

**The State with Two Prekindergarten  
Programs:  
A Look at Prekindergarten Education in New  
York State (1928-2003)**

Anne Mitchell  
Early Childhood Policy Research  
1250 Honey Hollow Road  
Climax, NY 12042

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## INTRODUCTION

New York is unique among the many states with state-funded preschool programs: it has both a long-standing one, called the Experimental Prekindergarten Program that began in 1966 and a more recent one, called Universal Prekindergarten that began in 1997. New York's first prekindergarten program began simultaneously with the nation's launch of Head Start. The state's second program was part of the wave of education reform sweeping the nation in the 1990s. Relatively little has been written about the origins of either program or about their shared history, their similarities and differences. Perhaps even less well documented is the involvement of the New York State Education Department in early childhood education and parent education that long preceded the state's commitment to publicly funded prekindergarten.

This paper attempts to provide a short history of prekindergarten education in New York starting in the early 20th century, before either of the distinct prekindergarten programs began, and to document the birth and evolution of each prekindergarten program. The story sheds light on some of the factors and context that led to the establishment of these programs, three decades apart, and the ways the two programs have grown closer in recent years. This paper also gives readers a data-based status report on these two prekindergarten programs for the 2002-2003 school year. Finally, using information from interviews with district administrators, the paper describes how these two programs, one nearly forty years old and one just past its preschool years, are managed in school districts that administer both programs.

### ***Methods***

The information in this report was gathered through face-to-face or telephone interviews with 20 people familiar with New York State prekindergarten past and present, analysis of district statistical data supplied by the members of the Early Education and Reading Initiatives Team in the State Education Department, and review of historical documents in the New York State Library and Archives. The survey instruments for interviews and a list of persons interviewed are included in Appendix 1 and 2. The annotated bibliography includes all documents reviewed.

### ***Sample***

There are more than 700 school districts in New York State. In the 2002-2003 school year, fewer than 250 of them administered prekindergarten programs. Yet, these 250 districts enroll close to 60 percent of the total public school enrollment in the state. The prekindergarten programs in these districts enroll about 30 percent of the total four-year-old population in New York State. As the table in Appendix 3 shows, New York City<sup>1</sup> and 188 districts in the rest of the state administered Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) programs. Ninety-seven districts operated Experimental Prekindergarten (EPK) programs, including New York City. There are 44 districts in New York that administer both EPK and UPK. See Appendix 4 for details on these 44 districts. From the 44 districts, 10 were selected for further study. See Appendix 5 for details of the sample districts.

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<sup>1</sup> New York City is counted as one district, but comprised 32 community school districts in 2002-2003 and now is organized into 10 regions.

The 10 selected districts are reasonably similar to the universe of 44 districts in terms of percentage of children in part-day classes, percentage of children in public school settings, and proportion enrolling 3-year olds, and in the proportion of economically disadvantaged children served. These 10 districts are just slightly below average in terms of fiscal and demographic characteristics, having a higher percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (63percent versus 50percent statewide) and slightly more state aid supporting the district budget (53percent versus 48percent statewide). Appendix 6 contains these data. The sample has three large city districts, three small city districts, two rural and two suburban districts, including both high-need and average-need districts. The 10 districts represent all regions of the state, except the far North Country. Appendix 7 is a map of New York showing the location of the 44 districts by county and highlighting the 10 sample districts.

The sample was selected to be as geographically and demographically representative as possible of districts in New York and representative of the two PreK programs. Sample districts represent ones implementing in the first year of EPK and in each of the three waves of its expansion over time. To ensure sufficient implementation experience with UPK, [no] districts were selected that were first-year implementers of UPK. Further, districts in the sample are primarily ones whose PreK administrators have been with the PreK program for many years and thus are able to discuss both programs. One district in the sample shows remarkable continuity, having had only three PreK administrators in forty years.

The prekindergarten administrators in the 10 sample districts were interviewed about the operations of their prekindergarten programs; those with longer tenure were also interviewed about the history of PreK programs in their districts. Ten other individuals with past and present perspectives on prekindergarten in New York were also interviewed. All interviews were conducted during March and April of 2004.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

New York's commitment to early education began in 1927, when the Spelman Fund awarded grants to the New York State Education Department, two universities (Cornell and City College) and two school districts (Rochester and Albany) for study, service and research in child development and parent education.<sup>2</sup> These grants occurred between 1927 and 1935 and totaled \$364,000. The grant to NYSED started at \$10,000 and continued at \$16,000 annually until 1933. In 1928, a division was set up and a director of child development and parent education was appointed (Ruth Andrus). Materials were developed, and training and outreach to school and community groups began. The new division had four major goals:

- To take leadership for early childhood education by improving the educational offerings in the state's 2,800 kindergarten classes, better integrating kindergarten and primary grades through consultation on curriculum revision and teacher in-service education, and "exercising supervisory leadership of those nursery schools and prekindergarten groups being organized in various centers."

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<sup>2</sup> New York State Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education (1938). *Ten Years of Child Development and Parent Education in New York State, 1928-38*. Albany, NY: State Education Department.

- To offer courses and guidance to secondary schools and colleges in the development of courses of study on personal and family relations, courses for teachers on child growth and development, and courses for parents to prepare them to be lay leaders of parent discussion groups, and
- To develop “more intelligent and effective cooperation between home and school,” by organizing study groups among parent-teacher associations and other parent and early childhood organizations, and provide staff development for superintendents, principals and other school officials.
- To direct the Works Progress Administration Nursery School and Parent Education Program authorized by the federal government in 1933.

By 1938, there were more than 60 parent groups operating across the state. The Department’s early childhood education committee had written three curriculum guides for teachers of two-to-five-year-olds; five-year-olds and of six-, seven- and eight-year-olds. Nearly 150 publications were produced, including several of “sketches and dramatic continuities” to stimulate discussion in parent groups. Also, dozens of studies had been published in refereed journals. In the 1937-38 reorganization of the State Education Department, the division became the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education under the Assistant Commissioner for Elementary Education,<sup>3</sup> with state and federal funding replacing the initial philanthropic investment. Ruth Andrus was chief of the Bureau until she retired in 1951.

During World War II, the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education oversaw the Lanham Act child-care and development centers, which were under the auspices of local school districts but often operated in other settings such as settlement houses. To guide local groups, the Bureau wrote a 50-page manual in 1942, complete with guidance on activities, staffing patterns and qualifications. It included minimum salaries for all staff, nutritional guidance, parent support, and plans for building equipment – from balance beams to hollow blocks to ‘toilet ramps’ that would make adult-height toilets accessible to small children. The minimum salary guideline for a teacher was \$1,200 and was accompanied by the admonition that; “[t]he salaries of teachers should be in line with those of other elementary school teachers with similar training and experience as well as responsibility in the particular community.”<sup>4</sup>

The story of early childhood education in New York is intertwined with the story of the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education. By all accounts from staff representing several decades there, the Bureau was an exciting place to be. Staff were characterized as “child development and family relations experts with deep content knowledge and strong views.” The Bureau was termed as “very parent connected and had always been what we’d now call ‘parent-

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<sup>3</sup> The Bureau was moved in the reorganization of 1989 into the division of Parent Education, Student Development and Community Schools. The next reorganization in the early 1990s created regional service teams and the Bureau was placed in the Child, Family and Community Services Team. In 2003, the Bureau was replaced by the Early Education and Reading Initiatives Team.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education (1942). *Guides for Establishing Nursery Schools and Child Care and Development Centers by or under the Auspices of Local Education Authorities*. Albany NY: Issued jointly by the New York State War Council and the State Education Department. (Page 23).

friendly.’ It was the place the PTA members would hang out when they came to Albany.” The Bureau and the Parent Teacher Association sponsored conferences together.

The Bureau played a key role in advancing early education in New York. An amendment to Education Law approved in 1946 allowed boards of education to establish nursery schools for children three years and older.<sup>5</sup> No state financial support was provided. (This was further amended in 1973 to omit the phrase “three years and above,” thus allowing boards of education to serve younger children.) Although some districts had been operating kindergartens for many years, no state aid was provided until 1942, when the state passed legislation providing state funds to aid local school districts for kindergarten. The Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education worked with districts and promoted good nursery school and kindergarten practices through materials, conferences and consultation.

As a publication of the Bureau describes, the late 1950s and early 1960s was a period “marked by a rediscovery of the young child and a renewed interest in early childhood education. Psychologists and educators are focusing on the early formative years as crucial years in the child’s total development; they are looking to schools for young children in an effort to promote maximum development of the individual...the significance of early perceptual experiences to later cognitive development had been noted...the relationship between environmental encounters and the rate of intellectual growth has been documented.”<sup>6</sup>

Apparently, young children are rediscovered on a somewhat regular (twenty year?) cycle, as we are now in a period that many would describe as a discovery phase, spurred by the new brain research. A similar rediscovery of young children and early education occurred in the early 1980s when the results of longitudinal studies such as the Perry Preschool coincided with a wave of education reform brought on by the U.S. Department of Education report, *A Nation at Risk*. In New York, the Regents Action Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education for 1979-1983 included advocacy for prekindergarten.

In 1958, the legislature provided an appropriation to the State Education Department for Experimental Programs for education of the disadvantaged. In 1961, the NYC Board of Education, in collaboration with Martin and Cynthia Deutsch of New York University, mounted a preschool effort funded by the Ford Foundation to stem the tide of failure among the city’s poor children. In 1965, Syracuse City School District began a preschool program in cooperation with a community agency called Crusade for Opportunity (an anti-poverty program in Syracuse that later became PEACE, Inc., the Head Start grantee).

School districts proposed a variety of types of program, which were evaluated by the SED Office of Research and Evaluation. By 1964, a number of districts had begun to educate disadvantaged children prior to kindergarten. Eight were selected for a three-year study (Cortland, Greenburgh, Hempstead, Long Beach, Mount Vernon, Schenectady, Spring Valley and Yonkers). In 1967-68, the last year of the study, these eight districts together received just over \$300,000 in state funds

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<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education (1957, revised 1968). *Child Development Guides for Teachers of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old Children*. Albany, NY: The State Education Department. (Page 65).

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education (1957, revised 1968). *Child Development Guides for Teachers of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old Children*. Albany, NY: The State Education Department. (Preface, page iii).

and served about 380 children. These experiments were the subject of a study funded by the U.S. Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). The report, published in 1969, compared these eight quite different programs using a constructed measure based on observed classroom structure and presence of “controlled practice of language development activities,” which were termed “cognitively-structured.” The report concluded that disadvantaged children in any of the PreK programs outperformed disadvantaged children in the control group on IQ, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and a measure of psycholinguistic abilities, with greater differences for ‘cognitively-structured’ programs. Few other measures of child outcome were used.<sup>7</sup>

In 1965, with \$96 million and only several months of planning, ‘summer Head Start’ was launched across the country, run by local groups in 13,918 communities, including many in New York. Governors who were not pleased that the money flowed directly from the federal government to local groups, had community action agencies in their offices that were responsible for all of the Community Action Program (CAP) agencies in the communities, including reviewing and approving all Head Start proposals. In New York, the plan was to hire one person in the education department, one in the health department and one in social services who would jointly be responsible for reviewing Head Start proposals for the Governor and doing the Head Start legwork in the state. Bertha Campbell, who much later would become chief of the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education, was the education department staff person assigned to the governor’s office to review Head Start proposals. The others in Health and Social Services were not assigned, so Bertha with the help of other staff in the Bureau, reviewed all the Head Start proposals.

### **How EPK began**

For some time, the Commissioner of Education, James Allen, and the chief of the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education, Myra Woodruff, had been preparing a plan for a prekindergarten program for educationally disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds in New York. In 1965, Commissioner Allen talked with governor Rockefeller about the idea and he was receptive. The Board of Regents requested funding and the Governor included an appropriation of \$5 million in the executive budget for 1966 to support “experimental prekindergarten programs for children in disadvantaged areas.” The legislature concurred, the Regents approved guidelines for the program in the spring of 1966 and the program was launched with a request for proposals to all school districts and Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES)<sup>8</sup> across the state to begin with the 1966-67 school year. Thirty-nine districts offered programs and served 2,651 children with state funds. New York City used primarily federal funds and served another 10,000 children that year.<sup>9</sup> Two of the districts (Westbury and Port Jefferson) used local funds to open their program to all preschool-aged children.

