experience

Weighted percent of kindergartners with preschool experience: State

	<u>2015-2016</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
State	79.7%	77%	80.2%	79.1%
Non- Alliance^[2]	87.5%	87.1%	86.4%	88.1%
Alliance	71.9%	67.1%	74.4%	71%

The Impact of Preschool on Children’s Educational and Social Outcomes

The extent of the impact of preschool depends on the quality of the program, but in general preschool has been shown to produce both short- and long-term benefits for the individual student, his or her family, and the broader community. In the short term, students who attend pre-K tend to demonstrate greater school readiness and academic growth over time, and also enjoy long-term benefits such as enhanced academic achievement beyond kindergarten as well as social-emotional skills and educational attainment (Campbell, 2014). The family or guardian of a child who attends preschool is more likely to be employed, further their own education, and be in good health (Ramey, 2018). Importantly, preschool also exerts a positive impact on the larger community via societal contributions such as intergenerational graduation rates and wellness, reduced criminal justice costs, and higher earnings and economic stability (Moffitt et al, 2001; Garcia et al, 2016; Ramey, 2018). Children with higher vocabulary, literacy, math, and executive functioning skills, all of which are cultivated in pre-k, have greater success through early elementary and middle school. Thus, without preschool, students are more likely to struggle or remain at or below average throughout elementary and even middle school (Weiland & Yoshika, 2008).

Short-Term Impacts of Preschool



"Short-term or immediate impacts of preschool are evident as students enter kindergarten and early elementary grades (through third grade)," writes Cyr. (Peter Morenus/UConn) Short-term or immediate impacts of preschool are evident as students enter kindergarten and early elementary grades (through third grade). The discrepancies between students who have had preschool experience and those who have not are both academic and social emotional. **Short-term academic impacts include greater school readiness skills in the areas of language, literacy, and mathematics, while short-term social emotional and behavioral impacts are evident in more positive relationships, self-regulation, and lower frequency of negative behaviors.** A meta-analysis over the past twenty five years determined that in general, preschool produces an immediate effect of half a standard deviation on cognitive development and school readiness. This means in the short-term alone, attending preschool has the potential to reduce the school readiness gap by half, or, at the individual level, to boost a student from achieving in the 30th percentile to the 50th percentile (Barnett et al, 2008). Below I describe the short-term academic and social emotional impacts in greater detail.

The discrepancies between students who have had preschool experience and those who have not are both academic and social emotional.

Academic impact.

Academic impacts are those that are generally tested via benchmark assessments or standardized evaluations, and include pre-literacy and early reading skills, letter identification, counting, math skills, problem solving, and oral language. These skills enable students to meet the demands of kindergarten, which now is more academic than in the past, and prepare them for learning in the early elementary years. **Multiple studies indicate that students who attend preschool gain an average of a 1/3 to 1/2 a year of language, reading, and math skills before entering kindergarten, and in the short term, these impacts are generally present through third grade** (Ansari et al, 2017; Campbell et al, 2014; Hill et al, 2015).

Additional research using causal designs allows researchers to isolate the causal impact of attending preschool. Recent studies have used a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) to simulate a randomized trial via pairing children with similar birthdays and either enrollment or non enrollment. This design allows for causal inferences, that is, that effects can be isolated as a direct consequence of having attended preschool. For example, Gormley et al (2008) found that attending a state-funded preschool produced effect sizes greater than other preschool programs in the state of Oklahoma and larger than Head Start across the nation. They found a significant impact of preschool on letter identification (effect size of .985), spelling (effect size of .743), and problem solving (effect size of .355). To further describe the impact of preschool, Gormley et al

(2008) also used the Woodcock Johnson to quantify the boost preschool gave children, measured in months. They determined that public preschool boosted students' pre-reading skills by 9 months, pre-writing by 8 months, and math by 5 months when compared to non-attending peers.

Multiple studies indicate that students who attend preschool gain an average of a $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a year of language, reading, and math skills before entering kindergarten.

Other studies have shown that students entering kindergarten with preschool experience scored significantly higher, in some cases demonstrating more than a year's worth of growth, on Letter-Word identification, problem solving, literacy and executive functioning assessments and were less likely to be retained in kindergarten than their peers with no preschool experience. These benefits last at least through first grade (Applied Survey Research, 2013; Huang et al, 2011; Pesiner-Feinberg et al., 2014; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). These short-term academic benefits are particularly pertinent for at-risk populations (low-income, children of color, language learners, special needs, etc) that tend to stay behind if they start or fall behind, and stand to benefit the most from publicly accessible preschool (Ansari et al, 2017).

Social and behavioral impacts.

