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NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES HISTORIC EXPANSION OF PRE-K TO MORE THAN 51,000 CHILDREN

Mayor de Blasio: ‘We are building a new and better foundation for our children and our city’

To mark first day of school, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña visit schools across all five boroughs

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña today launched the largest and most ambitious expansion of pre-K of any city in the nation’s history. In total, 51,500 children are now registered to attend full-day, high-quality pre-K—more than double the 20,000 children who attended those programs last year.

The launch of “Pre-K for All” has been a monumental undertaking spanning a dozen City agencies, involving thousands of teachers and education professionals, and partnering with hundreds of schools and community-based providers. This is the first stage of a two-year expansion that will bring full-day pre-K to all 73,000 eligible 4-year-olds in New York City.

Full-day pre-K is the cornerstone of the de Blasio administration’s plan to transform public education in New York City. Paired with the doubling of after-school enrichment for middle schools, the creation of new community schools, and a historic contract with New York City’s teachers, high-quality pre-K represents change at a scale that will raise achievement and reduce inequality across all communities.

“We are building a new and better foundation for our children and our city. This is a monumental moment in the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families. It has taken the dedication of an untold number of educators, parents and activists to bring us to this moment. We fought and we pushed so hard because we believed our families could not and should not wait. And today, the dream of Pre-K for All becomes a reality in New York City,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

In recognition of the pre-K expansion, today’s visits included stops to welcome new pre-K students and their families at two new free, full-day, high-quality pre-K programs at community-based early childhood centers in Brooklyn and Queens. At the Brooklyn and Queens sites, the Mayor and Chancellor showcased the transformational nature of Pre-K for All for tens of thousands of families—the extra year of high-quality instruction is going to change the trajectory of students’ lives.

“On the first day of school, we learn that anything is possible,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “While we’ve been hard at work all summer preparing and supporting our students and school staff, today we get back to work building the future of our City—giving our children the great education that will put them on the path to college, valuable careers, and a lifetime of learning. And as a lifelong educator, I am so proud that we are giving tens of thousands more children a stronger foundation on which to build.”

“No city has ever attempted what New York City is doing today. This is a transformative opportunity that will lift up kids in every community—from East New York, where I was born and raised, to the South Bronx and the Upper West Side. We are building something that reaches not just the lucky few, but every child,” said **Deputy Mayor Richard Buery**.

“A quality early education prepares children for a lifetime of success,” said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. “The City’s expansive and unprecedented emphasis on educating our youngest citizens and providing critical services to families supports the well-being of all our children, enabling them to realize their full potential in school and beyond.”

The Mayor’s Office, the Department of Education, and other City agencies have worked tirelessly throughout the summer to ensure that each pre-K program across our unified system of public schools and community-based early childhood centers offers safe and supportive classrooms, quality teachers, and cutting-edge curricula that facilitate academic and social learning and development. Early childhood experts will continue to monitor the sites and provide targeted supports for teachers throughout the school year, ensuring that program quality stays strong.

The Launch of Pre-K for All, by the numbers:

- 51,500 4-year-olds registered for programs
- 1,655 public schools and Community-Based Early Childhood Centers providing pre-K
- 180 days of education lasting 6 hours and 20 minutes
- \$300 million in new pre-K funding
- 1,000 new pre-K lead teachers
- 6,000 inspections and site visits to pre-K centers this summer by the FDNY, health department, buildings department, and the Department of Education to ensure the safety and quality of every site

“The first day of school is an exciting time for all of our city’s students, families, teachers and administrators. With pre-K in full effect, thriving new community schools, and free lunch programs offered at our middle schools, we are moving toward a city that prioritizes increased educational opportunity for our students,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**.

“Today is a truly wonderful day for the children and families of New York City. Having created the first statewide universal pre-K initiative nearly two decades ago, I have fought relentlessly to bring expanded full-day, universal pre-K to the children of our state. Now we are realizing this dream, having committed \$1.5 billion over the next five years to make a huge difference in the lives of so many. I commend Mayor de Blasio for working so hard to develop a program that will transform public education in New York City,” said **Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver**.

“This new school year also marks an exciting new chapter for tens of thousands of the city’s toddlers who will be receiving full funded pre-K. By providing this jumpstart on their education, we ensure our youngest students have the early tools they need for a bright future. I am proud to join with Mayor de Blasio to celebrate this important moment in the educational legacy of New York City,” said **Senate Co-Leader Jeffrey D. Klein**.

“Today we celebrate an historic step forward in our children’s schooling with an unprecedented expansion of early education for more than 50,000 kids entering pre-K. Mayor de Blasio deserves thanks for prioritizing this important advancement, and I look forward to continuing our efforts to grow the number of pre-K seats by tens of thousands more next year,” said **State Senator Michael Gianaris**.

“This is a tremendous day for New York City. Thousands of kids will be going off to pre-K today, many of whom never had access to this critical program before. Pre-K has a proven positive impact on children—both in

and out of the classroom—and it cannot be overstated. In the long-term, this will have the potential to dramatically reduce poverty and income inequality. I would like to thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership as we begin this historic school year,” said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**.

“The first day of school is always an exciting time, but this year, it’s doubly exciting because New York City has accomplished what many said couldn’t be done—to provide high-quality universal pre-kindergarten,” said **City Council Education Committee Chairman Daniel Dromm**. “Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Carmen Fariña deserve full credit for making this happen. I am confident that we are on the path to true educational reform.”

The Mayor and Chancellor will visit five schools across all five boroughs to mark the start of the school year:

- To start the day, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña will visit Inner Force Tots, a Brooklyn CBECC serving 145 4-year-old pre-K students.
- The Mayor will then join pre-K students at Sacred Heart on Staten Island, a Catholic school serving 54 pre-K students. Meanwhile, Chancellor Fariña will visit 6th and 7th grade classes at Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School on Staten Island.
- Next, the Mayor and Chancellor will visit with elementary school students at P.S. 69 in the Bronx for lunch.
- Following lunch at P.S. 69, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña will greet students and families as they leave Home Sweet Home Children’s School, a Community-Based Early Childhood Center serving 90 pre-K students in Fresh Meadows.
- To wrap up the first day of school, the Mayor and Chancellor will attend a Spanish class at Amber Charter School in East Harlem.

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