

## 2016 Issues Brief: Early Childhood Education

The NYS PTA believes that all children should have complete and equal access to pre-school educational opportunities. Education for young children should be designed and overseen around standards adopted by the NYS Board of Regents and NYS Education Department. Pre-school must include attention to the unique developmental nature of the social/emotional, physical and academic experiences of young children that address the needs of whole child learning. Furthermore, parents and guardians must be an integral part of the early childhood education experience.

Implementation of quality programming that assures such opportunities requires consistent standards that flow seamlessly from pre-kindergarten through early elementary grades. Success likewise requires consistency in program structure, research-based strategies that are age and developmentally appropriate, access to well-trained professionals and funding that is adequate, predictable and equitable. In responding to these aspirations, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Establish Universal Pre-kindergarten statewide in all public school districts.** Funding should be available to provide access to all children with optional participation. Program funding should be predictable and based on the same state aid distribution models that support kindergarten through grade twelve programs.
- **Require Full Day Kindergarten.** NYS PTA proposes that all districts provide a full day kindergarten program. NYS PTA recognizes, however, that some children may require a part time transition period to adjust to a full day program and proposes a process under which such children may enter on a part time basis, later converting to a full time program.
- **Support NYS Board of Regents and Education Department oversight of kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs.** The 2016 Executive budget proposes to consolidate and streamline pre-kindergarten programs by creating a new, politically appointed board to oversee pre-kindergarten programs. While NYS PTA agrees with the governor that it is time to consolidate and streamline pre-kindergarten programs, we also maintain that the educational integrity of such programs must not be subject to the political influence suggested in the Executive Budget. Effectiveness and consistency with K-12 programming demand that educational responsibility for pre-kindergarten reside in the education department.

## Talking Points: Early Childhood Education

The NYS PTA believes that all children should have complete and equal access to educational opportunities. Early education for young children from three to eight years of age should be built around standards adopted by the NYS Board of Regents. We propose:

- **Charge the NYS Board of Regents and Education Department with oversight of all pre-school education, assuring consistent education p-20.**
- **Adopt predictable Universal Pre-kindergarten funding statewide in all public schools that includes trained educators, adequate curriculum, support staff, transportation and parent engagement.** Grant funding for pre-school is unpredictable and insufficient to support UPK for all. Pre-kindergarten education support will be compromised without consistent formula-based funding.
- **Require and support full day kindergarten**