HEPC Brief Analysis

The President’s Plan places early education squarely within the educational context of early education – an extension of elementary school K-3 down to cover all 4-year olds. The target populations for program design and funding, however, are lower socio-economic families less likely to afford existing preschool fees.

The President’s Plan is a partnership with states in terms of funding. The federal budget for this is not yet determined.

For Hawai‘i, this may require a shift from regulating preschools in a non-educational context (looking more at safety) to a more traditional educational quality control program. Quality control is described much the same as would be described for general public education, namely

- State level standards for early learning (implying development of standards similar to those for K-12);
- Qualified teachers for all preschool classrooms (suggesting expanding existing teacher licensing);
- A data plan (suggesting a parallel system of IT and data collection similar to that of the HIDOE);
- Well-trained teachers paid comparably to K-12 staff (suggesting a potential expansion of Unit 5 collective bargaining);
- Class size standards;
- A rigorous curriculum (suggesting that some agency must be responsible for adopting standards for curriculum);
- Comprehensive health services (suggesting a role for our Department of Health);
- Effective evaluation (perhaps suggesting the role for third party evaluators).

These elements suggest a vision of preschool as more of an academic preparation program rather than one of initial socialization and exposure to creative play.

These elements also hint that the existing structures for qualifying teachers in public education might be involved with some form of licensing and credentialing - including training through a state approved teach education program, and perhaps an expansion of the authority of the Teachers Standard Board. Whether the current licensing of the preschools themselves would continue outside Hawai‘i’s Department of Education may be an issue for future discussion.

Governor Abercrombie’s proposal plan, summarized later in this paper, clearly speaks to similar elements of academic preparation, but does not yet make as dramatic a shift into extending public elementary education to all 4 year olds. The target populations may be the same, but it remains to be seen if the elements identified in the White House Briefing Paper are intended to fundamentally change how states deliver and support pre K programs.
What is more likely is that in order to access future Federal grants in the program the states will need to make compelling and competitive proposals, similar to the Race To The Top approach.

**Official White House Fact Sheet - President Obama’s Plan for Early Education for all Americans**


“In states that make it a priority to educate our youngest children…studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, form more stable families of their own. We know this works. So let’s do what works and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind.”

President Barack Obama

State of the Union, February 12, 2013

The beginning years of a child’s life are critical for building the early foundation needed for success later in school and in life. Leading economists agree that high-quality early learning programs can help level the playing field for children from lower-income families on vocabulary, social and emotional development, while helping students to stay on track and stay engaged in the early elementary grades. Children who attend these programs are more likely to do well in school, find good jobs, and succeed in their careers than those who don’t. And research has shown that taxpayers receive a high average return on investments in high-quality early childhood education, with savings in areas like improved educational outcomes, increased labor productivity, and a reduction in crime.

In his State of the Union address, President Obama called on Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool to every child in America. As part of that effort, the President will propose a series of new investments that will establish a continuum of high-quality early learning for a child – beginning at birth and continuing to age 5. By doing so, the President would invest critical resources where we know the return on our dollar is the highest: in our youngest children.

• **Providing High-Quality Preschool for Every Child**: The President is proposing a new federal-state partnership to provide all low- and moderate-income four-year old children with high-quality preschool, while also expanding these programs to reach additional children from middle class families and incentivizing full-day kindergarten policies. This investment – financed through a cost-sharing model with states – will help close America’s school readiness gap and ensure that children have the chance to enter kindergarten ready for success.

• **Growing the Supply of Effective Early Learning Opportunities for Young Children**: To expand high-quality early learning opportunities in the years before preschool, the President will call for a significant investment in a new Early Head Start-Child Care partnership. Competitive grants will support communities that expand the availability of Early Head Start and child care providers that can meet the highest standards of quality for infants and toddlers, serving children from birth through age 3.

• **Extending and Expanding Evidence-Based, Voluntary Home Visiting**: Voluntary home visiting programs enable nurses, social workers, and other professionals to connect families to services and educational support that will improve a child’s health, development, and ability to learn. President Obama
has already committed $1.5 billion to expand home visitation to hundreds of thousands of America’s most vulnerable children and families across all 50 states. The President will pursue substantial investments to expand these important programs to reach additional families in need.

