

## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF NOTE

**Topic:** 2025-2026 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates

**Date:** June 2025

**Action Requested:** ☐ Review ☒ Action/Consent ☐ Action/Discussion

**Held In:** ☒ Full Board ☐ State Schools ☐ United We Learn

### SUMMARY OF ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD:

To review and take action on the request to approve the 2025-2026 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates.

### COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends that the board approve the preschool per-child rates for 2025-2026. The rates are based upon the budget approved by the 2024 General Assembly.

### APPLICABLE STATUTE OR REGULATION:

KRS 157.3175, 702 KAR 3:250

### BACKGROUND:

#### *Existing Policy:*

The state-funded preschool program is available to 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities and 4-year-olds whose household income falls within 160% of federal poverty guidelines. Children who do not meet eligibility requirements may still participate if space is available. Established in 1990, preschool services are designed to provide children with developmentally appropriate teaching and learning experiences, as well as access to medical, mental health and social services. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) administers this program through a non-competitive state grant allocation process.

A formula is used to distribute funding to school districts. Amounts are based on the average number of children served on December 1 and March 1 of the previous academic year. The sum of this average is multiplied by per-child rates approved by the Kentucky Board of Education for the new school year. There is a standard "per-child" rate for three enrollment categories: at-risk (income eligible), speech, and developmental delay. There is a weighted category for children with severe/multiple disabilities. While funding is based upon a "per-child" rate, funds may be used to support any allowable preschool expenditure in school districts.

*Summary of Issue:*

Each spring, the Kentucky Board of Education establishes the per-child rates for the Kentucky Preschool Program for the upcoming school year based on the appropriation provided by the General Assembly. The following preschool rates for at-risk children and children with disabilities are recommended for the 2025-2026 school year:

At-Risk:	\$4,022
Speech:	\$4,022
Developmental Delay:	\$4,022
Severe:	\$7,643

*Budget Impact:*


The General Assembly appropriated \$84,481,100 to the state-funded preschool program for each year of the 2024-2026 fiscal biennium. The preschool program is level funded for 2025-2026.

Kentucky's preschool enrollment decreased last year. The average number of children enrolled on December 1 and March 1 went from 20,292 in school year 2023-2024 to 19,409 in school year 2024-2025.

**GROUPS CONSULTED AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:** The Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) and the Office of Finance and Operations (OFO) work closely together to finalize preschool enrollment counts, per child rates and school district funding allocations. In addition, staff communicate regularly with multiple stakeholder groups, including the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Child Care Advisory Council, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and other advocacy groups such as the Prichard Committee, about action needed to increase quality and access to early learning environments.

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

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**Commissioner of Education**

<b>Category:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Educator Workforce Diversity <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait of a Graduate Partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Racial Equity Commitment <input type="checkbox"/> Student-Centered Accountability System <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District Support
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