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<sup>7</sup> DiLorenzo, Louis T. assisted by Ruth Salter and James J. Brady (1969). *Prekindergarten Programs for Educationally Disadvantaged Children*. Albany, NY: NYS Education Department, Office of Research and Evaluation.

<sup>8</sup> BOCES are Boards of Cooperative Education Services, regional entities composed of school districts in one or more counties.

<sup>9</sup> New York State Board of Regents (December 1967). *Prekindergarten Education: A Statement of Policy and Proposed Action*. Albany, NY: State Education Department.



According to various sources, the program was called ‘experimental’ for at least two reasons. The Board of Regents had asked for \$5 million per year for at least 5 years. They wanted to signal the Legislature that this was ‘special’ funding, needed in addition to state aid to school districts. ‘Experimental’ seemed like the right word. Some felt that more evidence was needed on whether public schools could educate young children well. The experiment was in three areas:

1. To demonstrate that public schools could operate good pre-kindergarten programs;
2. To provide evidence on whether public schools could provide the comprehensive services (like Head Start); and
3. To show if and how a developmentally-oriented educational program for preschoolers might affect kindergarten and primary grade practices in the public schools.

In December of 1967, the Board of Regents issued a ‘statement of policy and proposed action’ on prekindergarten education. In this brief yet bold paper, they begin by noting the current interest in early childhood education, affirming “parents as the first and foremost teachers,” confirming the department’s support for promoting early childhood education since 1928, and thanking the legislature for the past two years of support. They then offer this proposal:

That “the State adopt a long-term plan leading to the establishment of free public education for all 3- and 4- year-olds whose parents wish them to attend school. The Regents recommend that State financial support be provided on the basis of ‘approved’ costs – that is, all costs necessary for a quality program for prekindergarten children. Financial provision should be made for building construction and the initial equipping of classrooms as well as for general State aid to school districts to operate these programs.”

The goal was clearly quality education for all young children, the regents saying that, “Close parental collaboration and involvement are absolutely necessary” The quality of the prekindergarten program to be developed was dependent on the strengths of the teachers who must be recruited and trained in anticipation of the large numbers of children to be served. To wit: “The Regents propose, therefore, that financial assistance should be made available to colleges and universities offering a specialization in early childhood education to encourage the preparation of much-needed, well-qualified, professional and para-professional personnel.”

The regents’ bold proposal for publicly funded education for all 3- and 4-year olds was followed by an even bolder 3-page detailed plan for implementing it by doubling the appropriation for experimental PreK, encouraging federal support through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Office of Economic Opportunity. Their plan called for expanding EPK during 1970-74, working with colleges on teacher preparation, constructing facilities, educating elementary school administrators and teachers on effective follow-up to prekindergarten and introducing legislation to provide free public education for all 4-year-olds, to be funded in state-aid formulas. The plan further called for legislation that would, between 1974 and 1978, extend education to all 3-year-olds.

Obviously, this did not happen. Many present at the time say it did not for several reasons:

- 1) the cost of universal preschool was high and school districts were focused on securing funding for full-day kindergarten;
- 2) 2) parents of that time were somewhat reluctant to enroll their children, especially 3-year-olds, in PreK; and
- 3) 3) the New York City financial crisis was resolved using state funds, leaving no funding available to support a PreK initiative. But imagine what a different situation would exist in New York today if this proposal had happened.

In 1966, the year EPK began, Myra Woodruff reached the then-mandatory age of retirement (70). Dorothea Conklin was chief of the bureau from 1967 until 1971, with Theodora Reeve in charge of the new ‘experimental’ prekindergarten program. During the 1970s, the bureau kept at its work, consulting with and monitoring the schools offering EPK, reviewing Head Start proposals, managing voluntary nursery school registration, and promoting kindergarten and parent education. Legislation was passed in 1970 allowing schools to offer day care services. The Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education produced a 30-page guide, *Children’s Spaces*, subtitled “Designs for the 70s Planning for Educational Facilities in the Elementary School for Very Young Children.” A year or two later, the Bureau published a comprehensive guide for schools called, *Prekindergarten Day Care is School-Plus*.

The Bureau was described by staff in this time period as “always having equitable relationships. We were peers with the EPK staff in districts and with each other in the Bureau.” One called it “an island of sanity in the midst of a hierarchical bureaucracy.” This culture was nurtured by the women who served as chiefs of the bureau over the nearly 60 years of its existence. These were “strong, knowledgeable women with powerful social consciences, articulate, passionately committed to children and families.” They were leaders in the field in New York, nationally and internationally. Myra Woodruff was president of the Association for Childhood Education International; Theodora Reeve was president of the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) which eventually became the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Dorothea Conklin and Bertha Campbell each served terms as president of the New York State chapter of NANE. The Bureau, as one interviewee put it, “was never shy about putting their point of view out there.” The Bureau issued reports on designing schools for ‘open education,’ fearlessly issued guidance on minimum salaries for staff in the child care and development programs during World War II, and promoted child-centered education clearly and compellingly for decades.

During its first six years, EPK expanded slowly within the 39 original districts. The seven resource centers supported the districts with training that was offered to any early childhood program in the area; Bureau staff provided on-site guidance to districts. In 1972-73, the appropriation for EPK reached \$10 million and 18 additional districts participated. In 1975, the legislature ordered a program audit of EPK to be done by the Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review.<sup>10</sup> Districts were visited and classrooms observed by commission staff. The tone of the report is confrontational, appearing to pit direct-instruction, home-based parenting programs and Montessori methods against the ‘developmental’ approach, chiding the department for not conducting follow-up studies on EPK and for changing the rules (guidelines

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<sup>10</sup> Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review (December 31, 1975). *Prekindergarten Programs Program Audit*. Albany, NY: New York State Legislature.

were rewritten twice in 9 years). The Department “differed strongly with the report on substantive issues” (page 65) and noted that requests for evaluation funds had been consistently denied by the legislature for three years running.

In the next session, the legislature ordered a longitudinal evaluation to be conducted to study the effects of PreK on children’s development and appropriated funds for that purpose. The longitudinal study had two parts — one quantitative and one qualitative, conducted concurrently. The qualitative study was conducted by the bureau with consultation from Pat Carini, a leading expert on observational research. The study followed ‘target children’ in seven districts that were geographically representative. Experts in child development/psychology and the seven teachers each observed the target child and conferred on their independent observations. Teachers who participated in the study gained new skills in observation and peer learning and the children’s progress was well documented. (Years later there was an attempt to follow-up on these children when they graduated high school.)

The quantitative study was conducted by David Irvine and colleagues from 1975 through 1980 and resulted in several detailed reports and significant positive findings. Compared to the control group children, PreK children were less likely to be retained in grade, less likely to be referred for special education and more likely to meet state standards for reading and math. Parent involvement had strong positive effects on children’s performance.<sup>11</sup>

The chart in Appendix 8 shows the growth of EPK annual state appropriations over time, the number of districts and the number of children served. Generally, as EPK grew, so did the Bureau. In the mid-1970s, the Bureau had 10 professional and 4 nonprofessional staff; Ruth Flurry was chief until 1982. The next expansion of EPK would come in 1984-85 and limit districts to serving 4-year-olds.

Gordon Ambach, who, as special assistant to Commissioner James Allen and principal author of the Regents 1967 Policy Statement. He was the prime advocate for prekindergarten as Executive Deputy Commissioner (1970-1977) and as Commissioner of Education beginning in 1977. During his remarks in an early 1984 press briefing on the major education issues to be considered that year, he offered a daring proposal. He suggested shifting the senior year of high school into college and starting to offer prekindergarten education to all 4-year-olds, in the space and with the funding that would be freed up in the K-12 system. This was during a time when the cohorts of high school seniors and college freshmen were on the decline and the population of young children on the rise. The proposal was far more successful in generating media coverage than legislative action. Other courageous proposals were to come.

In 1983, Mario Cuomo became Governor. His executive budgets proposed increases in EPK, beginning with a nearly 50% increase in 1984-85 (to \$14 million) and reaching \$22 million in 1986-87. In his 1987 State of the State message, Governor Cuomo proposed to build on that success and “set as our goal the provision of early childhood education to every disadvantaged

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<sup>11</sup> New York State Education Department, (February 22, 1982). *Evaluation of the New York State Experimental Prekindergarten Program*. Albany, NY: State Education Department, Division of Elementary Secondary and Continuing Education Planning and Development.

four-year-old in the state.” His proposal was for comprehensive programs developed through local plans involving both school and community agencies. He directed the Governor’s Council on Children and Families to work with the State Education Department and Department of Social Services and others to realize the goal. The Permanent Interagency Committee on Early Childhood Programs (PICECP) grew out of this proposal, but no new PreK program was developed.

The PICECP was composed of the directors and commissioners of the state agencies dealing with children and had a citizen advisory committee appointed by the governor. The PICECP and its advisory committee worked to streamline funding and coordinate programs for greater effectiveness. It developed a Collaborative Child Care Demonstration Project to increase access to quality, full-day, full-year early childhood programs by developing linkages among local service providers such as Head Start, EPK programs and child care. The EPK guidelines during this period began to require districts to form a community committee, or join an existing one. The Local Early Childhood Community Coordination Committee’s purpose was to promote collaboration among early childhood programs and access to comprehensive services.

The following year (1988) governor Cuomo’s budget message to the legislature recommended \$25 million to begin a “multi-year initiative to make prekindergarten programs available to all four-year-olds children in New York.” EPK funding was increased, but no new program was launched. EPK funding increased steadily during Cuomo’s tenure, reaching \$47 million in his last year in office (1993-94).

Governor Pataki took office in 1995. The PICECP and its Advisory Committee were dissolved. The EPK appropriation was increased modestly to \$50.2 million, where it has stayed ever since. In the 2003-04 budget, the legislature changed the name of EPK to “Targeted PreK.”

### ***How UPK began***

In September of 1996, Betsy McCaughey Ross, the Lieutenant Governor, released a report called *Preparing for Success: Expanding Prekindergarten and Educational Daycare* that proposed to expand the EPK program to reach all low-income four-year-olds and then all four-year-olds regardless of income. That fall, the powerful Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Sheldon Silver, had his staff planning a major education reform bill and rumors abounded that preschool would be part of it. Early education advocates were both delighted with the public attention and concerned about several issues. While the Ross report had been clear about a role for community organizations, as well as schools, it was not clear what the Speaker had in mind. Other questions were: What agency would manage the program? Would the focus be on 4-year-olds only or 3-year-olds as well? Would these be part-day or full-day programs?

Recognizing opportunity in the swirl of interest in preschool from both the executive and legislative branches in the fall of 1996, a group of citizens, advocates and organizations concerned about early education met to strategize about how to advance early education in New York. The decision was made to hold a legislative breakfast in Albany in February of 1997, early in the legislative session. A panel presented the just-released Carnegie Corporation report *Years of Promise* that made the case for investment in the earliest years of learning – preschool, kindergarten and the primary grades. A speaker from the Georgia Business Education

Roundtable spoke compellingly about the success of universal preschool in Georgia. The event was well attended and several legislative leaders (in addition to Speaker Silver and his staff) seemed interested. The general sense of the event planners was that it might take another year of education to spur the legislature to action, following the advocate's rule of thumb on public policy change: one year to educate, another to deliberate, then act. Almost no one predicted how quickly they would act. Several members of the planning group became actively engaged with the assembly staff crafting the legislation over the spring and summer and helped to shape some of its features.

In August 1997, the New York State Legislature enacted, and the Governor signed, a package of education reforms called LADDER that was largely the work of the Speaker of the Assembly, Sheldon Silver. The bill included funding for reduced class size in grades K-3, incentives for full-day kindergarten and a 5-year commitment to fund 'universal' prekindergarten for four-year-olds. Funding of \$67 million dollars for Universal PreK was appropriated for the 1998-99 school year to be administered by the State Education Department (SED) as grants to local school districts. Funds are allocated to eligible districts based on need and number of eligible four-year-olds. The phase-in began with the neediest districts, based on poverty and size; the legislative intent was to add funding and districts each year until, by 2001-02 school year, all districts would be eligible for funding. The legislation set funding at \$500 million per year for 2001-02 and thereafter.

