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TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: Dr. Amy Fowler, Deputy Agency of Education
TOPIC: PreK Revision Bill –
Response to Senate Request Regarding Age of PreK Enrollment
DATE: February 26, 2018

Overview

Following my testimony on February 15, 2018, Senator Baruth requested data regarding the enrollment patterns for Prekindergarten students. This is specifically in reference to clarifying the eligibility of children for Prekindergarten vouchers. In my prior testimony, I had said that we didn't anticipate that there were greater than 20-30 students per year taking advantage of such a delay. The numbers are much greater than that.

Summary

Over the last five school years, approximately 2.5% of all students participating in publicly funded prekindergarten are old enough to participate in kindergarten. Excluding students in the EEE program, this results in an excess cost to the Education Fund of at least \$ 572,040.

Detailed Data

The Agency of Education examined the Fall Census data and the Tuition Student Census data collected over the last 5 years for prekindergarten (PK) and Essential Early Education (EEE)¹ programs. Students with identified disabilities receive EEE programs and related services through their school district of residence. Each student receiving EEE services is required by law to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

While all school systems establish their own date for enrollment eligibility, the Agency of Education selected September 1 as a proxy for the cut date based on anecdotal knowledge that this is a typical eligibility date.

Prekindergarten Enrollment Trends: Last year (School Year 2016-17; SY17), 2.5% of prekindergarten students were age eligible for kindergarten. This prevalence of older students in prekindergarten has been steady since 2012-13.

¹ Past practice has been to refer to these as EEE programs. These programs have shifted in federal language to now be referenced as Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). The AOE will be starting to use this language in the future

Table 1: Prekindergarten (PreK and EEE combined) Enrollment Trends by Age Group

	SY17	%	SY16	%	SY15	%	SY14	%	SY13	%
All PK Total Enrollment	9160		7243		6221		5854		5683	
All PK older than expected 5+years old	225	2.5%	185	2.6%	156	2.5%	142	2.4%	125	2.2%
All PK age as expected 3-4 years old	8935	97.5%	7058	97.4%	6065	97.5%	5712	97.6%	5558	97.8%

Prekindergarten Enrollment Trends by Program Types: The percentage of older than expected students in prekindergarten differs by program type.

The percent of prekindergarten students who are age eligible to be in kindergarten has been relatively similar over the last 3 years at 2.5%.

Kindergarten placement for Essential Early Education students is determined through a parent-school IEP team decision. The percent of EEE students who are age eligible to be in kindergarten but have an additional year of prekindergarten has been relatively similar over the last 3 years at 3.8%.

In 2016-17, assuming that all of the prekindergarten students (180) that are not in EEE require the current voucher of \$3,178, this resulted in an excess cost to the education fund of at least \$572,040. This does not account for costs incurred of an unfilled seat in the kindergarten classroom.

Table 2: Prekindergarten Enrollment Trends by Age Group and Program Type

	SY17	%	SY16	%	SY15	%	SY14	%	SY13	%
PK total	8014		6193		5064		4830		4617	
PK older than expected 5+years old	180	2.2%	145	2.3%	113	2.2%	99	2.0%	85	1.8%
PK age as expected 3-4 years old	7834	97.8%	6048	97.7%	4951	97.8%	4731	98.0%	4532	98.2%
EEE total	1146		1050		1157		1024		1066	
EEE older than expected 5+years old	45	3.9%	40	3.8%	43	3.7%	43	4.2%	40	3.8%
EEE age as expected 3-4 years old	1101	96.1%	1010	96.2%	1114	96.3%	981	95.8%	1026	96.2%