Preschool has been found to produce social and behavioral impacts including skills such as conversing with peers and adults, social problem solving, self regulation, and ability to follow directions. In addition, emotional knowledge, or the ability to identify, describe, and regulate one's emotions or those of others (empathy), predicts both current and future social competence, classroom adjustment, and academic success in early childhood – more so than the influence of gender, age, and various risk factors (e.g., poverty, maternal depression). However, these skills are harder to measure and are less frequently researched or cited as an impact of preschool. There is a small but growing body of research around social emotional learning in preschool. For example, Barnett et al (2008) found **social emotional effects of preschool averaging about 0.33 standard deviations, and in the same study noted that half a standard deviation of growth has enough impact to reduce the achievement gap by half**; thus though small, the social emotional impact is noteworthy. Other social emotional impacts include reduced discipline through first grade and reduced incidence of identification as emotionally disturbed (Figlio & Roth, 2009) as well as improved adaptive behaviors, social skills, and self regulation (Yang et al, 2009). Gormley et al (2011) also found that children who attended pre-k were less timid, more attentive, less likely to engage in attention seeking behavior. While the research around short-term social emotional gains is somewhat limited, the development of executive functioning and social competencies in preschool has been found to strongly predict school adjustment and academic achievement through the early elementary years as well as peer acceptance and self regulation into the teen years and will be discussed in greater detail later (Nakimichi, 2009).

Long-Term Impacts of Preschool

Long-term impacts of preschool are those which extend beyond the first three years of elementary school. Several studies point to some lasting effects through middle school, particularly for boys. One of the first and certainly most well known preschool projects of the 1970s, the Carolina Abecedarian Project, was the among the first to document long-term impacts on academic achievement, economic sufficiency, societal benefits, and even adult health as a result of having received quality early childhood education and wrap-around services (Campbell et al, 2014; Garcia, Heckman, Leaf, & Prados, 2016). Furthermore, some long-term impacts, such as lower incidence of retention or of needing special education services, have direct budgetary implications for school districts

Individual academic.

The bulk of long-term impact research comes from three widely known preschools in the 1960s and 70s, the Abecedarian Project, Perry Preschool, and Chicago Child-Parent Centers. While researchers (i.e. Heckman, Reynolds, and Campbell) have demonstrated long-term academic impacts from these preschools, the current body of research remains small. When impacts do not converge or fade with time, studies have captured achievement differences as late as middle school (Gormley et al, 2018) and even higher high school graduation rates associated with having attended preschool (Philips et al, 2016). Research has found that students who attended preschool were 3.9% more likely than non attending peers to be promoted to 8th grade on time compared to peers who did not attend preschool. Similarly other studies have found that students who attended Head Start were 6% less likely to be retained than their non attending peers and 3% less likely to be chronically absent and in fact 6% *more* likely enroll in honors courses (Gormley et al, 2018; Philips et al, 2016). Most recently, Bai et al (2020) found that **achievement gains due to attending preschool increased over time, meaning that students who attended preschool continued to grow and achieve at a higher rate.**

Achievement gains due to attending preschool increased over time, meaning that students who attended preschool continued to grow and achieve at a higher rate.

Specific Populations.

Preschool impacts do not appear uniformly in all demographics of students. For example some researchers have found greater and longer-lasting gains for boys (Anderson et al, 2017) while others have determined that preschool attenders are less likely to be placed in special education classes (Peisner-Feinberg et al, 2019; Ramey et al, 2000). In fact, Ramey et al (2000) reported that by age 12, only 12% of students who had attended an Abecedarian Project Preschool were identified as needing special education versus 48% of their peers in the control cohort. There are students however who truly need special education services, and Yoshikawa et al (2013) found that children with special needs who attended Tulsa's preschool program demonstrated improvements in reading and pre-writing skills comparable to those of typically developing children. This work also found that the benefits extended to other subgroups of learners, including dual language learners and children of immigrants to the same or a greater extent as their native-born English speaking peers.

A few studies have also looked at the impact of preschool on children of color. Aikens et al (2020) found that Black and Latino boys made greater than anticipated growth in math and letter word identification while attending Head Start, likely due to a variety of factors including classroom environment and positive relationships between home and school. Huang et al (2011) found that Black and Hispanic preschool attenders from low-income families were significantly less likely to repeat kindergarten and experienced gains lasting through first grade. Similarly, Ansari et al (2017) found that Latino children who had enrolled in public preschool experienced gains that lasted through third grade. Lastly, in their analysis of preschool enrollment in Connecticut, Montrosse-Moorhead et al (2019) found statistically significant gains in reading and math for Black children from low income families but smaller gains for LatinX students and otherwise non-notable effect differences. The authors note in their discussion however that Connecticut's public preschool program may not be reaching its entire target population, less frequent attendance may have hindered LatinX student gains, and that differences in program quality may have affected these findings.

Increasing low-income children of colors' access to pre-k could shrink the Black-white school readiness

gap by nearly 20% and the Latino-white school readiness gap by almost 36%.