The legislation is fairly specific about the goals of the program and manner in which districts are to implement it. It states that "the program to be implemented contains, at a minimum, the following components:

- a. provides for an age- and developmentally appropriate curriculum and activities which are learner-centered;
- b. provides for the development of language, cognitive and social skills;
- c. ensures continuity in the program with instruction in the early elementary grades;
- d. encourages children to be self-assured and independent;
- e. encourages the co-location and integration of children with special needs;
- f. utilizes staff who meet the qualifications set forth pursuant to the rules of the board of regents;
- g. provides for strong parental partnerships and involvement in the implementation of and participation in the plan;
- h. provides staff development and teacher training and
- i. establishes a method for selection of eligible children to receive prekindergarten program services where there are more eligible children than can be served in a given school year."<sup>12</sup>

Each school district superintendent must appoint a Prekindergarten Policy Advisory Board to recommend whether the district should implement PreK. The board must hold at least one public hearing and create a plan for implementation if it is recommending participation in UPK to the board of education. At least 10% of the funding must be used for "collaborative universal PreK services" arranged through competitively bid contracts between school districts and a range of

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<sup>12</sup> Section 3602-e of the Education Laws of the State of New York. Available online at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/upk%20Educ%20Law%203602-e.html>.

eligible community-based agencies, including Head Start, child care, nursery schools, special education providers and others.

The 1997-98 school year was a whirlwind of activity. The SED had to discern the intent of the legislature and write regulations to implement the program as quickly as possible. One person knowledgeable about that situation said:

“The legislative language was complex; everyone had their own sense of what the intent of the language was. It was most difficult to figure out how to implement without knowing intent. It was sort of like having someone say, “We want an apple pie.” And you have to ask, “Did you know you’d need apples, and a pan?”

The legislation demanded that ‘eligible districts’ for the first year be identified and notified by January 31, 1998 (for subsequent years, notification is by November). Each had to appoint a Prekindergarten Policy Advisory Board to quickly plan for the 1998-99 school year. The concept of ‘collaborative’ prekindergarten was new – both to the school districts and to community-based early childhood agencies. While a few school districts had long experience with the school-based EPK, most districts had no experience with preschool except for special education. The community early childhood agencies were in much the same situation: most had little or no relationship with their school districts and many were afraid that ‘universal’ prekindergarten would fuel competition to serve 4-year-olds.

No funds had been provided to the State Education Department (or to local districts) for the planning year activities; the capacity of the bureau was stretched to its limit to continue administering EPK and simultaneously develop an entirely new PreK program. Many of the same individuals and organizations that had planned the 1997 legislative breakfast, rallied to promote the program, encourage school-community partnerships and do whatever was needed to support the SED in their efforts to launch UPK.

Their strategy was to use the required planning (the PreK Policy Advisory Board) as the focus, since it brought together all the elements in a community, including parents, early childhood educators, teachers and school board members. The statewide effort was spearheaded by the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (then called State Communities Aid Association, SCAA); in New York City a coalition of groups led by a child-care resource and referral agency (Child Care, Inc.). Those involved formed the Early Childhood Strategic Group. Technical assistance materials were written to educate advisory boards about the statute, their responsibilities, part-day and full-day program models, blended funding and other implementation issues. With the help of philanthropic resources, these were distributed widely and a concerted effort was made to reach out through the professional organizations of all the relevant constituencies: early childhood organizations (NYSAEYC, Head Start Association), child care resource and referral agencies, the district PreK administrators association, parent-teacher groups, the school boards association, superintendents groups, etc.

Fortunately, even with limited planning time, the maximum effort of all parties paid off; the 1998-99 school year opened with 65 districts serving more than 18,000 children in UPK. This spirit of cooperation and determination among community leaders, district PreK directors,

statewide organizations, professional associations and the State Education Department, has characterized the unfolding implementation of UPK.

The following year, UPK would confront a major challenge. The Executive Budget for 1999-00 proposed to reduce the total funding for the LADDER initiatives and turn the programs into a block grant to be used at local district discretion — effectively eliminating UPK. In response to this threat, the Emergency Coalition to Save Universal PreK and Reduced Class Size was born.

With strong support from the Assembly leadership and advocacy coalitions, LADDER was retained and the appropriation for UPK reached the legislated targets of \$100 million for the 1999-2000 school year and \$225 million for the 2000-2001 school year. As a result of setbacks in the state economy, the state budget for 2001-2002 level-funded both UPK and EPK, along with the rest of the state budget, leading it to be called the ‘Bare Bones State Budget.’ The aftermath of the events of September 11 compounded the economic situation for New York State; the upshot was the budget for 2002-2003 set UPK funding at the level expended (as opposed to appropriated) in the prior year, thus reducing it to \$204 million.

The Emergency Coalition was active every year, working to keep EPK, UPK and the reduced-class-size grants. The PreK Administrators Association was especially engaged in the coalition, gathering signatures on petitions, sending children’s artwork to legislators and mobilizing local constituents, as they had for years on behalf of EPK. SCAA and Child Care, Inc. worked as partners to secure philanthropic funds, first from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and later from The Pew Charitable Trusts through the Trust for Early Education, to support these efforts, helping to ensure that prekindergarten had a future in New York.

Governor Pataki eliminated UPK entirely in his 2003-2004 budget, along with cuts of \$1.5 billion to education overall. The education community, advocates, concerned parents and citizens were energized and worked hard to restore education cuts, culminating in a major rally called by a broad coalition of education groups, including the Emergency Coalition, in early May 2003. Parents wrote to the Governor; petitions to save PreK with 225,000 signatures were delivered to legislators; letters to the editor in support of PreK were frequent. Eventually the Legislature’s budget restored nearly all the cuts, including UPK and reduced-class-size funding. The Governor vetoed that budget. In a nearly unprecedented action, the Legislature overrode the veto. For 2003-2004, UPK was funded at \$204 million and the per-child funding formulas were set aside, giving participating districts the same total amount they had been eligible for in the 2002-2003 school year, and stalling expansion to more districts.

### ***Comparing EPK and UPK***

Both of these programs aim to educate children before they enter kindergarten. Both are funded outside the regular education aid formulas — EPK as a grant and UPK as a formula allocation. Each represents the historical period in which it was created. EPK is similar to Head Start, focusing on disadvantaged children and providing comprehensive services. Schools seemed the only logical place for EPK. By contrast, UPK reflects the fact that the early childhood education community has grown tremendously in thirty years. These community-based resources are valuable and necessary partners in a prekindergarten program that aims for universal access.

EPK is targeted to ‘disadvantaged children’ and has long had a commitment to family involvement and comprehensive services (social and health, including medical, dental, vision and hearing). Originally both 3- and 4-year-old children were eligible, if they and their families met one or more of a long list of criteria such as poor housing, low education levels of parents, family violence, poverty, etc. Outreach to enroll children from diverse “cultural and language groups” is required. EPK programs must operate at least 12 hours per week and 2.5 hours per day.

Only public school districts and Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) are eligible to provide EPK; all teachers must be certified to teach in the early childhood grades and administrators must be certified. The EPK regulations require an early-childhood-qualified administrator, i.e., with both early childhood teacher certification and administrative certification. Until fairly recently, the administrator was required to be full-time if 100 or more children were served.

EPK is a grant program. Funding is theoretically 89% state and 11% local, which must be cash — not in-kind contributions. (Many districts spend more than the required 11%). Districts are funded per-session for a set number of sessions, defined as a classroom of between 16 and 20 children, with most enrolling 16 or 17. On average, the state funds per session are about \$50,000 (roughly \$3,000 per child) and do not vary widely among districts. The EPK annual budget appropriation has been the same amount – just over \$50 million – for 10 years.

In many respects, EPK is a program cooperatively developed over many decades by early childhood leaders in the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education and in school districts across the state. Nothing defining EPK — except the annual budget appropriation — is in statute. Extensive guidelines, approved by the regents, were developed to assist districts applying for funding and define the desired program elements; these were the framework used to monitor EPK for many years. Commissioner’s regulations defining program elements and requirements for EPK were not put in place until the late 1980s.<sup>13</sup>

UPK is designed to offer prekindergarten education to all 4-year-olds without regard to eligibility criteria other than age (i.e., eligible to enter kindergarten the following year) and district residency. The program components in regulation for UPK<sup>14</sup> are somewhat similar to EPK, except that social and health services are not required to be provided, some descriptions are less specific than in the EPK regulations, e.g., family involvement, and some components are not addressed (e.g., discipline). UPK programs must operate at least 2.5 hours per day, 5 days per week and 180 days per year.

Public school districts are eligible to receive UPK funding and must distribute at least 10% of it to competitively selected community agencies, which may include BOCES. Teachers in public-school-operated UPK classes must be certified to teach in the early childhood grades. Until the 2004-2005 school year, teachers in community-operated UPK programs had to meet the staff

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<sup>13</sup> Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Part 100, Subpart 151-2. Available online at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/UPK/UPK%20regs.doc>

<sup>14</sup> Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Part 100, Subpart 151-1. Available online at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/UPK/EPK%20regs.doc>



qualification requirements of the licensing or regulating agency that governs them, and employ an on-site educational director who had to be certified to teach in the early childhood grades. Beginning in September 2004, teachers in all community agencies must be properly certified. UPK does not require an administrator, although participating districts must ensure that program operations are appropriately supervised and monitored.

UPK is a formula allocation program. Funding for UPK is determined by a formula that has provided between \$2,700<sup>15</sup> and \$4,000 per child, depending more or less on the need-to-resources capacity of a district. Also, each district is given a defined number of eligible children to be served, recalculated each year. There is no required match, but districts must maintain the level of prekindergarten expenditures made in the prior year.

UPK is a program defined partly in statute and partly in regulation. It is a much newer program than EPK and is, in a sense, being defined in practice. The collaboration requirement is proving for many districts to be a valuable new approach that not only uses community resources wisely, but also fosters relationships that have the potential to improve early education in the wider community. In some ways, the volatility of the state's commitment to fund UPK, especially in 2003, and the dynamic response of the advocacy community, have put PreK in general on the map. As two PreK directors put it:

EPK was a well-kept secret, even among otherwise well-informed members of the education world (e.g., the local Phi Delta Kappa group). UPK has made PreK a much more public issue.

Now everyone knows about PreK, since Pataki cut it [last year]. The rally to save it was so strong. He didn't know how important PreK is to communities; people feel strongly about it.

### ***The PreK Administrators' Association***

Many believe that New York is unique, not only for having two publicly funded PreK programs, but also in having a formal association for directors of prekindergarten programs. From its earliest days, the Bureau had always sponsored meetings on child development. When EPK began, the Bureau sponsored meetings for the directors of EPK on an as-needed basis. This evolved to be two meetings a year — fall and spring — every year, from early-on until the mid-1980s. This was the start of an informal PreK Administrators' Association. During these decades, meetings were attended by bureau staff and if 'political' issues needed to be discussed, the discussions were held in the late afternoon or evening after state staff had left the meeting and the directors were clearly on their own time.

According to directors who were present in the early days, many PreK directors were passionate about PreK and disadvantaged children. They would lobby the legislature for funding whenever EPK was threatened. One district used to take bus-loads of parents to Albany to lobby. At some point in the mid-1980s, it became clear to several PreK directors that they needed to form a real association, separate from SED. One who had worked in Head Start described the

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<sup>15</sup> The UPK statute sets the minimum at \$2,000 but every year the legislature has increased the minimum to \$2,700.

Head Start directors' associations, which the group took as a model. At one of the state-sponsored PreK meetings (perhaps the spring of 1984), a small group rented a junior suite in a hotel (using their own money) and gathered a small group for a "secret" meeting to establish the association. They elected officers, including a Legislative Chair. Several months later, at the fall meeting, they rented a suite again (using their own money) and wrote the by-laws. The association began to sponsor an annual conference that was part professional development and part business. They also held other meetings in Albany and communicated through phone calls. Later they realized that for some, it was hard to get to the meetings in Albany, and regional PreK Associations were organized. The PreK Administrators' Association lobbied tirelessly and as one original member says, "If we hadn't lobbied in those years in the 1980s, PreK would be dead."

Today, the Association is viewed as "a good organization that has an influence on legislation, and that is more powerful when it gets together with other organizations concerned about young children and is able to take positions." All of the ten PreK directors had high praise for the Association. (In the spirit of full disclosure, all are members and four of the ten are Board members of the Association.) Among other things, they said:

"The Association is wonderful – it's helped me in more ways than you can imagine. It's such a good network for getting information. For example, I used the listserv recently to ask for others recommendations and experience with kindergarten screening tools – how much they cost (time and money), and how effective they are. I got many responses in a day or two – some said we're about to stop using X because....others said we love Y because."

