



NJDOE News

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For Immediate Release: October 22, 2009

Pew Center on the States Pre-K Now Report Highlights New Jersey's Continued Investment in High-Quality Preschool Despite National Economic Crisis

New Jersey was one of two states singled out by a Pew Center on the States report released today commending state leaders who maintained their commitment to preschool programs by increasing financial support despite revenue shortfalls. New Jersey and Alabama were the two states highlighted in Pew's Pre-K Now report for "getting the job done."

The report, *Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2010*, commends New Jersey's legislators for approving Governor Jon S. Corzine's proposal to continue the state's investment in high-quality preschool programs and to increase state funding for preschool by \$52 million. The net total increase nationwide for Fiscal Year 2010 was \$64 million.

"The foundation of New Jersey's economy begins with the investments we make in early childhood education and quality preschool initiatives," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "I am proud that during trying economic times, we have remained committed to ensuring that all students across the Garden State have access to high-quality, full-day preschool programs that will lead to a brighter future."

According to the report, New Jersey made "prudent choices" for Fiscal Year 2010 that ensure education opportunities for more at-risk children while acknowledging fiscal limitations. Leaders in "New Jersey understand that high-quality pre-k is an essential support in tough times and a wise investment for a better future," stated the report.

"By opting to protect and even increase funding for high-quality pre-k, these lawmakers are supporting working families, giving children the chance to enter kindergarten ready to learn, investing in programs with proven returns and building the economic competitiveness of their states and the nation for years to come," concluded the report.

The Pew report can be found at: <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/>

In another report released in May, Pew's Pre-K Now campaign said Governor Corzine emerged as a "national leader" for making New Jersey's high-quality preschool program a fiscal priority.

Enrollment in state-support preschool programs is expected this year to exceed 50,000 students. Approximately 46,200 students in 2005-06 were enrolled in high-quality programs in both the former Abbott and non-Abbott districts.

"New Jersey's high-quality preschool program has become a national model for providing at-risk three- and four-year-olds the skills they need to enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed," said Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy. "The Pew Center on the State's recognition of New Jersey's efforts led by Governor Corzine is further evidence that we are making a solid investment in the future of our children and our state."

State-supported preschool programs began in 1999 in the 31 former Abbott district as the result of a N.J. Supreme Court decision. Standards for the preschool programs include a maximum class size of 15; certified teachers with early childhood expertise; assistant teachers in every classroom; comprehensive services; and a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to meet learning standards.

A Rutgers University study released in July found that children who attended the high-quality preschool education program in the former Abbott district outperformed their peers in first and second grades. The study, *The APPLES Blossom: Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES) Results through 2nd Grade*, also showed that children who had two years of preschool rather than just one had double the advantages.

The study, which was conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers, followed children who had participated in the former Abbott district preschools through second grade.