**The President’s Commitment to Early Education**

A zip code should never predetermine the quality of any child’s educational opportunities. Yet studies show that children from low-income families are less likely to have access to high-quality early education, and less likely to enter school prepared for success. By third grade, children from low-income families who are not reading at grade level are six times less likely to graduate from high school than students who are proficient. Often, the high costs of private preschool and lack of public programs also narrow options for middle-class families.

High-quality early childhood education provides the foundation for all children’s success in school and helps to reduce achievement gaps. Despite the individual and economic benefits of early education, our nation has lagged in its commitment to ensuring the provision of high quality public preschool in our children’s earliest years. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that the United States ranks 28th out of 38 countries for the share of four-year olds enrolled in early childhood education. And fewer than 3 in 10 four-year olds are enrolled in high-quality programs.

**Preschool for All**

The President’s proposal will improve quality and expand access to preschool, through a cost sharing partnership with all 50 states, to extend federal funds to expand high-quality public preschool to reach all low- and moderate-income four-year olds from families at or below 200% of poverty. The U.S. Department of Education will allocate dollars to states based their share of four-year olds from low- and moderate-income families and funds would be distributed to local school districts and other partner providers to implement the program. The proposal would include an incentive for states to broaden participation in their public preschool program for additional middle-class families, which states may choose to reach and serve in a variety of ways, such as a sliding-scale arrangement.

**Funds will support states as they ensure that children are enrolled in high-quality programs.** In order to access federal funding, states would be required to meet quality benchmarks that are linked to better outcomes for children, which include:

- State-level standards for early learning;
- Qualified teachers for all preschool classrooms; and
- A plan to implement comprehensive data and assessment systems.

Preschool programs across the states would meet common and consistent standards for quality across all programs, including:

- Well-trained teachers, who are paid comparably to K-12 staff;
- Small class sizes and low adult to child ratios;
- A rigorous curriculum;
- Comprehensive health and related services; and
- Effective evaluation and review of programs.
The proposal also encourages states to expand the availability of full-day kindergarten. Only 6 out of 10 of America’s kindergarten students have access to a full day of learning. In order to ensure that our kindergartners spend the time they need in school to reach rigorous benchmarks and standards, funds under this program may also be used to expand full-day kindergarten once states have provided preschool education to low- and moderate-income four year-olds.

Under the President’s proposal, investment in the federal Head Start program will continue to grow. The President’s plan will maintain and build on current Head Start investments, to support a greater share of infants, toddlers, and three-year olds in America’s Head Start centers, while state preschool settings will serve a greater share of four-year olds.

Quality Early Learning for Our Youngest Children

The President will also launch a new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program, to support states and communities that expand the availability of Early Head Start and child care providers that can meet the highest standards of quality for infants and toddlers, serving children from birth through age 3. Funds will be awarded through Early Head Start on a competitive basis to enhance and support early learning settings; provide new, full-day, comprehensive services that meet the needs of working families; and prepare children for the transition into preschool. This strategy – combined with an expansion of publicly funded preschool education for four-year olds – will ensure a cohesive and well-aligned system of early learning for children from birth to age five.

The President is proposing to expand the Administration’s evidence-based home visiting initiative, through which states are implementing voluntary programs that provide nurses, social workers, and other professionals to meet with at-risk families in their homes and connect them to assistance that impacts a child’s health, development, and ability to learn. These programs have been critical in improving maternal and child health outcomes in the early years, leaving long-lasting, positive impacts on parenting skills; children’s cognitive, language, and social-emotional development; and school readiness. This will help ensure that our most vulnerable Americans are on track from birth, and that later educational investments rest upon a strong foundation.
Governor Abercrombie’s Proposed Plan

PHASE 1 - The School Readiness Program (HB862 / SB1093): § What can be implemented now, without a ConAm.

- Designed to serve all 5,100+ four-year-olds whose kindergarten entry will be delayed until the 2015-2016 school year due to the 2014 change in kindergarten entry age that was mandated by the Legislature.

