

Over the past year and a half, First State Pre-K engaged advocates to begin building a vision for high-quality, universal pre-K in Delaware.

## WE'VE HOSTED COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS IN:



## WE'VE MET WITH:

- PNC
- Delaware Kids Caucus
- Wilmington Rotary
- Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee (DBREC)

## WHAT WE ARE HEARING: COMMON THEMES

- Delawareans agree with the First State Pre-K goals, the benefits of pre-K, and the need to increase both quality and access in Delaware.
- When it comes to implementing universal pre-K, the state must to engage community members along the way to:
  - Gather feedback on implementation decisions
  - Communicate what changes will mean for all different types of providers and families
  - Inform non-legislative guidance on issues such as transportation, facilities, etc.
  - Learn from other states and cities that have efficient large mixed-delivery systems

## WHAT WE ARE HEARING: COMMON CONCERNS

**Q: How do we ensure community-based child care providers are included as well as districts?**

A: First State Pre-K advocates for required mixed delivery.

**Q: Shouldn't we just prioritize high-needs students?**

A: First State Pre-K advocates for universal pre-K, which is more effective at reaching and serving high-needs children, and delivers greater long and short-term savings than targeted programs.

**Q: What will happen to the existing programs serving all child and family needs?**

A: First State Pre-K also advocates for investments in child care subsidy (Purchase of Care) and tiered reimbursement payments to support.

# DELAWAREANS SPEAK UP FOR PRE-K

## FAMILIES

At the beginning of 2019, the Delaware Readiness Teams surveyed 500+ Delaware parents. They said:

- “I feel my child may be behind other children because I cannot afford the high cost of pre-K.”
- “Universal pre-K would make it possible for me to work and go back to school.”
- “We are not able to move into a larger house to fit our family size because our childcare is the cost of a second mortgage.”

## EDUCATORS

“Our Delaware K-12 public school teachers strive to provide an outstanding education to our students, but our students would have a much stronger foundation entering kindergarten if Delaware would provide all children with access to high-quality, full-day, free pre-K - as is offered in many other states.”

– **Dana Bowe, 2019 Delaware Teacher of the Year and Elementary Special Education Teacher in the Seaford School District**

“In my opinion, nothing more powerful than being that child’s first interaction with school, and getting them to love school, love learning, and love themselves. Every moment that we have to create these powerful interactions and wonderful memories, and these feeling and relationships is wiring the brain to be able to learn and to be connected and willing to learn.”

– **Rebecca Vitelli, 2020 Delaware Teacher of the Year and Pre-K Teacher at The Colwyck Center in the Colonial School District**

“The storm is coming—not enough qualified teachers and not enough centers that can afford to maintain high-quality learning—and it will impact our state, our workforce, and our economy, as well as our children’s futures. This is not an idle warning. Delaware needs to raise itself up and support our youngest.”

– **Lucinda Ross, deaeyc Board President and Executive Director of St. Michael’s School & Nursery**

## COMMUNITY

“We know it’s possible for our pre-K programs to make a real impact because we see it in action. In the words of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “(Pre-K) is a wise investment in America’s future, strengthening business today while building the workforce we’ll depend on tomorrow and for decades to come.”

– **Stuart Comstock-Gay, President and CEO of Delaware Community Foundation and Lynn Adams Kokjohn, Board of Trustees Chair of Fund For Women**