Additionally, several studies have found that preschool provides particular benefits for children from low income families of color. **Increasing low-income children of colors' access to pre-k could shrink the Black-white school readiness gap by nearly 20% and the Latino-white school readiness gap by almost 36%** (Gormley et al, 2016; Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). A meta analysis of 29 different studies found that low income children in particular experience significantly improved (.241 difference in means) social competence compare to their peers without preschool experience (Yang et al, 2019). Moreover, low-income children are more likely to experience neglect or abuse than higher-income children and preschool can help mitigate these risks. Reynolds et al (2004) found that children , low-income or not, in public preschool programs were half as likely to be victims of abuse or neglect as their non attending peers.

Life-long behavioral impacts.



According to one set of studies, preschool attenders were three times more likely to be enrolled or to have attended a four-year college or university, and four times more likely to graduate. (GradImages)

Research also suggests that preschool has longer-term benefits. Learning self-regulation or the ability to control one's body in preschool, is associated with better coping skills in adolescence, higher SAT scores, higher levels of education, and less substance abuse as adults (Campbell et al 2016; Heckman, et al, 2010; Mischel et al., 2011; Moffitt et al., 2011). In fact Moffitt et al (2011) found that learned self control (a key preschool skill) predicted adult outcomes as well as IQ and social class. Specifically, Mischel et al (2011) found that will power or the ability to delay gratification in preschoolers predicted positive adult outcomes including but not limited to academic achievement, perceived self-worth, use of effective coping mechanisms, less drug use, greater ability to focus on tasks, reduced mental illness, and better overall health. Additional behavioral impacts are also evident in the academic achievement, employment, and overall health of preschool attenders. Follow-up studies of the Carolina Abecedarian Program found that **by age 21, 67% of individuals who attended preschool were either employed in a skilled position or attending higher education versus 47% of their non-preschool attending peers.** The same students were also three times more likely to be enrolled or have attended a four-year college or university and four times more likely to graduate. Former Abecedarian students were also 20% less likely to become teen parents, experienced fewer depression symptoms, reported less usage of illegal drugs, and were overall in better health. Longitudinal studies of the Child-Parent Centers in Chicago also found that preschool participants were 32% less likely to be arrested for a felony than their comparison cohort, and 20% less likely to be incarcerated (Anderson, 2014; Reynolds et al, 2007; Reynolds et al, 2011). One study (Farah et al, 2017) even looked at the brains of 40 year olds who had attended preschool and found statistically significant positive effects on the cortical grey volume as well as

white matter volume (Campbell et al, 2001; Campbell et al 2002; Campbell et al, 2014; Ramey et al, 1979). In short, the long-term benefits of preschool are considerable.

In addition to long-term benefits for individuals attending preschool, research from a fifty-year follow-up of Perry Preschool suggests that positive impacts of preschool don't end with those who attend it, but rather they extend to the next generation. In fact, over 60% of children of Perry Preschool graduates completed high school without suspension, addiction, or arrest, compared to 40% of their peers whose parents did not attend Perry Preschool. They are in general, healthier, have higher educational attainment, and live in more stable family environments than those in the control cohort (Heckman, 2019).

Costs and Returns on Investment

Given the copious research supporting the impact of preschool, it is worth noting that preschool programs are costly to run. However, numerous studies have identified a positive return on investment. The three seminal studies found **net benefits to the community ranging from \$3-\$17 for every dollar invested in the programs** (Masse & Barnett, 2002; Barnett, 1996; Schweinhart et al, 1993; Reynolds et al, 2002). In fact, the benefits of preschool are so high that even if middle and upper middle class students gained only a tenth of the benefits that low-income children gain, two years of preschool would still be a sound public investment (Barnett et al, 1986; Barnett et al, 2008). Another study found that **birth to five programs targeting disadvantaged children delivered a 13% annual return on investment** (Garcia et al, 2016).

Net benefits to the community range from \$3-\$17 for every dollar invested in the programs.

More than half of the reported returns on investment show up as higher future incomes of preschool attendees. Former Perry preschoolers made on average 25% more than their non-attending peers (Heckman et al, 2010) while Abecedarian preschoolers made approximately 60% more than non-attending peers (Campbell et al, 2012). Other notable returns show up as less money spent on remediation and tutors (\$4 for every dollar spent) for elementary students who attended preschool as well as reduced spending in the criminal justice system (Heckman et al, 2010), approximately \$3-\$8 less for each dollar spent on preschool (Campbell, et al 2012; Reynolds, 2001; 2002; 2011).

Recommendations

The research is clear: preschool has a positive impact on children, their families, and society. Children in Alliance districts are less likely to enroll in pre-K and thus lose out on the considerable benefits it bestows to children and their families. The state also misses out on the long-term benefits of more children attending preschool in these districts. A clear implication of this research is to **implement universal preschool in the districts that need it most.**

The research is clear: preschool has a positive impact on children, their families, and society.