PHASE 2 - The Early Childhood Education Program (HB864 / SB1095): The large, full-scale program that can be implemented only with a Constitutional Amendment.

- Allows more children to be ready to learn on day one of kindergarten by focusing more on socialization skills.
- Establishes the infrastructure for the Early Childhood Education Program.
- Start date: Fall 2014.

**Required Quality of Programs**

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<th>Early Childhood Education Program Standards</th>
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<td>Preschool Open Doors (DHS)</td>
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<td>DSS Child Care Licensing (Health &amp; Safety)</td>
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**Improve outcomes for children and state**

**Constitutional Amendment**

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**Number of Children to be Served**

- Current DHS FY14 ending 6/30/2014
- Services to be provided via contracts for FY15, beginning 7/1/2014.
- Nov. 2014 Election: Services to be provided via contracts issued after Constitutional amendment.
- Future biennium budget requests.

**Timeline**

- FY14 $3.5M for startup & admin (GOV400 & EDN700)
- FY15 $22.9M for direct services (School Readiness) (EDN700) + $6M to support capacity building & admin (GOV400 & EDN700)

**GOAL**

All 4-yr-old children & high-need 3-yr-old children in high-quality early childhood education programs.
other state agencies will need to implement quality standards even if we only pass the school readiness measure.
- Because the focus is on education, the risk of it being challenged under the Constitution is high – there has been litigation in the past.
- Start date: Fall 2016.

**FUNDING: SHORT-TERM VS. LONG-TERM REQUIREMENTS**

The Governor’s initiative proposes a graduated implementation.
- The program initially serves late-born four-year-olds, the gap group that will result from the 2014 change in kindergarten entry age.
- Governor’s executive budget for the biennium requests $22.9M in FY15 for direct services.
- Estimated number served = 3500.

The Governor’s plan proposes increasing the number of eligible four-year-olds over time as the budget allows.
- Providing access to every four-year-old statewide would cost an estimated $125M – depending on the sliding scale that is adopted.
- Estimated number served = 18,000 kids, assuming close to 100% participation (similar to participation rate in voluntary kindergarten). 80% participation is the goal – in line w/ the highest participation rates from other states who offer state preschool plans; for Hawaii that would be approximately ~14-15,000 depending on the year.

**Selected Research: Four Studies/Reports**

I. **2013 Report demonstrates continuing value of preschool for New Jersey’s poorest kids**

   [http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf](http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf)

   By John Mooney
   One of the common questions raised about preschool is, “Do the benefits really last?”

   According to a report to be released today, the answer is in the affirmative for New Jersey’s state-funded program. By the time they reached the fourth or fifth grade, kids who attended pre-K in the state’s poorest cities were on average three-quarters of an academic year ahead of their peers who didn’t.

   The study — from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers — started tracking 1,000 preschool students in 15 of New Jersey’s poorest districts in 2005. These children were among the first beneficiaries of the Abbott v. Burke school equity rulings that mandated preschool.

   A preschool in Perth Amboy

   Seven years later, researchers found that these kids — or at least the 700 they could still identify — had made significant academic gains, following up on similar findings when they were in second grade.
They were also significantly less likely to either be held back a grade or routed to special education services, according to the study, the Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES).

The preschool program ordered by the courts and now funded by the state is among the most rigorous in the nation. It specifies two years of full-day classes, certified teachers, and research-based curriculum. Class size is limited to 15.

“It is a big cost, but I think you can say the taxpayers are getting their money back,” said Steve Barnett, executive director of NIEER and one of the chief researchers, who will be presenting the report in Washington, D.C., today.

State Education Commissioner Chris Cerf yesterday said he was heartened by the results, and he hoped to spread the best practices to other districts. The state Department of Education provided the data for the report, although it did not pay for the research.

“We are energized by these findings and are grateful to the educators that work tirelessly for these results,” Cerf said in a statement. “We are committed to continuing to share successful practices from these programs with educators across the state to help all children receive high-quality early learning opportunities.”

The state Supreme Court’s mandate for two years of quality preschool has long been held out as the single biggest success story of the Abbott rulings.

