



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2-A

Resolution supporting the City's plan to establish high-quality universal pre-Kindergarten for all eligible four-year olds and high-quality after school programs for middle-school-aged youth.

By The Speaker (Council Member Mark-Viverito) and Council Members Dromm, Ferreras, Rodriguez, Koslowitz, Eugene, Cabrera, Arroyo, Barron, Chin, Cohen, Constantinides, Cornegy, Cumbo, Deutsch, Dickens, Espinal, Garodnick, Gentile, Gibson, Greenfield, Johnson, Kallos, King, Koo, Lancman, Lander, Levin, Levine, Maisel, Mealy, Menchaca, Mendez, Miller, Palma, Reynoso, Richards, Rose, Rosenthal, Torres, Treyger, Vacca, Vallone, Van Bramer, Weprin, Williams, Wills and the Public Advocate (Ms. James)

Whereas, The City of New York is proposing a plan to provide every four-year old with high-quality full-day pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) and every middle school student with high-quality after school programs; and

Whereas, The City of New York is proposing to fund its plan by enacting a tax increase on New York City residents earning more than \$500,000 per year which will ensure that a secure, dedicated and reliable funding stream will be available to fund a high-quality pre-K program and a high-quality after school program; and

Whereas, On January 27, 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio released a report, "Ready to Launch: New York City's Implementation Plan for Free, High Quality, Full-Day Universal Pre-Kindergarten," ("Ready to Launch"), which was prepared by the Office of the Mayor, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Education, the Administration for Children's Services, and a working group of experts who have decades of experience in early childhood education and who possess the requisite knowledge necessary to launch one of the largest pre-K expansions in history; and

Whereas, "Ready to Launch" outlines the City's plan to provide free, high-quality, full-day pre-K to an estimated 55,804 four-year olds in the 2014 - 2015 school year and to an estimated 73,250 four-year olds in the

2015 - 2016 school year; and

Whereas, Additionally, according to the “Ready to Launch” plan, currently, the City of New York can serve 58,528 four-year olds in pre-K programs with the vast majority either in a free half-day pre-K program, a free half-day program with a fee charged for the remainder of the day, or programs that contract with the Administration for Children’s Services, where they receive full-day services by combining half-day universal pre-K with Child Care and Head Start services; and

Whereas, It will cost \$10,239 per child to bring all of the 73,250 seats up to the quality standards anticipated by the plan, which include consistent and full implementation of comprehensive state pre-K learning standards, recruiting and retaining high-quality pre-K teachers, increasing support for students whose primary language is not English, increasing support for families in high-need areas, and “further developing quality infrastructure within DOE’s Office of Early Childhood Education;” and

Whereas, New York City and State have long had progressive income taxes and according to a 2010 article published in the Public Finance Review by Professor Howard Chernick of the City University of New York, economic models based on a “flight from progressivity” have not done very well empirically; and

Whereas, Additionally, according to Professor Chernick, all other things being equal, state and local governments with progressive taxes do not see lower rates of economic growth. Rather, increasing progressivity to finance human capital enhancing programs like universal pre-K can in the long run increase productivity and increase economic growth; and

Whereas, According to research conducted by Cristobal Young and Charles Varner and published in 2011 in the National Tax Journal, half millionaires do not flee small changes in marginal tax rates; and

Whereas, In fact, the personal income tax has been imposed on City residents since 1966 and has fluctuated throughout the years, and according to the Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget, 3.8 million tax filers pay the personal income tax; and

Whereas, Many studies show that quality universal pre-K provides essential early childhood education

and results in long term gains for disadvantaged students, that could enhance human capital later in life; and

Whereas, For example, according to research conducted through a partnership between New York University and the Children’s Museum of Manhattan in 2012, it was concluded that the preschool years are critical not only for developing basic skills for school readiness, but also for the development of children’s interests and beliefs about their own capabilities; and

Whereas, In addition, James Heckman, a Nobel laureate at the University of Chicago, in his book, “Giving Kids a Fair Chance,” concludes that preschool is critical because the early years of children’s lives are crucial for creating the abilities, motivation, and other personality traits that produce success in school, in the workforce, and in other aspects of life; and

Whereas, Furthermore, families’ inability or ability to access quality early childhood education programs can create disparities in the development of children; and

Whereas, For example, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study of low-income three and four year olds, beginning in 1962-1967, followed the children in the study throughout their lives until age forty, and those who participated in high quality early education programs were more likely than non-participants to graduate from high school, become employed, and had a higher median income at age forty; and

Whereas, Moreover, according to the United States Department of Education, sixty percent of new jobs in the 21st century will require skills possessed by only twenty percent of the current workforce; and

Whereas, According to the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, child care is the greatest expense for low-income families with children in New York City; and

Whereas, According to a report by America’s Edge, a membership organization of business leaders, the average working parent in America misses five to nine days of work because of child care; and

Whereas, Also according to the report by America’s Edge, for every \$1 invested in early care and education in New York, \$1.86 is generated in additional spending within the state and quality programs can save as much as \$16 for every dollar invested; and

Whereas, The City's plan for universal pre-K would help children build the fundamental skills necessary to start school and increase their opportunities later in life, create a better prepared workforce in New York City, and also help working families; and

Whereas, In addition to universal pre-K, it is critical that middle-school aged children remain productively occupied during afterschool hours; and

Whereas, Research has shown that more learning time, such as in high-quality after-school programs, leads to greater achievement, better school attendance and more enthusiastic learners, particularly among disadvantaged students; and

Whereas, Studies also indicate that disadvantaged African-American and Hispanic students show the greatest academic gains, providing evidence that afterschool programs help to close the achievement gap; and

Whereas, This proposal would add new programs between 3pm and 6pm in academics, culture and athletics, and provide after-school activities for nearly 120,000 middle school students, a significant increase from the nearly 56,000 middle school students who are currently served in after-school programs; and

Whereas, The State Legislature and the Governor of the State of New York should enact the tax increase being proposed by the City of New York for the purpose of providing full-day universal pre-K to every four-year old in the City of New York and high-quality after school programs for middle-school-aged youth; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the City's plan to establish high-quality universal pre-Kindergarten for all eligible four-year olds and high-quality after school programs for middle-school-aged youth.

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