Publicly funded universal preschool for all students would lead to positive outcomes for the state of Connecticut. In the 2017-2018 school year, the index score gap between high needs students (special education, language learners, and low income) and non-high needs students was 17.5 in ELA and 21.3 in Math (Callahan, 2019). The considerable impact of preschool on students with special needs or from low income homes supports the need for universally accessible preschool in order to shrink this gap. Universal preschool would also help to alleviate the huge financial burden of childcare and preschool costs on families. Given the current state of the economy and unemployment, access to quality childcare and preschool would be a tremendous boost to

wages earned. Ultimately, universal preschool would also lead to higher educational attainment and wages for its participants as well, which would help to drive Connecticut's economy in the future.



Daron Cyr is a doctoral candidate in the Learning, Leadership, and Education Policy program at UConn's Neag School. (Courtesy of Daron Cyr) The benefits of universal preschool for the next generation are already considerable and worth investing in. The fact that access to preschool might also influence the subsequent generation magnifies the need and justification for increased preschool funding in the state of Connecticut. Implementing universal preschool in Alliance districts is an important first step towards reducing achievement and attainment gaps and investing in Connecticut's future.

Daron Cyr is a doctoral candidate in the Learning, Leadership, and Education Policy program at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education. Her research interests include equity of access specifically in the field of parent engagement, and in the transition from preschool to kindergarten. Her doctoral work follows a BS in elementary education and an MA in curriculum and instruction, also from UConn. Prior to pursuing a PhD, Daron taught kindergarten and first grade and wrote curriculum in New Haven, Connecticut. She is now also teaching her own kindergartener at home! For more information, contact daron.cyr@uconn.edu.

⁽¹⁾ I use "pre-k" and "preschool" interchangeably in this brief.

⁽²⁾ These data exclude charter schools due to low enrollment.

CEPARE produces high-quality research, evaluation, and policy analysis that informs leaders and policymakers on a range of pressing issues, with a particular focus on enhancing social justice and equity across p-20 educational settings in Connecticut and beyond. CEPARE produced this brief as part of the SETER Alliance, which aims to strengthen and support learning opportunities in Connecticut's Alliance districts. Learn more about CEPARE cepare.uconn.edu. Access the [original PDF of this brief](#) (including all references).



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Email for tonight's meeting

1 message

Lisa Barile <barilel@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:59 AM

To: Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Hi Gloria,
Could someone please read this email below at tonight's meeting.
Thank you,
Lisa

Dear Preston Community,

My name is Lisa Barile and I have been a Preston resident for 25 years and I have worked in the preschool program in Preston for 23 years. To see conversations about this amazing preschool program being cut or eliminated is extremely upsetting.

In preschool we work on skills from the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards that give students a strong foundation to help them be successful in all of their elementary years to follow. Not only do we work on teaching children about sharing, working collaboratively together, and being great citizens, but we also work on skills like letter and letter sound recognition, name writing (a skill students will use for their lives), math skills like counting and learning numbers and so much more. Everything students need to be the most successful in their academic career.

Preston's preschool program has offered so much to the students and families of this wonderful community and to see thoughts of this program being reduced or eliminated is truly a shame. Please consider this when making your decision and voting on the Preston budget.

Sincerely,
Lisa
Sent from my iPhone



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Fwd: BOE Budget Consideration For Fully Funding PreK

1 message

Lynn DePina <lynndepina@sbcglobal.net>
To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 12:10 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lynn <lynndepina@sbcglobal.net>
Date: March 24, 2022 at 11:57:56 AM EDT
To: homiskig@prestonschools.org
Subject: Fwd: BOE Budget Consideration For Fully Funding PreK

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lynn <lynndepina@sbcglobal.net>
Subject: BOE Budget Consideration For Fully Funding PreK
Date: March 24, 2022 at 11:55:51 AM EDT
To: homski@prestonschools.org
Cc: seitsingerr@prestonschools.org

Hello Ms. Homski,

While I regret that I am unable to attend the BOE meeting tonight centering around budget decisions, I am hoping my input would be recognized.

I am a retired ECE Administrator from Norwich Public Schools and, more importantly, a Preston resident for the past 22 years. I am excited about the future of my grandchildren attending prek and beyond in the schools where their grandfather and family attended. I want to take this opportunity to express my concerns of the possibility of cutting some of the PreK classes from the BOE budget.

I know you are well aware of all the, researched based data that shows the importance of Early Childhood programs. Early childhood programming provides our youngest learners with the necessary skills they need to be fully prepared for kindergarten and beyond. Ask any kindergarten teacher what skills they want their incoming students to have and they will tell you, "be prepared to be part of a social group, able to attend for small periods of time and have the social / emotional skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten". These skills, as well as the learning domains of cognition, physical development and linguistics are taught to our Preston preschoolers through well planned play activities. One might say that all our preschoolers are doing is playing all day so do we really need to provide this opportunity in our schools. The answer is yes!!!! First, as a school district you should celebrate and be proud of the fact that your early childhood teachers understand the importance of play and ensure that every student has well planned and implemented play experiences that help them become the engaged, creative, curious student that they are. Second, the world is still experiencing a health crisis that has affected everyone in our community as well. Our young children need normalcy back in their lives. They need to be part of a social, caring community that embraces who they are and what they can become. Prek offers that opportunity to every Preston child and should be on the forefront of supporting our children.

