



# Monroe County School Boards Association

## Position Paper: Universal Pre-Kindergarten in NYS Public Schools

Research shows that children who attend high-quality Pre-K enter Kindergarten better prepared academically and socially, have stronger reading and math skills, have higher graduation rates, and are less likely to need special education or retention later on in their academic journey. UPK aims to reduce educational disparities by providing a structured learning environment that is child-centered, culturally diverse, and focused on developing crucial skills for long-term success in school and life.

**MCSBA requests:** Our membership calls for reforms to provide universal access to pre-kindergarten programs.

- **Underfunded:** Provide state funding that accurately reflects the real cost of Pre-K, including inflationary factors in each public school district.
- **Administrative Complexities:** Multiple grant pathways and staff/space shortages left over \$160 million unspent in 2023-2024.
- **Expansion Fund:** An annual expansion fund would create more Pre-K seats for students.

ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most districts receive <b>less than \$10,000 per student</b>, which falls below the real cost of implementing Pre-K.</li> <li>● Administrative complexity and staff/space shortages caused over <b>\$160 million in earmarked UPK funds to go unspent</b> in 2023-24.</li> <li>● Universal Prekindergarten is unreachable for many districts due to a <b>lack of usable space</b>, as not all available spaces are suitable for the unique requirements of our youngest learners.</li> <li>● There is an <b>inconsistent quality</b> of accessible programs between district-run and community-based programs.</li> <li>● Inequitable access results from community-based partner competition and the limited availability of <b>transportation and wrap-around</b> services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fund the Real Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provide state funding that accurately reflects the real cost of Pre-K, including inflationary factors in each public school district.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure Equity in Reimbursement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Reimbursement needs to be equal, at least to the rate of \$10,000, for every child in pre-kindergarten to provide equity for all students, districts, and community-based partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Establish an Expansion Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Create an annual expansion fund (\$25–\$50 million) for districts to open more Pre-K seats.</li> </ul> <p><b>Simplify and Streamline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Streamline processes that reduce administrative burden, align payment schedules, combine grant funding sources, and provide consistency throughout the state.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide Flexible Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ We ask that the state not allocate funds earmarked for UPK to districts without an existing program, but instead provide these districts with funds that are able to be utilized by their community.</li> </ul>