



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

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Lt. Governor

LAMONT O. REPOLLET,
Commissioner

April 1, 2020

Mr. Gregory Tatum, Superintendent
Union Township School District
2369 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083

SUBJECT: 2020-2021 Preschool Program Plan and Budget Approval

Dear Mr. Tatum:

As requested by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), the Union Township School District submitted the 2020-2021 Preschool Program Plan and 2020-2021 Enrollment/Budget Planning Workbook. This letter serves as notice that the DECE approves the district's plan and budget contingent upon receipt of a budget statement that is aligned with the correct Preschool Education Aid amount listed below and in the district's 2020-2021 state aid notice. Please also revise the entire budget planning workbook tables (Table 1, Table 2, Table 4, Table 4A, Schedule A, if applicable Provider updated Per Pupil Amounts) to align to budget statement changes. The resubmitted budget must also include funding for classified children in general education classrooms. This information must be received by April 30, 2020.

Under the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA), the district will receive Preschool Education Aid (PEA) in the estimated amount of \$3,733,788 for 270 general education students. The district's updated 2020-2021 Enrollment/Budget Planning Workbook must indicate a total amount allocated to the preschool program, including prior year PEA carryover and funding for students with special needs included in general education classrooms.

The DECE has reviewed the Union Township School District's submission and finds that the district has a sufficient plan to meet all criteria set forth in *Elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs - N.J.A.C. 6A:13A et seq.* with the exception of the area(s) described below. Please take note of the bullets below and incorporate them into the implementation of your program for the 2020-2021 school year and your planning for future school years

- The district needs to continue its efforts to include preschool children with disabilities in general education settings to the maximum extent possible. Union Township School District's inclusion rate is 41.7 percent. Classrooms where children with IEPs are served with their general education peers should reflect the natural proportion typically found in the community. Best practice generally recommends two to three children with IEPs per general education classroom. Furthermore, as children are placed in inclusion classrooms, they

should be fully included to the maximum extent possible as dictated by their IEP. All children enrolled in a general education classroom should be counted as fully enrolled in that classroom, regardless of the percentage of time spent in the classroom during the preschool day.

- The district is projected to serve less than 90 percent of its eligible universe of general education preschoolers and should begin to plan for expansion to increase the percentage served.
- In accordance with *New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines*, the district should budget for the appropriate ratio of 1:20 Master Teachers and in accordance with state regulations for the Preschool Intervention Referral Team (PIRT).
- Districts should ensure that preschool staff receives updated curriculum and assessment training from the developers.
- The Early Childhood Advisory Council should be established with diverse community representatives who are integrally involved in advising the preschool program and work collaboratively — across state agencies, and with the insight and input from the local level.
- The district is advised that all administrators serving in the preschool program must meet the required qualifications established by the NJDOE. In addition to coursework and professional development opportunities, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association offers an Early Childhood Leadership Academy.

Private Providers:

The Union Township School District's Preschool Program Plan indicates that the district will contract with one (1) private provider and no Head Start providers in 2020-2021 to implement its preschool program as represented on Table 2 and the Private Provider Per Pupil Amounts Worksheet.

The Union Township School District is responsible for ensuring that each provider can meet the elements of a high-quality preschool program as set forth in *N.J.A.C. 6A:13A et seq.* The district must also verify the accuracy of provider costs and ensure that private providers make expenditures in strict accordance with reasonable and customary costs based on the SFRA, 2019-20 Private Provider Expenditure Guidance, *N.J.A.C. 6A:13A et seq.*, the Preschool Education Program Contract, and quarterly expenditure reports. Planning budget documents (and any approved modifications or transfers) shall be used by all Head Start programs and other private providers as the basis for their quarterly expenditure reports.

If, at any time, the DECE determines that any of the information submitted is knowingly false or inaccurate, the DECE may take appropriate action including, but not limited to, revising its approval, recouping any misappropriated funds, recommending the termination of private provider contracts, and referring evidence to law enforcement agencies.

Please be advised that the preschool budget must be incorporated into your district budget. PEA is based upon your approved projected enrollment and may be subject to change pending the actual enrollment figures for the school year.

This determination may be appealed to the Commissioner in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:13A:11.1(a)2*.

We wish you and your staff continued success in the implementation of your preschool programs. If you have any questions, please contact us at (609) 376-9077.

Sincerely,



Cary A. Booker
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Early Childhood Education

c: Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
Kevin Dehmer
Tonya D. Coston
Daryl Palmieri
Annie Moses