Please, make our community proud. Show our Preston residents that we care about the

needs of our young children and that we, as a community, are honoring our responsibility to ensure they have every opportunity available to give them a great start in life.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lynn DePina
ECE Advocate / Preston Resident
[101 Middle Rd](#)
[Preston CT 06365](#)
860-886-9251



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Tonight's BOE Meeting

1 message

Brionna Lyn <brionnalynphoto@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:32 AM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Good morning,

Although I am unable to attend tonight's meeting I still want to make sure my voice is heard. It was brought to my attention that at the last meeting, cutting the pre-k program was at the center of meeting the budget cuts required. This would be a massive disservice to the youth in our town.

Quality education at a young age is paramount for all children's development. My husband and I purchased our home in Preston because of the reputation of the school system here, mostly because we heard amazing things about the pre-k program. Especially now during a global pandemic, many young children have been deprived of the educational and social settings that preschool provides. These are both crucial for development and the thought of cutting this program is extremely upsetting for me and many other parents in town.

I believe if anything should be cut, the pre-k program should not even be on the list of options. I know that the superintendent and BOE are currently searching for a "central office" building. If anything this should be held off. With the current prices for construction and the fact that their jobs are being done fine without it, it is not a necessity like pre-k, and should be put on the back burner.

Just this year alone we've seen the increase in interest for the pre-k program, and as a mom who has two children currently enrolled and a third that would be enrolled in two years I hope that this decision is not made lightly. The board of education is supposed to have the student's best interest in mind, and this decision feels very much like the opposite.

Best regards,
Brionna Sommo
860-319-3644



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Letter to BOE for 3/24 meeting regarding Prek

1 message

Marissa Heater <marissaandguy2019@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:41 AM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Dear Board Members, The fact that cutting the Pre-k program is even up for discussion makes my stomach turn in disgust. This is such a blatant disregard for this town's childrens future and their most important building blocks. As a young family who bought our first house in what we thought was a beautiful town, we would have never moved here without the pre-K program. Members I beg of you please don't fail our children.

Thank you,
Marissa Heater



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

PreSchool program Removal

1 message

Nick Beers <nbeers9@yahoo.com>
To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:44 AM

Good Morning,

I would like to start this off by saying I have been a preston resident for the last 4 years. Although i do not have any children (yet), I have my friends in town that do.

That being said, the removal of the Preston Pre-School program is not an idea that the town or BOE should entertain. This is a paramount age for child growth and development. So many children will suffer due to the removal of this program. I have numerous friends who still pay out of pocket for this service, and thats bad enough as it is. Please, as a preston resident and a person who may someday have a child that will need to attend this program please do not remove it. Thank you for your concern.

Regards,
Nick Beers
2 Downing Drive.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Pre-school

1 message

Wilcox, Danielle <Danielle.Wilcox@hhchealth.org>
To: "Homiskig@prestonschools.org" <Homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:44 AM

Good morning,

I wanted to express my concern for the vote that is being held this evening.

I personally feel that cutting the preschool program at PVMS will negatively affect our community and school system. Early development is paramount to the success of our youth. There are many families in our community that depend on this program.

Danielle Wilcox, RHIA

Site Manager

Hartford HealthCare

Health Information Management/East Region

[326 Washington Street, Norwich, CT 06360](#)

P: 860.889.8331, Ext. 2438

F: 860.425.3879

C: 860.491.5248

E: danielle.wilcox@hhchealth.org

W: HartfordHealthCare.org



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Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Pre-k

1 message

Connie <aaqua213@yahoo.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:47 AM

To: Homiskig@prestonschools.org

Hello Mrs. Homiski,

I'm writing to you because it was just brought to the attention of myself and some Preston residents that Pre-k could possibly be eliminated from Preston Veterans. My family and I are completely against this and would like Pre-k to still be apart of Preston. We have a young daughter who would hopefully be attending for the following school year. Im just not quite sure why this is even on the agenda as an options from my understanding parents pay for Pre-k so not sure where the savings would really be coming from. Unfortunately I'm unable to attend the meeting tonight since I will be at work but I would like to be heard in letting you know that I disagree with the possible elimination of Pre-k for Preston's schools.

Sincerely,

Constance Papathanasiou

(860-867-6862)



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Education Budget - Pre School

1 message

Katherine Malafronte <malafronte.katie@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:56 AM

To: Homiskig@prestonschools.org

Good morning,

I would like to express my concern about the education/town budget proposed cutting of the pre-school program here in Preston. As a resident, educator, Realtor and Mother I feel that by cutting this program we are setting our towns early childhood students up for failure. Early childhood education experiences are so beneficial to children's interactions with peers, adults, and their community.

As a town we are surrounded by towns (Ledyard, Stonington, etc...)that are adding money and increasing their preschool programs. We would be setting our town up to reverse the growth of families that are currently seeking out our amazing town for homes. I am completely against cutting Family PAID pre-school programs from our budget.