"The lines of communication we have with the State Education Department, meaning Cindy Gallagher and her office, are fabulous and so useful. They are very supportive – I'm never afraid to call them for help; they're not like some offices in State Ed where you feel they're looking for some error in your question. They have great rapport with us."

"The PreK Administrators' Association is excellent. We meet 4-5 times a year and have conference calls in months we don't meet. It's the best thing I ever joined. I learn something new about PreK (that's not written down anywhere) every time."

The Administrators' Association was tested when UPK started. As one long-time member put it "There was trouble in paradise." Some members wanted nothing to do with UPK; others were enthusiastic supporters. The objections were partly philosophical: passionate crusaders for disadvantaged children felt strongly that PreK was to help disadvantaged children, and not meant for all children. Others worried that private providers would take over PreK, dilute the quality and comprehensiveness they had worked so hard to maintain in EPK, and displace certified well-paid teachers. Other concerns were based on suspicion: UPK was viewed as an idea coming from outside the schools, from non-school advocates and legislators, whose motives were unknown and thus suspect. This was so different from EPK that had come from education leaders like the commissioner and bureau chief and had the support of the governor. The supporters saw UPK as an opportunity to serve more children, and to reach out to the programs already serving preschoolers and exert influence to improve their quality.

Some on both sides were concerned that the funding would not be sustained. After level funding of EPK for 3 years, budget was a valid concern as UPK began. Both sides were concerned about differences between the two programs. For example, the strict requirement in UPK for 180 days would mean little time for staff development, a valued part of EPK. Waivers were sought, but all were refused on the grounds of statutory requirements. As one long-time member said, “The fights were so intense, such heated discussions, that some longtime friendships were fractured. These women have now retired and others have incorporated UPK into the Association.” Now the Association welcomes directors of both UPK and EPK programs.

Many outside observers believe that EPK directors, mostly members of the PreK Administrators’ Association, were key to getting UPK off the ground. These seasoned administrators had years of experience promoting (and defending) PreK in their districts. They knew how to present the case to superintendents and boards of education.

The PreK Administrators’ Association is exploring new ways to work together, such as e-mail and the listserv. In the old (EPK only) days, most administrators were focused on early childhood exclusively. They had responsibility for PreK alone, or PreK and kindergarten, or PreK through primary. They mentored younger staff, bringing them to Association meetings to expose them to other leaders, consciously thinking about succession planning. Today, there are many more district personnel responsible for PreK, but for most it is in addition to an already-broad job, like elementary principal, director of curriculum, and the like. The list of titles of district administrators in Appendix 2 shows the range. With such broad job responsibilities, directors have trouble putting as much time into the PreK Administrators’ Association as they might wish.

## **THE EXPERIENCE OF DISTRICTS IMPLEMENTING EPK AND UPK**

In the 2002-03 school year, there were 44 districts in New York that administered both EPK and UPK. From those, ten were selected for further exploration of implementation issues through telephone interviews.<sup>16</sup> The sample of districts interviewed was selected to be as geographically and demographically representative as possible, as well as to represent a range of years of experience with EPK and UPK. All the sample districts implemented UPK in the first year in which the district was eligible; four districts were first year implementers of EPK in 1966; the others began EPK during one of the three waves of EPK expansion.

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<sup>16</sup> Quotes throughout the rest of the paper are from district administrators and other persons interviewed. To protect their confidentiality, districts are not identified.

| District                              | County      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year EPK | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year UPK |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Binghamton City School District       | Broome      | 1969-70                  | 1998-99                  |
| Buffalo City School District          | Erie        | 1985-86                  | 1998-99                  |
| Liberty Central School District       | Sullivan    | 1985-86                  | 1998-99                  |
| Newfane Central School District       | Niagara     | 1994-95                  | 2000-01                  |
| New York City Department of Education |             | 1966-67                  | 1998-99                  |
| Ossining Union Free School District   | Westchester | 1974-75                  | 1998-99                  |
| Rome City School District             | Oneida      | 1985-86                  | 1998-99                  |
| Schenectady City School District      | Schenectady | 1966-67                  | 1998-99                  |
| Syracuse City School District         | Onondaga    | 1966-67                  | 1998-99                  |
| Westbury Union Free School District   | Nassau      | 1966-67                  | 1998-99                  |

### ***Administration of PreK***

One of the purposes for this study was to provide information about how these two programs are managed in school districts that administer both programs and to offer guidance based on the experience of those school districts. The clear consensus, not surprisingly, is that districts administer these programs as one, typically saying, “We didn’t see any reason to keep them separate.” They are mindful of the differences and the recordkeeping and reporting required, but they overwhelmingly believe these are one program, as evidenced by these observations:

“[District] administers these two programs – EPK and UPK – together. It’s sensible. Several years ago we decided [through our Advisory Board] to make the goals the same, use the same child assessments, same screening, enrollment, same forms for both. The UPK Advisory Board is now the PreK Advisory Board. The enrollment process is the same for families, except EPK has income limits. Parents just think of it as PreK.”

“[District] definitely administers them as one program – one PreK program. We always have – we didn’t want one for the poor and one for the rest (parents would be embarrassed to be in the ‘poor kids’ class).”

“In reporting to SED, we have to do them separately, but the forms and reports have been slowly getting more similar over the years. It would be easy to merge now.”

There are pros and cons about putting the two programs together. Compromises have to be made. There will be more days for EPK, and less time for staff development, home visits, and staggered entry of children at the beginning of the year.<sup>17</sup> Spreading the comprehensive services staff such as nurses, social workers and family workers across more children and families means less intensive comprehensive services. Yet, more children will have access to PreK.

Several administrators said that UPK had been a good influence on developing the PreK program in their district. They see EPK as having a commitment to serve disadvantaged children with highly qualified teachers and necessary comprehensive services. They say UPK allows for flexibility and creativity in shaping the program. “Taking the best of both, we can meet more

<sup>17</sup> UPK requires that 180 days of school be held, not that a specific child attends 180 days. Thus, staggered entry of children at the beginning of the year is allowed in UPK and in EPK

child and family needs. With UPK, we can match the child to the teacher and the setting and families have more choices.”

While all these districts administer EPK and UPK as one program, there are some interesting differences.

### **Advisory Boards**

In all districts, the PreK Policy Advisory Board was described as a positive experience that was useful for planning the UPK program. In 7 of the 10, the Advisory Board has continued to meet and provide guidance to the district on all prekindergarten matters. Many use email to communicate as well as face-to-face meetings two to four times a year. In those few districts in which the advisory board has not met since the planning year of UPK, the district administrators report they would convene it if an issue arose on which they needed advice. In one district with a high proportion of collaborative UPK programs, the Board has created both a Pre K Parent Advisory Board and a PreK Directors Advisory Board. In a large city district, each community district convened a local advisory board and there was a Citywide Advisory Board. The Citywide Advisory Board is now permanent, meets 3-4 times a year and works through active subcommittees.

### **Collaboration**

UPK legislation requires that districts use at least 10% of their funding allocation for “collaborative PreK.” That is, contracts with community-based organizations to provide UPK. All but one of the districts has developed collaborative PreK programs — some extensively. One sparsely populated rural district has sought and received a waiver since beginning UPK, claiming that, not only are there no willing programs within the district boundaries, there are, in fact, none. Even the Head Start program is outside this particular district. One suburban district had a waiver in the first year of UPK and then developed contracts in the second and third years with a nursery school, a Head Start site and a special education program.

Two of the smaller districts, both of which operate all their school-based PreK in one early childhood school, decided to give exactly 10% of their UPK allocation to one collaborative partner. In one district, the partner is a 4410 school (special education provider) that operates a UPK inclusion class, serving 33% of the UPK enrollment, in a classroom in the district’s early childhood school. In the other, the district contracted with one child-care center to meet the needs of families who need full-day services. Children attend the district’s PreK classes in the morning and then are bussed to the child-care center for the afternoon, or vice versa, attending child care in the morning and district PreK in the afternoon. The child-care center is serving 26% of this district’s UPK enrollment.

Four of the six city school districts have extensive collaborative partnerships, ranging from 54% of UPK enrollment to 89%. The other two city school districts contract for 31% and 32% of their UPK enrollment. These city districts tend to contract with the full range of types of providers: child care centers, nursery schools, Head Start, parochial schools, BOCES and special education providers.

The contracting process varies among districts: four negotiate budgets annually with each provider. In one of these districts, this results in one contract at \$3,500 per child and the other at \$1,000 per child. In another, the district contracts almost exclusively with child-care centers, and negotiates one rate that applies to all providers. Another negotiates a cost contract as part of the annual request for proposals process and monitors closely to be sure contract amounts are reasonable. The administrator said, “If [a community provider] is getting only \$1,200, the district will not be getting a good program.” The fourth district reported:

“[District] determines payment to a contracted provider through the RFP process. Each agency has to submit a budget annually. The whole application is not required every year – we just ask the agency to report changes in their program on the application and submit a new budget.”

In three districts, all contractors are offered a set rate of \$2,000 per child. In these three, the district receives roughly \$3,500 per child in UPK funding and is providing extensive staff development, supervision and other support services in addition to the contracted payment.

For the majority of districts, the process of selecting and working with collaborative UPK partners has been fairly smooth. Generally, the community agencies that were selected in the first year of implementation of UPK have continued. In four of the districts, PreK directors reported losing one or two contracted programs over the years. In every case, the contracted agency was “not performing well enough.” These agencies were unable to meet and maintain the PreK standards, in particular the requirement for an early-childhood-certified teacher on-site. A few were able to hire a teacher with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood, but who was not certified. Teacher turnover was an issue in some cases. In two cases, the district PreK administrator worked with the agency to help them improve their UPK program, but was not successful. The overwhelming majority of these problems are in the districts that are paying the least per child to the collaborating agencies contracted to provide UPK. And, unlike other states that have included funding for professional development of teachers in their prekindergarten programs, UPK did not include any funds for teacher development. Comments include:

“We are comfortable with the sites we have – most have been with us for the whole time. I was dubious about collaboration at first, but it works. It could be because [City] has a strong early childhood community; we go to the same meetings. We know each other and we’ve gotten closer, we have better communication because of collaboration.”

“Our goal is to grow the program however we can, in all settings. This year we have two community-run sites in housing projects. Next year we are doubling a site in the Catholic school. We will have a new site that is all the 4-year-olds classes in a child care center. We’re serving 33% of the children [in our district] this year; we’d like to reach them all.”

## **Recruitment and Enrollment of Children**

There are two broad patterns of practice regarding recruitment and enrollment. In most districts, the process for parents is similar: Come to the school (or early childhood office in larger districts) and get an application; or call and have an application sent by mail. In the majority of districts, parents are informed about all the PreK options, including brochures for the

collaborating agencies. The collaborating agencies have applications for PreK and parents can apply at those sites or at the district office.

In two districts, the parents are not told about collaborating agencies. One said, “We don’t tell them about [nursery school] – they do their own recruitment and enrollment.” In contrast, in a large city district, the recruitment and enrollment procedures are clearly spelled out, requiring each school in the district to provide parents with the Regional PreK Directory that lists all PreK sites within the boundaries of the region and access to the Citywide PreK Directory on the web. The procedures “are designed to facilitate family access to prekindergarten services and build on the powerful partnerships that link community-based organizations with the public schools.”<sup>18</sup>  
Comments:

“You’d think we were giving away gold, when we open PreK registration. It is not first-come, first-served, but people rush to get their application in.”

“The district advertises PreK widely: in the district newsletter, on cable TV, in the elementary newsletter, WIC offices, the DSS office. We tell parents about the collaborative agencies. We also let the collaborative agencies handle their own recruitment and enrollment. They have a clientele, a following. Parents who had kids there want their younger siblings to go there. The agencies advertise they have UPK – and they take applications from parents and generally choose to enroll the neediest families [in UPK].”

“A parent calls the PreK Office to register. We ask about where they live, whether they have transportation. Our Head Start partner program does transport, if they live in the right parts of the city. We ask about the child, family needs, preference for full-day or half-day. We have brochures for all our partners (collaborating agencies).”

One district noted that “A PreK student, in any setting, is enrolled in the [district]. The parent does not have to re-register for kindergarten.”

One district has developed a system for gathering information from all PreK teachers to help with kindergarten placement. “A kindergarten placement card is filled out by the sending PreK teacher, in all settings (school PreK, collaborative PreK and other community programs). The teacher is asked to describe the child’s strengths, likes, and talents and what type of class the child would do best in (academic, more/less structure, etc.).”