In 2008, then-Gov. Jon Corzine and the Legislature passed an expansion of the mandate to apply the same standards — and funding — to all districts serving low-income students.

That expansion has since been stalled by the state’s financial strains. But preschool in the Abbott districts has continued to grow and be the beneficiary of increased funding.

This year, close to 45,000 students are being served under the mandate.

Gov. Chris Christie has proposed an additional $14.4 million in state support for preschool in the Abbott districts and a handful of others next year, according to the administration. The would bring the total to $648 million, its largest funding yet.

The new report should further bolster the case for the program, with Barnett saying that the New Jersey results are better than practically anywhere else, including national studies that looked at the long-term benefit of preschool.

The tracking is modeled on a national longitudinal study completed in 2010 that found at least some “fadeout” of preschool benefits as children get older.
“If you look at Texas or Georgia, they are looking at small fractions of our effects by third grade or fourth grade,” Barnett said. “[It] kind of makes sense, as [New Jersey’s] program is more expensive and more extensive than anywhere else. Nobody else has class sizes of 15.”

And he said it should make the case for renewing its expansion efforts as well. “Will [the administration] say that as resources come back, we need to implement this? Because it is clearly an effective program,” Barnett said.

In addition, the researchers said they found nearly double the benefits of two years of preschool compared with one, even seven years later.

“The magnitude of the test-score gains from one year are equivalent to 10 percent to 20 percent of the achievement gap between minority and white students,” reads the report.

“The gains from two years are equivalent to 20 percent to 40 percent of the achievement gap,” the study said.

“Today’s findings continue to prove the long-term value of high-quality preschool,” said Cecilia Zalkind, the executive director of Advocates for Children of New Jersey. “It provides further proof of why it must be available to all 3- and 4-year-olds, especially those in low-income families.”

II. Preschool education and its lasting effects


Conclusions

- Many different preschool programs have been shown to produce positive effects on children’s learning and development, but those effects vary in size and persistence by type of program.
- Well-designed preschool education programs produce long-term improvements in school success, including higher achievement test scores, lower rates of grade repetition and special education, and higher educational attainment. Some preschool programs are also associated with reduced delinquency and crime in childhood and adulthood.
- The strongest evidence suggests that economically disadvantaged children reap long-term benefits from preschool. However, children from all other socioeconomic backgrounds have been found to benefit as well.
- Current public policies for child care, Head Start, and state pre-K do not ensure that most American children will attend highly effective preschool programs. Some attend no program at all, and others attend educationally weak programs. Children from middle-income families have least access, but many children in poverty also lack preschool experiences.
- Increasing child care subsidies under current federal and state policies is particularly unlikely to produce any meaningful improvements in children’s learning and development. Given the poor quality of much child care, it might instead produce mild negative consequences.
• Increasing public investment in effective preschool education programs for all children can produce substantial educational, social, and economic benefits. State and local pre-K programs with high standards have been the most effective, and such programs need not be provided by public schools. Public schools, Head Start, and private child care programs have produced similar results when operating with the same resources and standards as part of the same state pre-K program.

• Publicly funded pre-K for all might produce a paradoxical but worthwhile effect in terms of educational gains. Disadvantaged children benefit (in comparison to their gains with targeted programs), but so do more advantaged children. Accordingly, while such universal programs may result in higher levels of achievement for the disadvantaged, they might leave a larger achievement gap. If a universal preschool program substantially increased the enrollment of disadvantaged children, however, the achievement gap might also be reduced.

III. Are we putting education $$ in the wrong place? An Economic Perspective


"raising high school graduation rates of the most disadvantaged children to 64 percent from 41 percent would cost 35 to 50 percent more if the assistance arrived in their teens rather than before they turned 6."

IV. Education Commission on the States: Survey of Kindergarten State Policies

http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/06/80/10680.pdf

This report presents data on four policy areas that can indirectly influence student success and highlights the significant variations across states. Policy questions addressed:

1) Are districts required to offer a kindergarten program? If so, is it full-day or half-day?
2) Are students required to attend kindergarten?
3) At what age can a student enter kindergarten?
4) At what age is a student required to attend school?