Kind regards,
Katie Malafronte

Sent from my iPhone



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Preschool program

1 message

stacimarie <stacimarie@aol.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:01 AM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Good morning,

It has been brought to my attention that there is question of removing the preschool program from PVMS. I'm writing to you to express my concerns. My oldest daughter is currently in kindergarten. She started school during the pandemic and she was still able to flourish and thrive in the preschool program. It was a wonderful transition for her from daycare to the school system regardless of the health restrictions the pandemic provided. My youngest daughter will be 2 next week and the thought of her not being able to participate in the Preston school system preschool program in the coming years as well, is heartbreaking to me. The structure, learning, and experiences that are provided through the preschool program at our school system is amazing. My question is if the preschool program is paid for by parents via tuition, how is this a matter of a budget issue? Surely there are cuts elsewhere that could be made. I really hope you understand the impact this would take on the families in our town.

Thank you,
Stacie Houle

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Preston Pre-K

1 message

Kayla Thompson <kayla.thompson16@outlook.com>
To: "Homiskig@prestonschools.org" <Homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:32 AM

Hi,

I am submitting my letter in support of the pre-school program in Preston and ask that it not be cut. I have two kids right now in first grade and pre-k and can tell you they are thriving in this school system. We will be sending another one to the pre-k program in a couple of years. We did not send my first daughter to pre-k and my second one is developmentally and academically well ahead of where my first daughter was at this age because she is attending pre-k at PVMS. The teachers in the pre-k program are fantastic and help to set our students up for success academically moving forward. It is an integral part of our school system and I think cutting it would be a huge disservice to the children of this town. Also as much as people don't like to talk about this, school is not meant to be childcare..... but the reality is that it is for a lot of people, that doesn't discount the fact that kids are going there for education but it does relieve some of the pressure on parents of figuring out childcare. Gone are the days where most families can live off of one income and with two working parents there are childcare needs. Being in a rural town there are not a lot of options close by for pre-school programs and currently there is a childcare shortage in this country and I don't foresee that changing soon. So not only does this program support the kids of this town but it also supports their families.

On another note it is one program that there is some reimbursement for by the parents so it does in some aspects pay for itself. I am sure the cost is more than the reimbursement but would there be the opportunity to increase the tuition some to cover the increased costs of keeping the program running? I know I can only speak for myself but I would much rather pay a little more to keep the program going then to lose it all together. I also feel that there is the opportunity to look closely at the budget to find other cost savings options than cutting the preschool program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kayla Thompson
148 Ross Rd
Preston CT 06365
Get [Outlook for iOS](#)



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Support for Preschool program

1 message

Nicole Ortiz <nicoleeddy1@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 11:39 AM

To: Homiskig@prestonschools.org

Good morning from a fellow tax paying Preston resident and concerned parent. I have lived in Preston my entire life minus college and a short period following. Preston's School District has provided me with the tools to become a successful professional and integral part of our society. Upon planning a family, my husband and I spoke fondly of the education and support I received from Preston schools and our town in order to ensure success. We felt it was very important to live in a town that would provide the same for our children starting at such a young age. I am saddened over the years at how much we have to fight to pass the education budget and keep the preschool program. We need to advocate for the children and their future.

I currently have two children enrolled at PVMS and one more will make his way through in the next few years. The other two having the opportunity to start preschool in Preston, with their peers/teachers/mentors etc that they will grow up with until 8th grade is integral in their success. Establishing these relationships, school routines, set curriculum etc in my opinion is giving them the most opportunity for success.

It unfortunately has already been voted on to have a sliding scale as a payment plan. Unsure why if the town was in a uproar about this 2 years ago we are back here again. This makes our town seem like they do not respect or value tax payers, education or our children.

Their education (which includes socialization and extracurricular activities) starting young is not only their future, but also YOUR future! In years to come they will migrate back to this community after furthering their education and be here for the exact people that are voting no for them

Please understand our fight to support these growing children as early as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nicole Eddy Ortiz

Sent from my iPhone



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

3/24 BOE Meeting, Pre K Program

1 message

Victoria Shotts <delouisev@gmail.com>

To: "homiskig@prestonschools.org" <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 9:51 AM

Good morning,

I saw a message on an online forum that one of the topics for tonight's meeting is about the possible removal of the pre K program. Although I cannot attend the meeting tonight, I wanted to express my opinion that I do not wish to see the program removed. I have two younger kids who will be attending Preston Schools in the next couple of years. I have heard so many great things about the program that it was a big factor in my family deciding to move to Preston. I hope that the program finds a way to continue on!

Thank you,
Victoria Shotts



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Letter of Support

1 message

Beth Bonosconi <bonosconib@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 8:48 AM

To: Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Dr. Nugent,

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Beth Bonosconi, I live at 5 Tyler Drive and I have worked in the Preston School System for 25 years.

