

### Elementary and Secondary Education Hearing Testimony

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On Long Island the three BOCES and two Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies have been anchoring a collaborative effort known as the Long Island Pre-K Initiative. The intention of this group is to provide professional development for Pre-K Providers, strengthen the relationships between the Island's school districts and community-based organizations who provide Pre-K. The initiative also examines whether regional approaches might ameliorate some of the challenges associated with the expansion of Pre-K in our urban/suburban and rural settings.

Publically funded opportunities for Pre-K on Long Island lag behind New York City and other parts of the State – in fact, we are the least funded region in New York. There are historical reasons for this as well as some serious structural challenges to expansion. Our communities are changing and Long Island districts are now feeling a real need for Pre-K funding and programs. Unfortunately, the current funding structures and identification of needs based on individual district data makes it difficult, if not impossible, for many Long Island districts to serve their children and their families.

We recognize that the State will have to build funding to meet a goal of access for all children. But, as we build towards funding for all - we recommend that the funds be distributed to districts based on needs of students or the individual schools rather than data represented at a district level. Furthermore, regional collaborations should be encouraged so that districts and families assess a number of Pre-K programs and locations, and that the real costs associated with administration, professional development, facilities and other suburban considerations such as transportation, might be shared and more efficient.

We encourage the State to examine the real regional costs of providing a full-day Pre-K program and encourage the continued focus on Pre-K so that all children across New York State are served. The Long Island Pre-K Initiative has continued to work to drill down to better understand regional challenges, resources and opportunities for collaboration.

The Long Island Pre-K Initiative suggests that funding be available to establish Regional Technical Assistance Centers on Long Island and other areas in the State to support the expansion of high-quality Pre-K in throughout New York