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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **R.I. Pre-kindergarten Program set to open more classrooms, increase access for families**

Rhode Island is adding 12 sites this fall to the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program, bringing the total number of sites to 29 and making the 2016-17 pre-kindergarten program the largest ever.

Pending approval of Governor Raimondo’s budget and thanks to the federal Preschool Expansion Grant that Rhode Island received from the U.S. Department of Education, pre-kindergarten programs will be located this fall in 11 communities: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

“We are continuing to create opportunities for all Rhode Islanders, including maintaining our commitment to high-quality early learning programs for our youngest learners,” said Governor Gina M. Raimondo. “It’s great news for Rhode Island children and parents that we plan to provide even more free pre-kindergarten choices for families in the coming school year. Our on-going support for early learning will help us meet our goal: All Rhode Island children reading on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.”

“Our continued investment and commitment to the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program will enable families in 11 communities across the state to access Pre-K education,” said Barbara S. Cottam, Chair of the Board of Education. “Providing these free, high-quality early learning programs is a major step toward closing the equity gap and ensuring that all of our children enter kindergarten ready to learn.”

“As we continue expanding pre-kindergarten options in Rhode Island, it’s equally important that we focus on program quality,” said Daniel P. McConaghy, Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. “Governor Raimondo’s budget includes funds to support program quality while expanding options for families. These investments will pay huge dividends as more

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and more Rhode Island children will develop, at an early age, the skills they will need for school success.”

“We know that it’s never too early to start a child’s education, and our continued investments in the Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program will give hundreds of Rhode Island families a jump start on learning for their children,” said Education Commissioner Ken Wagner. “Early-childhood education is one of the priorities in our Strategic Plan, so we are pleased that this fall there will be a total of 29 sites offering free pre-kindergarten programs. We hope that many Rhode Island parents and guardians will take advantage of this opportunity and apply for a spot for their children in one of our high-quality programs.”

With a total of 56 classrooms scheduled to be opened this fall, Rhode Island is approaching the state goal of 60 pre-kindergarten classrooms by 2019. The expansion of the pre-kindergarten program, however, depends on approval by the General Assembly of Governor Raimondo’s budget, which includes \$5.2 million for early-learning programs.

The Pre-kindergarten Program sites for the coming school year (2016-17) are:

**Central Falls:**

Central Falls School District, Capt. Hunt Early Learning Center (12 Kendall Street) – 4 classrooms

**Cranston:**

Comprehensive Community Action Program (848 Atwood Ave.) – 2 classrooms  
*New:* The Children’s Workshop (546 Budlong Road) – 1 classroom

**East Providence:**

*New:* Martin Middle School (111 Brown Street) – 5 classrooms  
*New:* Oldham School (60 Bart Drive) – 2 classrooms  
(Note: Applications for the Martin and Oldham sites are available at the East Providence Administration Offices, 145 Taunton Ave.)  
East Bay Community Action Program (70 Turner Ave.) – 1 classroom

**Johnston:**

*New:* Graniteville School (6 Collins Avenue)  
(Note: Applications for the Graniteville site are available at Graniteville School until June 17 and at the Johnston Central Office, 10 Memorial Dr., throughout the application period.)

**Newport:**

East Bay Community Action Program at the Pell Annex of the John F. Kennedy School (740 West Main Rd., Middletown – temporary location; program will be for Newport residents only) – 1 classroom  
East Bay Community Action Program Head Start (8 John Chafee Blvd.) – 2 classrooms

**North Providence:**

*New:* Tri-Town Community Action Agency (2204 Mineral Spring Avenue) – 1 classroom

**Pawtucket:**

*New:* Pawtucket School Department, Fallon Memorial School (62 Lincoln Avenue) – 2 classrooms

(Note: Applications for the Fallon site are available at the Pawtucket Central Office, 286 Main St.)

Ready to Learn Providence @ Heritage Park YMCA Early Learning Center (333 Roosevelt Ave.) – 2 classrooms

*New:* Children’s Friend and Service (13 Legion Drive) – 1 classroom

**Providence:**

*New:* Providence School Department, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (35 Camp Street) - 1 classroom

(Note: Applications for the Martin Luther King , Jr. site are available at the Providence Registration Center, 325 Ocean Street.)

Ready to Learn Providence @ CCRI Liston Campus (1 Hilton St.) – 1 classroom

(Note: Applications for the CCRI site are available at 945 Westminster St., Providence)

Beautiful Beginnings (700 Elmwood Ave.) – 2 classrooms

Children’s Friend and Service (350 Point St.) – 2 classrooms

Children’s Friend and Service (99 Berkshire St.) – 1 classroom

*New:* Children’s Friend and Service (550 Hartford Avenue) – 1 classroom

*New:* Imagine Preschool (520 Hope Street) – 3 classrooms

The Mariposa Center (1 Corliss Park) – 1 classroom

Meeting Street (1000 Eddy St.) – 2 classrooms

Smith Hill Early Childhood Learning Center (25 Danforth St.) – 4 classrooms

**Warwick:**

CHILD, Inc. (160 Draper Ave.) – 2 classrooms

**West Warwick:**

*New:* Academy for Little Children (10 James P Murphy Industrial Highway) – 1 classroom

CHILD, Inc. (28 Payan St.) – 3 classrooms

**Woonsocket:**

Connecting for Children and Families (46 Hope St.) – 2 classrooms

Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association (204 Warwick St.) – 4 classrooms

*New:* YWCA Rhode Island (514 Blackstone Street), 1 Classroom

The Rhode Island Pre-kindergarten Program, entering its 8<sup>th</sup> year, provides free, high-quality pre-kindergarten classes to eligible children. The R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) oversees the program. Statewide, spaces will be available for 1,008 children to participate in the 56 pre-kindergarten classrooms. To be eligible, children must be 4 years old by September 1 and they must be residents of one of the identified communities. Children are selected for participation by lottery.

RIDE will release the 2016-17 Pre-Kindergarten Program child lottery application and open the online Pre-Kindergarten Program child lottery application system **today** (Wednesday, May 11). Families will be able to apply online at <https://www3.ride.ri.gov/PKLottery> or family members

may pick up an application at either the pre-kindergarten program location or at the district location when so noted above. Families can also download the application, at [www.ride.ri.gov/EC-Programs-PreK](http://www.ride.ri.gov/EC-Programs-PreK). Completed applications should be returned to the program of choice. Families may apply at more than one site if multiple sites exist in their community of residence, but only one application per site will be accepted. Applications will be accepted through **July 1**.

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