I would like to state that I am in complete support of the education budget as it stands. I ask that there is deep reflection, consideration, appreciation and continued investment made in all that has been accomplished in the last two years in the face of the unknown. The strength of the entire staff and their continued commitment to the education of the children of Preston needs to be reflected in a budget that supports all needs going forward.

The budget must remain whole to continue to move forward with the restoration and rejuvenation for our students' social and emotional well-being. This will enrich their learning as well and help to fill the gap that Covid left. To consider anything less than this is not only a disservice to those who give their all everyday, but to the students themselves who put their trust in us to offer everything we have to continue to create a school climate rich in access to all of their needs. This includes the extreme importance of maintaining the Preschool Program as it stands. The program is paramount to the beginning successes of every little human when they take their first step into the building to begin their educational journey through the grades. To eliminate this program would be a disgrace to all the littles of Preston who deserve the exposure to a solid program and a jump start into their learning. The little students entering now are the Covid gap generation that need a strong beginning now more than ever. To do less is to rob them of the very foundation of their learning.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Bonosconi



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

PreSchool Program and Budget Meeting

1 message

Vernotzy, Britany <Britany.Vernotzy@ct.gov>
To: "homiskig@prestonschools.org" <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:22 AM

Good Morning Ma'am,

My name is Britany Vernotzy and I'm a resident of Preston. I am writing to you regarding tonights meeting. I unfortunately have to work and will not be able to attend tonights meeting.

We have 4 children, one who currently attends Preston Plains Middle School and my triplets are set to start Pre-K this coming school year. As a matter of fact we had our screening yesterday. My boys are beyond excited to ride the school bus with their big brother, meet new friends and learn at their new school. To end such a valuable program would be a travesty for all of the children and families in this town. We moved to Preston to raise our family in a positive, safe, healthy, and productive environment. And the foundation of this is a great education.

"Preschool is important for so many reasons. Preschool teaches our children how to become learners. It provides opportunities for children to learn in ways that interest them, building a positive association with learning. A good preschool program will help a child develop a healthy drive to learn. A drive that they will take with them throughout their time in school."

Please, please don't let our children lose this opportunity

Best Regards,

Britany Vernotzy

860.912.2939

120 Ross Road

Correction Officer Britany Vernotzy

Property Officer

York CI

860.451.3238 Tel

860.451.3237 Fax



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Preschool program

1 message

Angella Ciccotti <aeciccotti@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:13 AM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Hi I'm currently a parent of a 5 year old in Preston veterans memorial School and I have an almost 2 year old daughter who I have been really looking forward to putting in your preschool program it's part of the reason that we moved to Preston or back to Preston I should say I grew up in Preston but one of our biggest factors was the school system and the preschool program and I know that budgets are not fun and stuff has to be cut but maybe make the preschool program like you have to pay if you make over a certain amount of money or something like that but to cut the program completely would be horrible there aren't places that you can trust to bring your kids to and I at least I know I can trust Preston schools or at least I think I can and it's part of the reason that she isn't in anything right now I'm waiting to put her in preschool because I trust my child will be in good hands so I just thought I would give my two cents into this thank you so much.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

BOE meeting concerns

1 message

Laura Martin <Laura6184@yahoo.com>
To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:14 AM

Good morning,

I am emailing you to voice my concern over the topic of removing the pre-k program. I feel that this is a huge disservice to families in Preston. As a mother of an almost 3 year old, who we are very much looking forward to sending to PVMS, I am very upset that this is even a consideration. I have seen the progress that the pre-k program has made with other children, my oldest included, and hope that it continues in the future. By not providing pre-k as an option it does not prepare the students for kindergarten and in my opinion makes for a more difficult transition. I truly hope the board takes our concerns seriously, as I am sure I'm not the only parent who would be very upset to see the pre-k program disappear when these kids need it the most.

Thank you,
Laura Martin

Sent from my iPhone



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

BOE meeting 3/24/022

1 message

Jaclyn Iskra <jaclynbeser@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 10:13 AM

To: "homiskig@prestonschools.org" <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Good morning,

It's come to my attention via the Preston Community Voice group that the BOE meeting tonight is largely centered around the prospect of removing the pre-k program altogether.

My son Wesley is a pre-k student at PVMS and despite some hiccups with the rotation of substitute teachers in his class, Wesley has absolutely flourished in the pre-k program. He has gained independence, friendships, and a well rounded education.

At the end of each day we ask Wesley what his favorite part of the day was and 9 times out of 10 it involves a funny thing his friend or teachers said or a fun activity he experienced at school. He gets physical and mental stimulation above what I can provide at home as a disabled stay at home parent as well. Wesley's father is in the military and between the difficulties military children face in forming friendships and community plus my struggles as a disabled person with performing daily tasks like driving, having the option to send Wesley on the bus to school (we adore Ms. Sherry!) and knowing he's safe in a well protected building is HUGE to us as a family. So huge, in fact, that we have been looking forward to sending his little brother Jonas to pre-k at PVMS when the time comes next year.

