

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE) STAFF NOTE

**Topic:** 2026-2027 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates

**Date:** June 2026

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

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

## SYNOPSIS OF WHAT YOU WILL BE SHARING:

Review and request for approval of the 2026-2027 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates.

## COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends that the board approve the preschool per-child rates for 2026-2027. The rates are based upon the budget approved by the 2026 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 2026-2027 school year:

At-Risk:	\$4,174
Speech:	\$4,174
Developmental Delay:	\$4,174

Severe: \$7,929

*Budget Impact:*

The General Assembly appropriated \$84,481,100 to the state-funded preschool program for each year of the 2026-2028 fiscal biennium. The preschool program is level funded for 2026-2027.

Kentucky's preschool enrollment decreased last year. The average number of children enrolled on December 1 and March 1 went from 19,409 in school year 2024-2025 to 18,713 in school year 2025-2026.

*Groups Consulted and a Brief Summary of Responses:*

The KDE 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.

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

Dr. Gretta Hylton, Associate Commissioner  
Office of Special Education and Early Learning  
Email: Gretta.Hylton@education.ky.gov  
(502) 564-4970



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**Commissioner of Education**

**GOALS/PRIORITIES:** Indicate all applicable options.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster Educational Innovation Through Vibrant Learning Experiences
<input type="checkbox"/> Advance Educational Excellence Through Continuous Professional Improvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultivate Collaborative Partnerships
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislation
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner's Management