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

Generally, the school-based EPK and UPK teachers in a particular district are using the same curriculum and assessment system. In most of the districts, it is common for collaborating agencies to be left on their own in terms of curriculum and assessment. In some cases, this is probably a wise decision, since these are established programs that are well-run and have qualified teachers. In others, the agencies may need more guidance. In the two districts where a collaborating partner is operating within the district’s early childhood school building, planning

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<sup>18</sup> New York City Department of Education (March 23, 2004). *Addendum to March 10 Early Grade Admission Memo*. New York City: Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education.

is done jointly with the collaborating program's teachers and the EPK and UPK school-based teachers. Oddly, even though another preschool program is also located in the school building, joint planning does not include that group.

In a handful of districts, consistency of curriculum and assessment across all settings is a high priority. In one district, all PreK sites, both school and community, are trained to implement a locally developed curriculum and aligned assessment. Comments:

“Our curriculum was evaluated by an outside expert in 2003 against scientifically based reading research. It was found to be in alignment with the current research and NYS Standards for this age group. The curriculum is aligned with an assessment system the district also developed. About 90% of the assessment can be done through observation. Assessment occurs three times a year in October, February and May). The May assessment serves as the screening for entering kindergarteners.”

Other districts use the New York State standards to develop curriculum frameworks or maps. One describes the process. “We did a grid of the PreK through Grade 1 standards and we added levels of achievement to each item, appropriate for each grade: I for introducing, D for developed, and M for mastered. We know what's expected for different ages, what we need to be teaching and we can assess using that system (I, D, M).”

### **Staff Development and Supervision**

In six of the 10 districts, staff development is conducted jointly for all PreK – school and community-based. One of these six districts was one of the original EPK resource centers, which provided staff development to all early childhood staff in the region, public and private, a trailblazer of collaboration. Comments:

“We train all the PreK staff together. All new teachers, regardless of setting, have four full-days of training during the year (we pay for subs). In the contract we require the community-based staff to attend 4 out of 6 evening training sessions. Unfortunately we can't compel our school-based staff to attend – we do pay them and invite them, but it's up to them. When we had EPK alone, long ago, we could do mandatory monthly training for school staff. Then we closed the program one day a month and staff had to come because it was within their union-contracted days.”

“[District] provides all staff development and oversight for the community-run UPK sites. And they can access the district's child study team (i.e., social worker, nurse, and psychiatrist) for consultation. A [district] PreK supervisor meets monthly with the director of each UPK program, does observations in each classroom and then shares the information with the director. There are UPK directors meetings 6 times a year – the first ½ hour is business, the other hour is leadership development. Staff development facilitators offer monthly sessions, do in-class model teaching, and offer on-site technical assistance. We won't approve a PreK contract unless the budget has subs in it, so the staff can come to staff development and benefit from the TA. The monthly staff development sessions are ½ day – with the same content for all PreK teachers (school and community). We train both teachers and aides together. We recommend not having both



leave their class on the same day (that's better for kids). For new teachers, the topics would be room arrangement, creating community among kids, curriculum planning, and assessment. Other topics are based on identified needs.”

At least one district is reaching out with training beyond its contracted partners. Comments:

:Every program a child is in needs to be a quality one. We are working with our UPK sites and the rest of the city, too. We're doing a series of evening forums, jointly with our child care resource and referral agency, with local philanthropic support. These are instructional forums on the NYS Standards for PreK and K for teams of teachers and administrators from centers that don't have UPK contracts.”

Many of the districts are working hard to make quality the same in both school-based and community-based PreK. They say the biggest difference is teacher quality. Typically, EPK classes are taught by very experienced certified teachers, meaning long tenure in the district and high pay. In contrast, the UPK classes, especially the community-based ones, have newer teachers. Some of the newer teachers have access to continuing education (e.g., Head Start programs have federal funds to pay college tuition for their staff). In community-based programs, teacher pay is much less than in schools and turnover is too high. Teacher quality costs money.

## Outcome Data

While there is not a single approach recommended by the State Education Department for tracking student outcomes for children below grade 4, some districts have conducted evaluations and followed PreK children. Much of this work is unpublished, although nearly all of the data has been presented to school boards, at education conference in the state or in other forums in which early education outcomes are discussed.

Several years ago, one small city school district did a follow-up on EPK graduates to look at their performance on the NYS 4<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts Assessment. Overall, EPK students did as well as or better than their peers without EPK. Looking back over the school careers of the EPK graduates in 4<sup>th</sup> grade: none were retained in kindergarten and referrals to special education in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade were very low (1%).

In another district, a study focused on students who were continuously enrolled in the district's school-based PreK program (UPK and EPK) during the 1999-2000 school year.<sup>19</sup> Their performance on the Early Literacy Profile (ELP) in kindergarten was compared to grade level peers who did not participate in the district's PreK program. Total average scores for all kindergarteners were 37 out of 50 for PreK attenders versus 30 for non-attenders. The scores were disaggregated by socio-economic status and race/ethnicity. Mean scores were dramatically better for lower SES children who attend PreK (26) versus those who did not (10), but not as high as middle and upper SES children without PreK who scored 39. Black male kindergarteners who attended PreK scored higher than the average for all kindergarten students, 46 versus 37. Black females who attended PreK scored much higher (32) than non-attenders (9)

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<sup>19</sup> Lewis, Krista (March 2001). *Ossining Union Free School District Early Literacy Profile Results*. Unpublished data from the Ossining Union Free School District

but not as high as the average kindergartener (37). Latino male and female kindergarteners who attended PreK scored higher than their Latino peers who did not attend (23 compared to 8 for males and 29 compared to 10 for females), but neither reached the overall average of 37.

### **Effects of PreK on Kindergarten and Primary Grades**

From the beginning of EPK in 1966 and continuing today, an area of keen interest is whether quality prekindergarten programs have any effects on the practices in kindergarten and beyond. District PreK administrators have mixed reactions. Some feel PreK has had a lot of influence, at least on kindergarten, while others feel there has been little, if any, effect. Others feel the influence is moving in the opposite direction. Kindergarten is becoming too academic and pushing PreK to do so; PreK has not had enough influence. The effect that many discern is that children who attend PreK are better-prepared to do well in kindergarten. Others can see changes in kindergarten practices. Their words best describe the situation:

“PreK has absolutely had effects on kindergarten. We have a much better sense of what’s happening with a child who is entering kindergarten, since we’ve had him a whole year prior. The PreK program is enrolling about 270 plus there are another 160 in Head Start; we have about 500 entering kindergarteners, so we know a lot about 85% of the entrants. And with our Parents as Teachers [parent education] program, we know a lot of the families pretty well, too.”

“Has PreK had any effects? Absolutely ‘yes’ in kindergarten. I’m not so sure about 1<sup>st</sup> grade. PreK was our model for kindergarten as we went from part-day to full-day K. We didn’t want it to be 6 hours of the same stuff they did in 3. We paired PreK and K teachers, so kindergarten teachers could see how to do learning centers, developmentally appropriate activities, and we did staff development for the kindergarten teachers. All our kindergartens now look much better as full-day than they did as half-day (except for two veteran teachers who will probably never change).”

“My biggest fear is that kindergarten is becoming too academic. Children need time to play, to be children. They do need to learn to read by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but pushing them earlier won’t do it. We aren’t having enough influence on K-3. Yes, kids are better prepared for K because of PreK. But many disadvantaged kids still have such low language development – it takes more than a year to fix it. Standards in kindergarten now are what used to be for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Kindergarten is more rigorous, so we do make PreK somewhat more rigorous, but we have to hold the line. We don’t want to make PreK boot camp for kindergarten. Of course, children need to enter kindergarten knowing letters of the alphabet, but not all 26!”

“In [District], we’re changing to think PreK – 12, but in some ways we’re glad they don’t include us in the standardized assessments and highly structured curricula [of later grades]. We are still able to creatively write our curriculum.”

## ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The administrators and others interviewed for this report offered a wealth of advice about how best to administer PreK programs – some of their advice is specific to New York and some is certainly applicable anywhere.

### ***Adequate and Reliable Funding***

Perhaps the most common plea was for enough funding to “do PreK right,” meaning a high quality program with qualified, well-paid teachers. One said “The only real difference between EPK and UPK is the money – we get a lot more for UPK.<sup>20</sup> We don’t have enough money to run both programs well.” Another said, “The hardest part [about administering these programs] is being able to fund enough PreK so all children can have it.” Other comments:

“We need more money per child to do this right. And more money to be able to serve all the children. We should have 3’s in UPK. If the state merged EPK and UPK, it would make my job easier, less bureaucratic (fewer forms and reports) but the programs are the same (essentially the same guidelines) and that shouldn’t change.”

The uncertainty of funding is a major concern. Not knowing whether UPK will be funded at all or if EPK might ever be increased is a major barrier to progress. Some districts that were eligible for UPK funding did not even apply because they considered annually appropriated state funds outside the basic aid formula to be an unreliable source of funding.

### ***Contracting***

The UPK rule prohibiting a district from contracting with a program outside district boundaries is a barrier for many. Districts would like to provide PreK near parent’s workplaces, for example, or an excellent program that serves many district residents is located a block outside the district. This ‘rule’ does not appear in the regulations and does not appear to be statutory, but is perceived to be an interpretation made by the State Education Department that could be changed.

Another issue — mainly for smaller rural districts — is the cost-effectiveness of some aspects of PreK. Districts with small numbers of eligible children might be allowed to jointly establish programs with neighboring districts. Some might want to jointly contract for supervision of all their collaborative partners.

### ***Staffing***

Many administrators spoke eloquently about the people who are needed to make PreK succeed and believe strongly in high standards for teachers and administrators. Comments:

“Teachers need to be grounded in early childhood development, not deluged with elementary methods courses in their teacher education programs. The new Birth to Grade Two certificate is several giant steps in the right direction.”

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<sup>20</sup> In fact, whether a district actually ‘gets more for UPK’ depends on its needs-to-resources capacity. UPK provides greater per child funding to needier districts. EPK funding, not based on such a formula, does not vary much among districts.

“To do PreK well, you must have the right mix of staff – who are qualified (certified) and want to teach young children. They have to be nurturing and know curriculum and have teaching skills for young children. And you need leaders who are passionate about young children and knowledgeable to be sure that PreK is getting done right. It can not be done the same as all the other grades in the district.”

### ***Promoting Best Practices***

Regulation may be necessary to define basic parameters of a program, but much of what is viewed as good about PreK is the result of dedicated, creative teachers and leaders in districts and communities, and the State Education Department, exploring new knowledge, trying out new ideas and evolving best practices. There is little opportunity to share these practices among PreK programs. For sixty years, the bureau used guidance documents, publications, meetings and professional development sessions as tools of influence. Many feel that it is time to exercise that option and develop some new materials and means of distribution regarding PreK best practices. Doing so will require funding and authority for SED to spend funding for such purposes.

Several areas emerge from the experience of these districts.

- PreK Policy Advisory Boards were and continue to be useful. It would be helpful to know that keeping the Board going is an option, that many districts have chosen to do so, and that some have broadened their scope to include the full early childhood education community. Some communities may have a similar body that might serve the same purpose and should be allowed to function as the PreK Policy Advisory Board.
- Staff development is a hallmark of EPK – keep in mind the seven resource centers – and now is being carried out diligently and well in some districts for all the UPK and EPK staff. Knowing how this is accomplished, with what staff and at what costs, would be helpful to other districts. Leaving all community-based UPK programs ‘on their own’ is not likely to result in quality programs.
- Assessment practices vary widely among districts, making accountability for early education outcomes difficult to judge. Guidance on effective assessment and evaluation for districts and the adoption of some measures that might be used statewide would strengthen PreK programs.
- Some districts do a good job planning with the PreK programs on-site in their buildings, e.g. Head Start and nursery schools with UPK contracts, but don’t interact on substantive matters of curriculum, staff development, with other programs that may be ‘tenants’.
- Collaboration itself was a new practice that has now had five years to develop. The contracting process, particularly with regards to costs, is quite variable among districts. Guidance about exemplary practices and advice about unsuccessful approaches would be useful.

### ***Merging EPK and UPK***

The fact that all 10 districts report administering the two programs as one is an argument for merging the two. Yet, the two programs do have somewhat different focuses: EPK aims to educate disadvantaged children comprehensively and UPK has a stronger literacy focus. Many said a merger would be welcomed, with a few major conditions:.

