

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
WITH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007

5:30 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL WORK ROOM

AGENDA

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| I. Welcome and Comments | Mayor William D. Euille |
| II. Brief History of Early Childhood and Current Initiatives | Debra R. Collins, Director
Human Services |
| III. Vision for Early Childhood in the City of Alexandria | Sean McEneamy, Chair
Early Childhood Commission |
| IV. City Council Discussion | |

Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in the City Council work Session may call the City Clerk and Clerk of Council's Office at (703) 838-4500 (TTY/TDD 838-5056). We request that you provide a 48-hour notice so that the proper arrangements may be made.

WS
12-11-07



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12/11/2007 01:09 PM

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Subject COA Contact Us: D.C. Council Chair Vincent C. Gray Announces Pre-Kindergarten Legislation



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Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
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Subject: D.C. Council Chair Vincent C. Gray Announces Pre-Kindergarten Legislation
Comments: Please read before Council Work Session
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D.C. Council Chair Vincent C. Gray Announces Pre-Kindergarten Legislation

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- DC Council Chair Vincent Gray introduced landmark public education reform legislation today that promises to revolutionize the way in which District families prepare their children for school. The legislation establishes new, high-quality pre-k classrooms for three- and four-year-olds who lack access to pre-k and improves the quality of many existing classrooms.

For the first time, DC families will have access to high quality pre-k across community-based programs, public schools and public charter schools. For the first time, legislation paints a clear picture of what high-quality pre-k looks like and draws the clear, research-based link between quality pre-k and school success.

"Our city's children deserve nothing less than a first-rate public education system that can transform all of their hopes and dreams into reality. High-quality pre-k for all will ensure that children enter Kindergarten with the skills and knowledge to succeed in school and in life," said DC Council Chair Vincent Gray.

Decades of research demonstrates that a high-quality pre-k education can lead to improved school achievement, health and better life outcomes for children, as well as financial savings for the District. In fact, in a recent report conducted by the Economic Policy Institute, award-winning economist Robert Lynch found that if the District began investing immediately, a pre-k for all system would begin paying for itself in just seven years.

A majority of three- and four-year-olds already attend pre-k in the District. However, as a whole, these programs are not preparing our children for the K-12 system. Nearly 80 percent of pre-k programs do not meet national standards for quality -- a leading indicator of whether programs are able to meet their objectives.

"With Chairman Gray's announcement today and the public support of other Council members, it's clear that policymakers increasingly recognize that the District's pre-k programs are sorely under-funded," said Carrie Thornhill, Pre-K for All DC Campaign Co-Chair. "If programs are adequately funded and closely monitored for quality, then we will see the sort of positive outcomes we have long desired for our children."

The legislation is supported by a diverse coalition of business, community, and education reform partners. On December 5, over 30 university presidents, CEOs, and business association leaders sent an open letter of support for this initiative to the Chair and urged the DC Council to follow the Chairman's lead. The leadership of the Federal City Council, the DC Chamber of Commerce, and the Washington Board of Trade also signed the letter.

The letter states, "By taking this step, the city can make a sound investment in the future that will bolster current education reforms, strengthen the city's workforce, and accelerate our economic growth."

During the 2006 elections, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign met with Gray and then-Mayoral candidate Adrian Fenty and requested that pre-k become a priority for them. In return, a long-time champion of children's issues, Gray prioritized the issue in his inaugural address, citing pre-k for all as one of the top four education reform measures, "to prepare our children for a successful education experience."

In his First 100 Days and Beyond Plan, Mayor Adrian Fenty stated, "We envision a city where every child starts school ready to learn; where all three- and four-year-olds will have access to high-quality early childhood education programs."

"Both the Council and the Mayor understand that pre-k for all is not only the right thing to do for our children but it also makes great economic sense," said Pre-K for All DC Campaign Co-Chair Terry Golden.

The proposed legislation establishes 125 new, high-quality pre-k classrooms for the three- and four-year-olds who lack access to pre-k and improves the quality of 125 existing classrooms. It will continue using the current diverse delivery system of providers by ensuring DC families can access pre-k for their children in community-based programs, public schools, and public charter schools -- free of charge. The legislation also reserves 10 percent of the total number of slots for children with special needs.

Pre-K is currently funded through the District's Uniform Per Pupil Funding Formula. Under this legislation, the formula is adjusted to incorporate the research-based components that lead to school success. The Pre-K for All DC Campaign estimates that investing in pre-k will be a \$48

million investment spread over six years.

Hearings on the legislation are expected in mid to late January, and passage is expected by the end of March.

More information about the Pre-K for All DC Campaign or Chairman Gray's legislation, please visit <http://www.prekforalldc.org>.

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SOURCE Pre-K for All DC