To whomever is in charge of determining the fate of the pre-k program at PVMS, I urge you to remember and consider what makes the state of Connecticut so highly regarded in the realm of education. I know we are not the only military family who moved to Preston because we heard of the great education schools here provide. We must not let our littlest community members feel left behind. Especially in a more rural area with minimal other options close by, I cannot imagine having the physical ability to take Jonas to a pre-k program anywhere else, let alone praying we could afford it as costs rise steeply across the nation. I also know how valuable it is to make friends within a community so close knit as our beautiful Preston, and I hoped to give Jonas the same educational and community experience as Wesley since it has served Wesley so well thus far.

I cannot attend the meeting tonight but still wanted my voice heard, and I hope this email can do just that. I'm okay with it being shared at the meeting as well.

Thank you and have a great day,

Jaclyn Iskra



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

board of ed meeting comment 3/24 7pm

1 message

Megan Izbicki Koniecko <meganizbicki@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 2:26 PM

To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

When my husband and I were choosing our forever location, we were split between Preston (where he grew up) and Lisbon (where I grew up). Andy has lived here all of his life and was very proud of his schools. We chose Preston because of the school system, especially since they had a prek option.

My prek son just turned 4 in October. He is small but mighty. He is super smart but I wasn't sure how he'd be socially or emotionally in a school setting. I sent him to preschool and he is flourishing. The best part about this program is that it is a full day program. He receives the tools he needs to succeed in all areas where he is lacking. The teachers told me he is blooming. We want to continue using this program for our son's two younger siblings, both of which are very similar to our preschooler socially and emotionally. I do not mind paying for a program that is preparing my child to be successful from day one. Please reconsider keeping the program so that both my other children can have the same opportunities that my current son has. We shouldn't be cutting from educating our kids.

Thank you.

Megan Koniecko
17 McClimon Road
Preston
8603032191



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Public Comment for 3/24 BOE Meeting

1 message

Cara Sawyer <cara.h.sawyer@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 2:07 PM

To: Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Understanding that the BOE budget is not yet finalized and still fluid, I think it is important now to voice support that the pre-K program is not considered as a potential savings cut. It has proven to be a vital program for early intervention and in preparing kids for kindergarten and beyond, both socially and academically. I would urge the Board to consider alternative options rather than take away this valuable resource to the Preston students and community.

Areas that directly affect the students' academics, physical and mental well-being should be the last items to be considered for cuts, especially by those claiming to be working on behalf of, and in the best interests of, the students.

Separately, no matter the space constraints, we certainly should not be discussing renting/renovating a new Central Office in lieu of continuing our pre-K programming.

Thanks.
Cara Sawyer
Miller Road



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Tonight's BOE meeting

1 message

Shailyn O'Connell <shailynoc@charter.net>
To: Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 1:07 PM

Hello,

I'm unable to attend tonight's meeting but would love to share my thoughts on the rumored proposal of cutting the preschool program.

My daughter is currently enrolled in PVMS's preschool program and over this year I have been able to watch her grow so much. I believe this program is extremely important to the town because it better prepares these children for the kindergarten year. With all the changes our children have undergone within the last two years, it would be a disservice for the future generations to not have the same opportunity- and with that being said, if the school isn't providing this early education program for its students, bad habits created from other programs not under the same curriculum may be formed and hard to fix moving forward with educating the incoming kindergarten class. My husband grew up in Preston and it's school system is what enticed us to stay in this area. As my daughter will be moving up to kindergarten this next school year, we are soon expecting twins that we hope to have the same opportunity as our daughter.



Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

BOE Letter

1 message

Rebecca Brigner <jacarusor@gmail.com>
To: homiskig@prestonschools.org

Thu, Mar 24, 2022 at 1:28 PM

Ms. Gloria Homiski,

I hope this email finds you well.

I have recently become aware of the Board of Education meeting tonight, which I am unable to attend, but wanted to share my thoughts with you in regards to the possibility of Preston's preschool program being removed - an idea that I was saddened to hear.

My husband and I moved into our brand new home in Preston in January of 2019. We built our home for many reasons, but the main reason was because we knew we wanted to start our family in this wonderful town because of the school system and for the many opportunities. My husband went through Preston schools. Stories about past teachers, his experiences and his love for Preston are continuous conversations we have.

On March 6, 2021 we welcomed our baby girl into this world. As a first time parent, my worries have changed - she comes first. It is my job as a parent to advocate for her now and for the very near future. She deserves all that we can offer, as well as all the other nearing-school-aged children do. We would be upset to see changes made to the preschool program we have in place.

Preschool has unlimited benefits for our children. Some benefits that come to mind are socialization opportunities, adjustment to routines, emotional development, building independence, exposure to diversity, etc. It amazes to hear of all the wonderful things children can benefit from before entering kindergarten. It would be disheartening to see that being pulled away from our children that are not even in a place to advocate for their educational needs yet.

I have a strong belief that we can work together to make sure our children receive all the opportunities they can now and in the future. Thank you for your time, it is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Brigner