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Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College Campaign Praises New York Education Commission’s Recommendation to Create Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Program

A coalition of early childhood, education and community organizations, the Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College Campaign praised Governor Cuomo’s New NY Education Reform Commission for recommending the expansion of quality pre-kindergarten programs through the creation of a statewide full day pre-kindergarten program. The new full day Pre-K funding, including a focus on program quality, would be the first state sponsored full-day pre-kindergarten program in the New York. A full-day Pre-K program would build on the successful statewide Pre-K initiative created under the leadership of Speaker Sheldon Silver and the New York State Assembly. The Commission recommended that the program be targeted to students in high need school districts. At hearings around the state, dozens of parents, providers and experts testified about the importance of quality pre-kindergarten and early childhood education programs.

"Pre-kindergarten is one of the most proven education reforms available and full-day programs are particularly successful," said Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education. "Governor Cuomo's Education Commission deserves recognition for making the expansion of quality Pre-K a centerpiece of their recommendations, targeting this to high need school districts, and recognizing the success of full-day Pre-K programs. Clearly the testimony of early childhood education advocates made a difference."

"The full day Pre-K program proposed by Governor Cuomo's Commission is a very important step toward preparing kids for Kindergarten, and closing the achievement gap," said Karen Scharff, Executive Director of Citizen Action of New York. "If children are ready for Kindergarten, they are more likely to succeed in school, graduate and go on to college or careers."

"The Education Reform Commission has taken an important step in expanding opportunities for New York State's youngest learners," said Nancy Kolben, Executive Director, Center for Children's Initiatives. "High quality Pre-K is a stepping stone to Kindergarten and sets children on the right trajectory for school success and beyond. Quality full day Pre-K is a proven strategy for improving student outcomes. The Commission is to be commended for giving quality early learning the priority it deserves."

"There is strong and significant research that shows that high quality early care and learning improves educational outcomes, reduces disparities and saves money," said Kate Breslin, of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy and
WinningBeginning NY. "The Governor’s Education Reform Commission recommendation to expand full-day Pre-K and link it to quality improvement is a strong first step to reaching at-risk children early for lasting impact. The strong voices of New York’s advocates for high quality early learning were heard at Education Reform Commission hearings across the state."

"The Education Reform Commission has embraced a critical role for early education, acknowledging that success in school is determined largely by the experiences children have before they start Kindergarten," said Dana E. Friedman, Ed.D., Founder and President, The Early Years Institute. "Most importantly, their recommendations will assure that our most vulnerable children will have more opportunities to experience a full day of pre-K, putting them on a stronger path to school readiness."

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