



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Klein & Carlucci: Every child deserves a full-day kindergarten seat

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 11, 2016

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Fund Would Provide Approximately \$60 Million Annually for Full-Day Kindergarten Across New York State

Ossining, NY - Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) and State Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland) joined NYSUT members, and local parents and children on Thursday, to call for the creation of a Kindergarten Conversion Fund from approximately \$60 million in unclaimed or forfeited lottery prizes for full-day kindergarten and the expansion of kindergarten programs.

"Across the state, young children have started to build their educational foundation with Universal Pre-K, a vital educational program that I was proud to fight for in 2014. However, when many children turn five-years-old, they will not have access to a full-day kindergarten program, leaving many of our youngest students with an educational gap. By establishing the Kindergarten Conversion Fund, we can use unclaimed or forfeited lottery money to finally close that gap and ensure that all of New York's students have the early education they deserve," **said Senator Klein.**

"While year after year New York loses tens of millions of dollars in unclaimed lottery prizes, school districts with rapidly expanding enrollment for kindergarten are left to cover the costs of making sure their students have a seat. The Kindergarten Conversion Fund will alleviate this burden on school districts by ensuring that students across New York will have the ability to attend full day kindergarten. I'm proud to stand with Senator Klein, Superintendent Sanchez, NYSUT and all those who want to provide our children with the academic tools they need to succeed," **said Senator Carlucci.**

For many young students, kindergarten can close the achievement gaps that are a result of income and education disparities in the home. Studies have shown that students who attend full-day kindergarten perform better throughout their academic years, and eventually obtain higher paid jobs, which in turn also leads to more tax revenue for the state.

It is estimated that if each student was given the opportunity to attend full-day kindergarten, the state could receive an additional \$25 million in accumulated benefits.

While many school districts have a demand for full-day kindergarten, they lack the operation funds and capital expense money to expand their program. Over 30 school districts could benefit from new funds that would cover capital expenses for kindergarten program expansion.

As of the 2014-15 school year, only 18 school districts offered both full- and half-day kindergarten, leaving five school districts that offer only half-day kindergarten and a whopping 13 school districts that offer no kindergarten program at all. While demand for full-day kindergarten grows, due to a lack of state funding, over 5,100 students throughout New York State are enrolled in half-day programs.

Senate Bill S. 863-A, sponsored by Senator Carlucci and championed in the Independent Democratic Conference's New York 2020 Agenda, would establish the Kindergarten Conversion Fund, which would use unclaimed lottery money to fund kindergarten programs, as well as related capital expenses, throughout New York State. The Kindergarten Conversion Fund could result in \$60 million in additional funding for kindergarten programs, annually.

"NYSUT fully supports investment in full-day kindergarten. Studies show that programs that promote early school readiness, as full-day kindergarten does, provide children with substantial academic and social benefits. They help to ensure students are prepared to take on the challenge of learning, leading to increased reading and math proficiency, higher graduation rates and more students moving on to college. It is far more cost-effective and educationally sound to invest in school readiness at the front end of a student's academic career, rather than trying to play catch-up later when a student is experiencing difficulties and frustration," **said NYSUT's Executive Vice President Andrew Pallotta.**

"We are excited with the prospect of this new bill. The North Rockland Full Day Kindergarten Advocates are fully committed to finding a solution to educational inequity in New York State. Full day kindergarten is a core program and it can not continue to be treated as a non-essential program. All kids deserve a sound basic education in New York and it starts with a solid foundation in full day kindergarten," **said Jennifer Teichmann, President of the North Rockland Full-Day Kindergarten Advocates.**

“As the father of a young girl who attends school in Ossining, I want to know that she is getting the best education possible. Providing Full Day Kindergarten for our students will give countless parents like me the peace of mind knowing our children will have a bright future,” **said Matthew Brown, Ossining Parent.**

“In my career as a Kindergarten teacher at Park Elementary, I’ve watched many students pass through my classroom doors and the one thing I can tell you is how important it is that we invest in our youth. I teach my students letters, which turns into words, then sentences and end up as stories. Those are the building blocks of success that happen everyday in classrooms across New York. Let’s provide our teachers with the resources they need to see our students succeed beyond their wildest dreams,” **said Lisa Clemmons, Park Elementary Kindergarten Teacher and NYSUT member.**

RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S863A

-
- Introduced
 - - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly

- On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to certain unclaimed and abandoned prize money and establishes the kindergarten conversion fund

January 07, 2015

In Senate Committee Investigations and Government Operations

Sponsored by David Carlucci

Do you support this bill?