- Only if the total funding is maintained — that is— merging does not reduce either the current EPK or UPK appropriation amounts, and no districts that currently operate only EPK are disadvantaged.
- Only if the standards remain high — that is, merged regulations take the highest standard or best practices from each program, carefully constructing unified regulations, taking the best of each.
- Only if districts have flexibility in determining eligibility for enrollment until full funding is achieved, so that the children with greatest needs are served.
- Only if statutory requirements are minimized. Many feel that the complicated legislative language of UPK has been a barrier. EPK functioned well on a regulatory foundation.
- Only if a unified application and reporting system is simpler than either of the current ones and provides better data.
- The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case and the court order to create a new way to distribute aid to schools is an opportunity to re-invent PreK as a unified program. If and when PreK funding becomes part of any new aid formulas, the program components, such as high standards and collaboration, must be maintained. And assurances are necessary to prevent PreK funds from being spent on other things.

### **General Advice**

Based on the New York experience, it is clearly possible to create a collaborative PreK program. Some conditions could have made it easier. States need to develop a network of strong partners, starting with the state education agency and other state agencies concerned with young children, and statewide early childhood professional groups, including school districts and community agencies, before starting PreK programs or making major changes, such as starting a new program (like UPK). This probably happens most effectively when the governor directs the State Education Department and the Human Services Department to work together.

### **CONCLUSION**

Many have debated whether more planning time and slower implementation would have been more effective for UPK than being forced to do it quickly and on a large scale. EPK started slowly, serving only a few thousand children at first, with a reasonable amount of technical assistance and support for professional development. It grew slowly over time and has endured. UPK started very quickly and served almost as many children in its first year of implementation as EPK was serving after thirty years. UPK has been as successful as it has in large part because of the cooperative efforts of many nongovernmental organizations that rallied to help with implementation, the experience of school districts with EPK, and the coalitions that sprang up in response to UPK's vulnerable position in the budget every year. Both approaches to developing PreK can work, judging by the experience in New York, and one may lead to the other.

UPK was in many ways a natural development from the early commitment of the State Education Department to child development and parent education. The Bureau had a long history of support for nonpublic entities, from nursery schools and parent groups during the Depression to the child development centers in World War II, to the resource centers that were an integral part of EPK early on and the collaboration committees that evolved later. The experience of the Permanent Interagency Committee on Early Childhood Programs and its

Advisory Committee brought together otherwise disparate groups (state social service and education agencies, Head Start, child care, school-based PreK) to work through some of the distinctions among these programs and reach a better understanding of one another. By the time UPK emerged, the stage was set for a collaborative program.

The future of publicly funded PreK in New York will likely be shaped by legal mandates. The New York State Court of Appeals in *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State* established a statewide standard providing that all children are entitled under the state constitution to an opportunity for a “meaningful high school education.” The court ordered the state to determine the actual cost of a meaningful high school education in New York City, and ordered that the “costing-out” and remedies to address the inequities be in place by July 30, 2004. The cost studies have been done.

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE), the New York State School Boards Association, the two major teacher unions and the Business Council collaborated on a costing out study that drew input from across the state. The New York Adequacy Study recommended that between \$7 and \$9 billion additional aid over four years would be needed statewide. The study firmly established PreK and smaller class sizes in elementary school as necessary to achieve the sound basic education guaranteed by the state constitution.<sup>21</sup> The Governor’s Commission on Education Finance Reform released its report in late March recommending between \$3 and \$6 billion more be spent statewide over five years. The report supports ‘stabilizing and enhancing’ prekindergarten education as part of the remedy.<sup>22</sup> The commitment to PreK was reinforced by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg who recently announced a plan to use CFE funds to make prekindergarten universal for all 3- and 4-year-olds in New York City. He proposed providing half-day programs for 3-year-olds and full school-day programs for all 4-year olds.<sup>23</sup>

While the court order technically applies only to New York City, few believe that any viable solution can apply only to the city. Many other districts across the state have similar problems with inadequate resources. Defining a remedy that applies only in New York City would be impractical, given that state aid formulas apply across the board and are widely viewed as overly complicated and in dire need of reform statewide.

At this writing, the legislature and the governor have not come to agreement on a concrete proposal for reforming education finance in New York, but whatever the outcome, PreK will likely be part of it. This reinforces the importance of merging EPK and UPK into one program that can be supported through a reformed state-aid formula. Incorporating PreK into the state-aid formula is probably the only way to ensure reliable and sustained funding and the long-term expansion necessary to achieve universal access. The recommendations made by the Board of Regents in 1967 hold up well today:

- 1) State financial support should be provided on the basis of “approved” costs – that is, all costs necessary for a quality program for prekindergarten children.
- 2) Financial provision should be made for building construction and the initial equipping of classrooms as well as for general state aid to operate these programs.

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<sup>21</sup> The report is online at: <http://www.cfequity.org/nyadequacystudysummary.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> The report is online at: <http://www.cfequity.org/zarbfinalreport.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> The full announcement is online at: <http://www.nycenet.edu/NR/rdonlyres/5209E2A1-6A59-49CA-8D17-78DB8B748BC1/582/BloombergAddress033104.pdf>

- 3) Financial assistance should be made available to colleges and universities offering a specialization in early childhood education to encourage the preparation of much-needed, well-qualified, professional and para-professional personnel.

The K-12 system may finally become the PreK-12 system envisioned by the Board of Regents in 1967, with vibrant collaborative partnerships offering PreK throughout the state.

Finally, no research report is complete without a discussion of the need for further research. This was an exploratory study and raised as many issues as it sought to address. The long and fascinating history of child development and parent education in the New York State Education Department raises questions: Did other states have such an early commitment? Was this unique to New York? The unified administration of two different PreK programs leads to several other questions. Much more could be learned from a focused study analyzing the curriculum, assessment and professional development practices of school districts implementing PreK and how that has changed from the era of EPK to that of UPK. Collaborative PreK is another area that would benefit from a much deeper examination to learn what has worked. This report is one small step toward understanding how to make PreK the best it can be for all young children in New York.

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This report describes the seven sites that were funded as part of the project (programs in New York City, and Chemung, Erie, Monroe, Onondaga, Oswego and Steuben counties). Three models emerged: extending the day of part-day Head Start and/or PreK (EPK); enhancing services in child care settings; and attempting to promote system integration in a community by upgrading programs and joint training among child care, Head Start and EPK. The conclusions and recommendations section noted that high quality programs were possible when sufficient resources were available; the project showed that modest progress could be made in closing the large resource gaps among the three program types; and that state agencies could promote collaboration and improve quality by emulating some of the successful practices developed in local communities.

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This 27-page report describes the initiation and accomplishments of the Bureau in its first ten years, including a complete bibliography of reports, articles, radio talks, forms, presentations and other printed materials produced during the decade.

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This 30-page guide covers designing, building, equipping and operating educational programs for children under age six in public schools.

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This report summarizes data gathered by questionnaire from 50 district programs. Topics covered include: recruitment and selection of children, planning and programming in the classroom, parent involvement, evidence of child growth and development, and planning for continuing prekindergarten goals in the kindergarten and primary programs.

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This is a 76-page guide for school districts and Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) that want to offer day care programs for children and families. Topics covered include room arrangements, equipment and materials, activity schedules, staffing patterns, integrating with school curricula, among others. The preface indicates the intention to publish other material including "state interagency guidelines."

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This is a census of all children in public kindergartens in New York in 1974-75, giving the numbers enrolled, school-day and half-day. Through an in-depth questionnaire to 10% of districts (76), it provides details about the practices in kindergartens including staffing, curriculum, and materials in classrooms, among other characteristics.

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This is the report of the observational, in-depth study that was part of the longitudinal study of EPK (1975-1980). There is no copy of this study in the New York State Library collections.

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This is the report of a follow-up study of the seven children who, in prekindergarten, were the subject of the 1975-1980 study of EPK, when they were juniors and seniors in high school. There is no copy of this study in the New York State Library collections.

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This is the final report on the study of districts that chose to offer a year-long, part-day prekindergarten programs for disadvantaged 4-year-olds from 1965-66 through 1968-69. The eight districts were Cortland, Greenburgh, Hempstead, Long Beach, Mount Vernon, Schenectady, Spring Valley and Yonkers. The study was funded by the U.S. Office of Education in the federal department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). The eight districts offered quite different programs: a Montessori nursery school that used the then-new 'talking typewriters,' one that emphasized reading readiness using workbooks, one that emphasized language development using the Bereiter-Englemann direct-instruction model, ones that changed methods during the three-year study, a child-oriented enrichment program, and one that stressed music and movement and used Peabody Language Development Kits. DiLorenzo constructed a measure based on observed classroom structure and presence of "controlled practice of language development activities," which he called "cognitively-structured." The report concludes that disadvantaged children in any of the PreK programs outperformed disadvantaged children in the control group on IQ, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and a measure of psycholinguistic abilities, with greater differences for 'cognitively-structured' programs. Few other measures of child outcome were used

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This study describes the structure and operations of both EPK programs and other prekindergarten programs operated by school districts in New York during the 1996-97 and includes some historical background on preschool education and the advent of EPK.

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This is an extensive report that compares the EPK program in 18 of the 54 school districts operating that program, with two NY districts operating a Mother-Child Home program for 2- and 3-year olds and their mothers, and the theories of Maria Montessori and Bereiter-Engelmann (none of the visited districts operated such programs). They note that all of the observed classrooms were “well-equipped and pleasant;” that some districts had tested children on intelligence, achievement and readiness and found gains through first grade but not beyond; and that the cost of EPK is higher per hour (\$2.81) than group day care centers in NYC (\$1.40). They conclude that the lack of stated program objectives in law inhibits adequate testing and that adherence to one model of early education (developmental) is unduly restrictive.

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This is the final condensed report of the longitudinal study of the effects of PreK on children's development conducted by David Irvine and colleagues from 1975 through 1980. The first cohort entered preK in the fall of 1975 and completed third grade in the spring of 1980; the second entered in 1976 and finished second grade in 1980; each cohort included about 1,800 children who were followed each year through 1980. The design used both a waiting list and other district control group, employed five standardized measures for cognition and behavior, and gathered extensive demographic and program participation data through program reports. Compared to the control group children, PreK children had been less likely to be retained in grade, less likely to be referred for special education and more likely to meet state standards for reading and math. Parent involvement had strong positive effects on children's performance. An in-depth study was conducted in seven of the school districts, focusing on three children in each district. This involved additional in-class observations and interviews with each child's teachers and family over time.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix 1. Questionnaires for Interviews

### UPK/EPK Interview

### School District Administrators

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 District: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: \_\_\_\_\_

This interview is confidential. I want your honest opinions. I will not identify you or your district by name in the report (unless you want to be quoted on a particular topic and you give me permission to do so).

1. Tell me a little about your background. You are now the district administrator for both EPK and UPK. How long have you been in this position? What did you do before? *(If less than 5 years, get names of predecessors)*
2. What is your title? What else is part of your job?
3. When did your district begin to offer **Experimental PreK**? (School Year \_\_\_\_\_ & number of children \_\_\_\_\_)
  - According to data from SED, last school year (2002-03), your district enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ children (\_\_\_\_--3s and \_\_\_\_--4s) in EPK.
  - Has EPK enrollment been about the same over the years? If not, how has it changed?
4. When did your district begin to offer **Universal PreK**? (School Year \_\_\_\_\_ & number of children \_\_\_\_\_)
  1. Last school year (2002-03), your district enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ children in UPK. About \_\_\_\_\_ were in public school classrooms and the rest \_\_\_\_\_ were in other settings in the community. Has that stayed about the same over the years?
5. For this school year 2003-04, what are the state funding and enrollment in EPK and UPK?

| 2003-04 data               | EPK | UPK      |
|----------------------------|-----|----------|
| # 3 year-olds              |     | xxxxxxxx |
| # 4 year olds              |     |          |
| <b>Total State Funding</b> |     |          |
| <b>State per pupil</b>     |     |          |

- What is your district's per pupil allocation for UPK (formula used in past years)?  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_
6. [**Confirm mix of contracted providers.**] How do you determine how much you pay a contracted provider?
  7. Tell me a little about your UPK Advisory Board.  
Is your Advisory Board still meeting? If so, what does it work on now?
  8. How does your district administer these two programs -- EPK and UPK?  
Separately? Together? Why did you choose to do it that way?  
If together, did the 'merge' happen right away when UPK started or gradually? (Please describe)
  9. If I'm a parent interested in enrolling my child in PreK, what do I do? (*ASK for each program: parent outreach, enrollment practices*)
  10. How do you handle...(*ASK for each program: curriculum, assessment, professional development, other aspects*) Is this the same for contracted providers?
  11. Are there major differences between EPK and UPK?  
If so, what?
  12. In your opinion, what's the best thing about EPK?
  13. What's the best thing about UPK?
  14. Most people still think of public schools as K-12. (*Is that changing in your community? PK-12?*) How does PreK fit in your district?
    - What does your Superintendent think about PreK?
    - What does your School Board think about PreK?
    - What do parents think about PreK?
    - What about the general community?
  15. Does your district have any outcome data on your PreK programs (either one, both)? For example, you might have done observations in classrooms using something like ECERS or child assessments of developmental status. Any reports? Any data sharable?
  16. Has PreK had any effects on kindergarten and the primary grades?
  17. Are you a member of the PreK Directors Association? How is that?
  18. Is there anything else you want people in NY, or in other states, to know about administering PreK programs?

**History of PreK in NYS****UPK/EPK Study**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

This interview is confidential. I want your honest opinions. I will not identify you by name in the report in connection with any statement (unless you want to be quoted on a particular topic and you give me permission to do so).

1. Tell me how you came to work at State Ed. When did you become involved with PreK there?
2. *[Depending on dates of tenure:]* How did PreK start in NY? OR: How did PreK evolve while you were at SED?
3. How did things change when UPK started?
4. Are there important differences between EPK and UPK?  
If so, what do you see as the major differences?
5. In your opinion, what's the best thing about EPK?
6. What's the best thing about UPK?
7. What advice would you give to New York and/or other states about administering PreK?
8. Are there any written histories or reports on PreK in NYS that I should look for/read?

## ***Appendix 2. Interviewees***

### ***PreK Directors in School Districts that administer both EPK and UPK***

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ms. Tonia Thompson<br>Director of Primary Education<br>Binghamton City School District   | Broome County      |
| Ms. Elaine Dentico<br>Director of Early Childhood Programs<br>Buffalo City School District   | Erie County        |
| Ms. Mary K. Scheutzow<br>Director of Curriculum<br>Liberty Central School District   | Sullivan County    |
| Ms. Amy Cavaretta<br>Principal, The Early Childhood Center<br>Newfane Central School District  | Niagara County     |
| Ms. Eleanor Greig Ukoli<br>Director, Department of Early Childhood Education<br>New York City Department of Education                | New York City      |
| Dr. Sandra W. Shelton<br>Principal, Roosevelt School (all 4-year-olds)<br>Ossining Union Free School District                        | Westchester County |
| Ms. Nancy Petrucci<br>Supervisor of Alternative Programs<br>Rome City School District  | Oneida County      |
| Ms. Michelle VanDerLinden<br>Coordinator of Early Childhood and English as Second Language (ESL)<br>Schenectady City School District | Schenectady County |
| Mrs. Christine Vogelsang<br>Director of Early Childhood Education<br>Syracuse City School District                                   | Onondaga County    |
| Mrs. Rhoda Freedman (retired, former director in Syracuse)   |                    |



Ms. Dale Telmer  
Principal, Dryden Street School (The Early Childhood Center)  
Westbury Union Free School District                      Nassau County

Dr. Mary Fritz (retired, former director in Westbury)

***The State Education Department, Early Education and Reading Initiatives Team***

Cynthia Gallagher, Coordinator  
Dee Dwyer, Associate in Early Childhood Education  
Doris Hill-Wyley, Associate in Early Childhood Education

***The State Education Department, Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education***

Mary J. Bondarin, former chief of the Bureau  
Bertha D. Campbell, former chief of the Bureau  
Sue Updike-Porter, former associate in the Bureau

***The State Education Department***

Gordon Ambach, former Commissioner of Education  
Margretta Reid Fairweather, former Director of Division of Child Development, Parent  
Education and Pupil Support Services

### Appendix 3. New York State Prekindergarten Data for 2002-03 School Year for All Districts with UPK and/or EPK

(Data from final reports submitted to SED, Early Education and Reading Initiatives; 184 of 189 UPK districts reporting and 97 of 97 EPK districts reporting)

|  | N = 183         | N = 1          | N = 184                        | N = 96         | N = 1          | N = 97                         |
|--|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
|  | <u>UPK-ROS*</u> | <u>UPK-NYC</u> | <u>UPK</u><br><u>statewide</u> | <u>EPK-ROS</u> | <u>EPK-NYC</u> | <u>EPK</u><br><u>Statewide</u> |
| Districts                              | 183             | 1              | 184                            | 96             | 1              | 97                             |
| Sites                                  | 608             | 1,054          | 1,662                          |                |                |                                |
| Classes                                | 1,218           | 2,611          | 3,829                          | 579            | 295            | 874                            |
| % With extended day options            | 32%             | 41%            | 38%                            |                |                |                                |
| Children - 4s                          | 16,428          | 41,886         | 58,314                         | 8,076          | 4,686          | 12,762                         |
| Children - 3s                          |                 |                |                                | 1,106          | 324            | 1,430                          |
| % Enrolled part-day                    | 74%             | 85%            | 82%                            | 76%            | 65%            | 73%                            |
| % Enrolled school-day                  | 26%             | 15%            | 18%                            | 24%            | 35%            | 27%                            |
| % with IEP                             | 9%              | 2%             | 4%                             | 12%            | 10%            | 12%                            |
| % Economically Disadvantaged**         | 56%             | 76%            | 70%                            | 77%            | 95%            | 86%                            |
| % Certified teachers                   | 94%             | 74%            | 81%                            | 100%           | 100%           | 100%                           |
| % of above with N-6 certification      | 93%             | 98%            | 96%                            | na             | na             | na                             |
| % Of children in settings:             |                 |                |                                |                |                |                                |
| Child care center                      | 17%             | 35%            | 30%                            |                |                |                                |
| Head start                             | 11%             | 9%             | 10%                            |                |                |                                |
| Non-public school                      | 7%              | 8%             | 6%                             |                |                |                                |
| Nursery school                         | 6%              | 9%             | 8%                             |                |                |                                |
| BOCES                                  | 3%              | 0%             | 1%                             |                |                |                                |
| Public school                          | 48%             | 32%            | 37%                            | 100%           | 100%           | 100%                           |
| 4410 school (special education school) | 6%              | 5%             | 5%                             |                |                |                                |
| Family child care                      | 1%              | 2%             | 2%                             |                |                |                                |

\* ROS = rest of state

\*\* Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch

### **Appendix 4. New York State Prekindergarten Data for 2002-03 School Year for the 44 districts with both UPK and EPK**

(Data from EPK and UPK final reports submitted to SED, Early Education and Reading Initiatives Team)

|                                   | N = 43<br><u>UPK-ROS*</u> | N = 43<br><u>EPK-ROS</u> | N = 1<br><u>EPK-NYC</u> | N = 1<br><u>UPK-NYC</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Districts                         | 43                        | 43                       | 1                       | 1                       |
| Sites                             | 326                       |                          |                         | 1,054                   |
| Classes                           | 648                       | 357                      | 295                     | 2,611                   |
| % With extended day options       | 35%                       |                          |                         | 41%                     |
| Children - 4s                     | 9,049                     | 4,812                    | 4,686                   | 41,886                  |
| Children - 3s                     |                           | 785                      | 324                     |                         |
| % Enrolled part-day               | 64%                       | 72%                      | 65%                     | 85%                     |
| % Enrolled school-day             | 36%                       | 28%                      | 35%                     | 15%                     |
| % with IEP                        | 8%                        | 14%                      | 10%                     | 2%                      |
| % Economically Disadvantaged**    | 65%                       | 86%                      | 95%                     | 76%                     |
| % Certified teachers              | 94%                       | 100%                     | 100%                    | 74%                     |
| % of above with N-6 certification | 94%                       | na                       | na                      | 98%                     |
| % Of children in settings:        |                           |                          |                         |                         |
| Child care center                 | 14%                       |                          |                         | 35%                     |
| Head start                        | 12%                       |                          |                         | 9%                      |
| Non-public school                 | 11%                       |                          |                         | 8%                      |
| Nursery school                    | 4%                        |                          |                         | 9%                      |
| BOCES                             | <1%                       |                          |                         | 0%                      |
| Public school                     | 55%                       | 100%                     | 100%                    | 32%                     |
| 4410 school (special ed school)   | 2%                        |                          |                         | 5%                      |
| Family child care                 | 1%                        |                          |                         | 2%                      |

\* ROS = rest of state

\*\* Eligible for Free or Reduced lunch

### **Appendix 5. New York State Prekindergarten Data for 2002-03 School Year for the 10 Districts with both UPK and EPK (sample for interviews)**

(data from EPK and UPK final reports submitted to SED, Early Education and Reading Initiatives)

|                                   | N = 9<br><u>UPK</u> | NYC<br><u>UPK</u> | N = 9<br><u>EPK</u> | NYC<br><u>EPK</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Districts                         | 9                   | 1                 | 9                   | 1                 |
| Sites                             | 104                 | 1,054             |                     |                   |
| Classes                           | 193                 | 2,611             | 152                 | 295               |
| % With extended day options       | 33%                 | 41%               |                     |                   |
| Children - 4s                     | 2,752               | 41,886            | 2,135               | 4,686             |
| Children - 3s                     |                     |                   | 210                 | 324               |
| % Enrolled part-day               | 61%                 | 85%               | 60%                 | 65%               |
| % Enrolled school-day             | 39%                 | 15%               | 40%                 | 35%               |
| % With IEP                        | 9%                  | 2%                | 17%                 | 10%               |
| % Economically Disadvantaged      | 71%                 | 76%               | 90%                 | 95%               |
| % Certified teachers              | 93%                 | 74%               | 100%                | 100%              |
| % Of above with N-6 certification | 97%                 | 98%               | na                  | na                |
| % Of children in settings:        |                     |                   |                     |                   |
| Child care center                 | 13%                 | 35%               |                     |                   |
| Head start                        | 13%                 | 9%                |                     |                   |
| Non-public school                 | 10%                 | 8%                |                     |                   |
| Nursery school                    | 4%                  | 9%                |                     |                   |
| BOCES                             | 1%                  | 0%                |                     |                   |
| Public school                     | 56%                 | 32%               | 100%                | 100%              |
| 4410 school (special ed school)   | 3%                  | 5%                |                     |                   |
| Family child care                 | 0%                  | 2%                |                     |                   |

The nine districts interviewed and the counties in which they are located:

| <u>District</u>                     | <u>County</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Binghamton City School District     | Broome        |
| Buffalo City School District        | Erie          |
| Liberty Central School District     | Sullivan      |
| Newfane Central School District     | Niagara       |
| New York City Dept. of Education    | New York City |
| Ossining Union Free School District | Westchester   |
| Rome City School District           | Oneida        |
| Schenectady City School District    | Schenectady   |
| Syracuse City School District       | Onondaga      |
| Westbury Union Free School District | Nassau        |

## **Appendix 6. Fiscal and Enrollment Data for the Sample Districts Compared to Statewide Averages**

| <b>2001-2002 Fiscal And Enrollment Data By District</b> | <b>Expenditure Per Pupil (K-12)</b> | <b>UPK Per Pupil Grant Amount (2000-2001)</b> | <b>Total Enrollment PK-12</b> | <b>Percent Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</b> | <b>NYS Revenue Share*</b> | <b>Combined Wealth Ratio**</b> | <b>Need To Resource Capacity***</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Binghamton City School District                         | \$9,401                             | \$3,148                                       | 6,299                         | 65%                                     | 52%                       | 0.640                          | 3                                   |
| Buffalo City School District                            | \$11,742                            | \$4,000                                       | 45,721                        | 82%                                     | 73%                       | 0.506                          | 2                                   |
| Liberty Central School District                         | \$13,018                            | \$2,908                                       | 1,787                         | 60%                                     | 52%                       | 0.763                          | 4                                   |
| Newfane Central School District                         | \$9,458                             | \$3,212                                       | 2,158                         | 25%                                     | 64%                       | 0.579                          | 5                                   |
| New York City Dept. of Education                        | \$10,469                            | \$3,332                                       | 1,066,516                     | 82%                                     | 44%                       | 0.939                          | 1                                   |
| Ossining Union Free School District                     | \$14,373                            | \$2,700                                       | 4,050                         | 35%                                     | 23%                       | 1.818                          | 5                                   |
| Rome City School District                               | \$11,188                            | \$3,332                                       | 6,199                         | 47%                                     | 65%                       | 0.554                          | 3                                   |
| Schenectady City School District                        | \$11,031                            | \$3,052                                       | 8,591                         | 69%                                     | 59%                       | 0.690                          | 3                                   |
| Syracuse City School District                           | \$10,045                            | \$3,684                                       | 23,015                        | 74%                                     | 66%                       | 0.510                          | 2                                   |
| Westbury Union Free School Dist                         | \$14,207                            | \$4,000                                       | 3,928                         | 95%                                     | 27%                       | 1.308                          | 3                                   |
| Average for sample districts =                          | \$11,493                            |   |                               | 63%                                     | 53%                       | 0.831                          |                                     |
| New York State average =                                | \$11,495                            |   |                               | 50%                                     | 48%                       | 1.0                            |                                     |

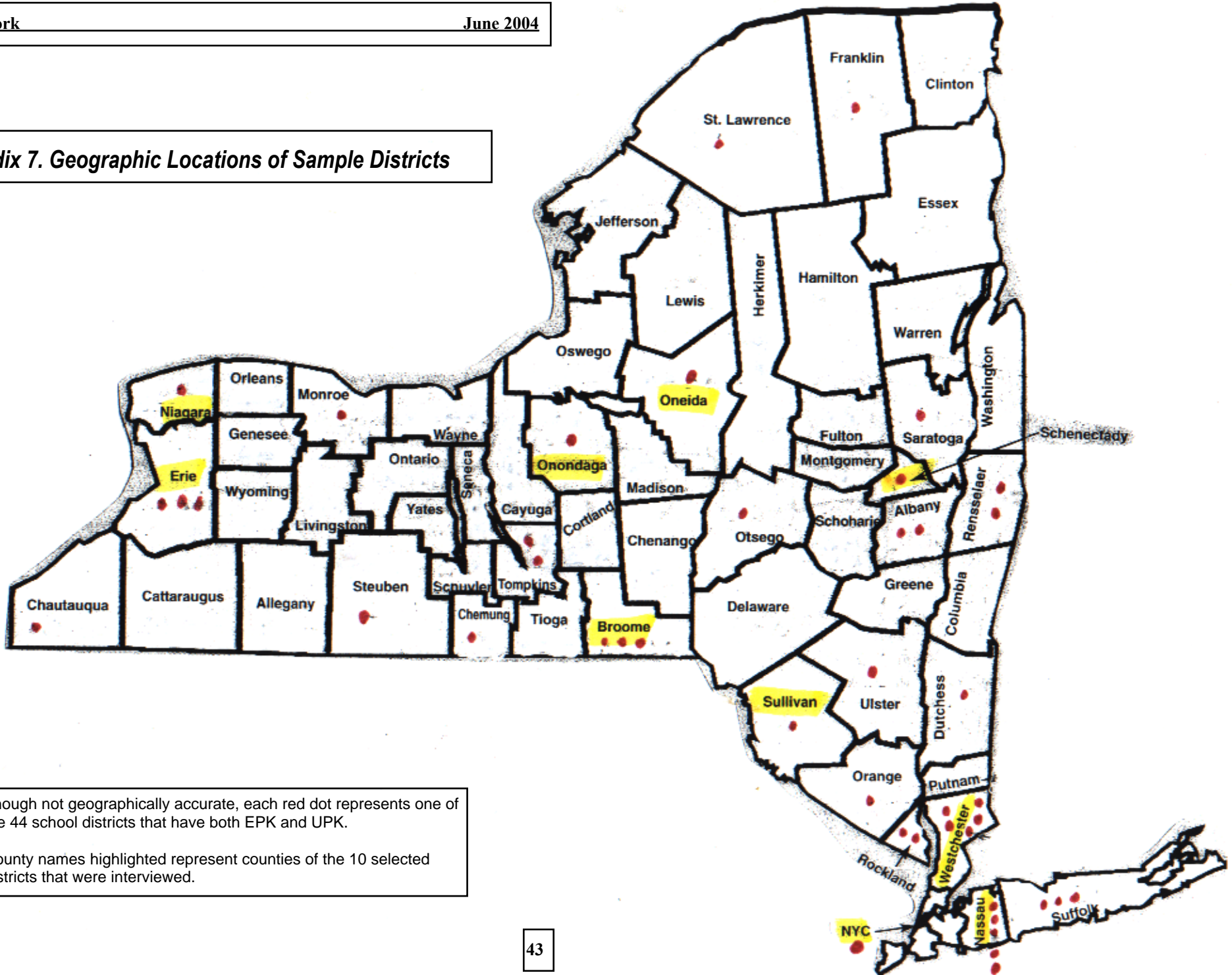
\* NYS Revenue Share = The proportion of the district's total revenue that is derived from State Aid.

\*\* Combined Wealth Ratio (CWR) = The CWR is a measure of a district's fiscal capacity to support education. It compares district wealth to the State average wealth, which is defined as 1.0. The CWR is based on total actual property value and total Adjusted Gross Income of all income tax returns.

\*\*\* Need to Resource Capacity (NRC) = A measure of a district's ability to meet the needs of its students with local resources. There are six categories based on the NRC index, which is a comparison of district poverty index to Combined Wealth Ratio.

1. New York City Public Schools;
2. Large City Districts – Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers;
3. High Need Urban-Suburban Districts;
4. High Need Rural Districts;
5. Average Need Districts; and
6. Low Need Districts

Appendix 7. Geographic Locations of Sample Districts



Though not geographically accurate, each red dot represents one of the 44 school districts that have both EPK and UPK.

County names highlighted represent counties of the 10 selected districts that were interviewed.

### **Appendix 8. Annual Budget Appropriations, Districts Involved and Children Enrolled in EPK and UPK (1967-2004)<sup>24</sup>**

| <i>School Years</i> | <i>Experimental PreKindergarten EPK (state budget appropriation)</i> | <i>Universal PreKindergarten UPK (state budget appropriation)</i> | <i>Number of School Districts Involved</i> |            | <i>Approximate Number of Children Enrolled</i> |            |
|---------------------|--|---|--|------------|--|------------|
|                     |  |   | <i>EPK</i>                                 | <i>UPK</i> | <i>EPK</i>                                     | <i>UPK</i> |
| 1966-67             | \$5,000,000  |   | 39   |            | 2,690  |            |
| 1967-68             | \$5,000,000  |   | 39   |            | 3,082  |            |
| 1968-69             | \$5,600,000  |   | 39   |            | 5,494  |            |
| 1969-70             | \$6,800,000  |   | 39   |            | 5,666  |            |
| 1970-71             | \$6,800,000  |   | 39   |            | 5,357  |            |
| 1971-72             | \$5,000,000  |   | 39   |            | 4,676  |            |
| 1972-73             | \$10,000,000   |   | 57   |            | 6,402  |            |
| 1973-74             | \$10,600,000   |   | 57   |            | 7,945  |            |
| 1974-75             | \$10,600,000   |   | 57   |            | 6,038  |            |
| 1975-76             | \$10,000,000   |   | 57   |            | 7,785  |            |
| 1976-77             | \$9,100,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,528  |            |
| 1977-78             | \$8,960,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,487  |            |
| 1978-79             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,520  |            |
| 1979-80             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,301  |            |
| 1980-81             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,088  |            |
| 1981-82             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 6,041  |            |
| 1982-83             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 5,897  |            |
| 1983-84             | \$9,460,000  |   | 57   |            | 5,866  |            |
| 1984-85             | \$14,000,000   |   | 62   |            | 6,853  |            |
| 1985-86             | \$18,660,000   |   | 74   |            | 9,261  |            |
| 1986-87             | \$22,000,000   |   | 86   |            | 10,400   |            |
| 1987-88             | \$23,530,000   |   | 90   |            | 11,300   |            |
| 1988-89             | \$33,000,000   |   | 102  |            | 12,434   |            |
| 1989-90             | \$37,000,000   |   | 109  |            | 13,353   |            |
| 1990-91             | \$42,000,000   |   | 96   |            | 19,170   |            |
| 1991-92             | \$47,000,000   |   | 97   |            | 19,500   |            |
| 1992-93             | \$47,000,000   |   | 99   |            | 19,500   |            |
| 1993-94             | \$47,000,000   |   | 99   |            | 19,500   |            |
| 1994-95             | \$50,200,000   |   | 99   |            | 19,631   |            |
| 1995-96             | \$50,200,000   |   | 99   |            | 19,631   |            |
| 1996-97             | \$50,200,000   |   | 99   |            | 20,840   |            |
| 1997-98             | \$50,200,000   |   | 98   |            | 19,000   |            |
| 1998-99             | \$50,200,000   | \$67,000,000  | 98   | 65         | 20,800   | 18,389     |

<sup>24</sup> For years through 1966-97, data are from:

King, Alice D. (1998). *The Status of Prekindergarten Programs in New York State*. Dissertation submitted to the University at Albany. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services.

For later years (1998-2004), data supplied by SED, Early Education and Reading Initiatives.

| <i>School<br/>Years</i> | <i>Experimental<br/>PreKindergarten<br/>EPK<br/>(state budget<br/>appropriation)</i> | <i>Universal<br/>PreKindergarten<br/>UPK<br/>(state budget<br/>appropriation)</i> | <i>Number of<br/>School Districts<br/>Involved</i> |            | <i>Approximate Number of<br/>Children Enrolled</i> |            |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|------------|--|------------|
|                         |  |   | <i>EPK</i>   | <i>UPK</i> | <i>EPK</i>   | <i>UPK</i> |
| 1999-00                 |  | \$100,000,000   | 98   | 99         | 16,800   | 27,277     |
| 2000-01                 |  | \$225,000,000   | 97   | 163        | 15,400   | 48,139     |
| 2001-02                 |  | \$225,000,000   | 97   | 187        | 15,400   | 54,588     |
| 2002-03                 |  | \$204,000,000   | 97   | 189        | 15,700   | 58,332     |
| 2003-04                 |  | \$204,000,000   | 97   | 190        | 15,700   | 58,984     |

Notes: The number of children enrolled in EPK declined during the first two years of UPK implementation. The reason is that, prior to implementing UPK, New York City enrolled many more children in EPK than were required to comply with the terms of the City's EPK grant from the state. (These children were supported by federal and local funds.) As the City's UPK program and allocation amount increased, some classrooms were re-categorized from EPK to UPK and the City reorganized its distribution of funds from all sources (federal, state and local) to maximize the use of state funds. The combined total number of children enrolled in PreK (EPK and UPK) in New York City has been steadily increasing.

The numbers of districts and children for 2003-04 are estimates, based on application projections, supplied by Early Education and Reading Initiatives Team, New York State Education Department.



## **Appendix 9. Leadership in New York State**

### **Governors**

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Franklin D. Roosevelt | 1929-1932    |
| Herbert H. Lehman     | 1933-1940    |
| Thomas Dewey          | 1941-1954    |
| Averell Harriman      | 1955-1958    |
| Nelson Rockefeller    | 1959-1973    |
| Malcolm Wilson        | 1973-1974    |
| Hugh Carey            | 1975-1982    |
| Mario Cuomo           | 1983-1994    |
| George Pataki         | 1995-present |

### **Commissioners of Education**

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Frank Graves      | 1928-1939    |
| Ernest Cole       | 1940-1941    |
| George Stoddard   | 1942-1945    |
| Francis Spaulding | 1946-1949    |
| Lewis Wilson      | 1950-1954    |
| James Allen       | 1955-1970    |
| Ewald Nyquist     | 1971-1976    |
| Gordon Ambach     | 1977-1987    |
| Thomas Sobol      | 1988-1994    |
| Richard Mills     | 1995-present |

### **Chiefs of the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education**

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Ruth Andrus             | 1928-1951 |
| Myra Woodruff           | 1952-1966 |
| Dorothea Conklin        | 1967-1971 |
| Ruth Flurry             | 1972-1982 |
| Bertha Campbell         | 1983-1986 |
| Michael Willie (acting) | 1986-1987 |
| Mary Bondarin           | 1988-1992 |

**About the author**

Anne Mitchell is the president of *Early Childhood Policy Research*, an independent consulting firm specializing in research, planning and policy analysis in early care and education.