



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2014

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MIKULSKI, CARDIN LEAD TEAM MARYLAND IN ANNOUNCING \$15 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND

Federal grant dollars will be used to provide high-quality preschool programs 18 Maryland school districts as well as community based programs across the state

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Ben Cardin, together with **U.S. Representatives Steny H. Hoyer, Elijah Cummings, Chris Van Hollen, Dutch Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes, Donna F. Edwards** and **John Delaney (all D-Md.)** today announced the State of Maryland has been awarded \$15 million through the Department of Education’s Preschool Development Grant program to provide high-quality preschool programs in 18 school districts across Maryland.

“All children deserve the opportunity to have a bright future. We know that ensuring children get high-quality, safe, reliable and nurturing care - especially in their earliest years - is an important building block toward achieving that better future,” said **Senator Mikulski**, Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee which funds the Department of

Education. "That's why I'm so proud to announce that Maryland has been awarded this federal grant of \$15 million from the Preschool Development Grant program. These funds in the federal checkbook will ensure that Maryland preschoolers are getting the very best care, to help support their development and prepare them for school. This is a down payment on Maryland's middle class families, on our children's future and on our nation's future."

"We never get do-overs when it comes to our children's early development, which makes this federal grant to strengthen and expand preschool programs in targeted Maryland communities incredibly important," **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin** said. "Our goal is to ensure that all 4-year-olds have the chance to acquire the learning skills they need to be successful later in life. Together, we can make certain that the window of opportunity doesn't close on Maryland students before it ever opens."

"This funding will provide high-quality preschool services to ensure that our children have a good education and the opportunity to enter the classroom on a more level playing field," said **Congressman Steny Hoyer**. "The Judy Centers across Maryland have been successful in helping to close the achievement gap that affects too many of our children before they enter kindergarten. I will continue to work with the Maryland Delegation to ensure that our state continues to be a recognized leader in early childhood education services critical to our children's success later in life."

"Investing in early education is one of the most important ways to ensure our children's long-term educational success by giving them a strong foundation," **Congressman Elijah Cummings** said. "It's also one of the best ways to build stronger communities, and strengthen the middle class. Our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see, and I am thrilled to see these federal dollars working in our state to ensure our message is strong and full of hope."

"Our economy depends on a skilled workforce and a strong middle class, which are only possible if children have access to the best possible education," said **Congressman Van Hollen**. "Early education is the kind of investment that is critical to protect as we prioritize funding in areas that will grow our economy to give every Marylander a chance to get ahead."

"Research suggests that preK can improve a child's chance of success in school and in life - children who attend preK are more likely to graduate from high school and earn more as adults, for example," said **Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger**. "This grant will enable more Maryland children to reap these benefits. It is an investment in our future."

"Experts agree that early childhood education helps develop young minds and prepares children to succeed in the classroom," said **Congressman Sarbanes**. "This grant from the Department of Education will help our state continue to lead the nation in providing high-quality education to Maryland students of all ages."

"A high-quality education early in a child's life is critical in determining their long-term success," said **Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards**. "That is why I am grateful for this federal grant from the Department of Education to help 11 school districts across Maryland expand their preschool programs in some of our most vulnerable communities. We need to ensure that a child's first building block is the strongest, and I thank all of our federal, state, and local partners for working together to help make Maryland's application successful."

"An investment in early education is an investment in our future," said **Congressman Delaney**. "Federal grants to provide preschool education to Maryland kids is good news for our state, it's good news for the students and their families who will directly benefit and it's good news for our local communities. When you examine the data on early education, it is clear that these kinds of initiatives are absolutely essential to building a globally competitive 21st century state and country."

Maryland school districts receiving grant funding include: Allegany County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, Caroline County Public Schools, Carroll County Public Schools, Charles County Public Schools, Dorchester County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Schools, Garrett County Public Schools, Harford County Public Schools, Howard County Public Schools, Montgomery County Public Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools, Somerset County Public Schools, St. Mary's County Public Schools, Washington County Public Schools and Wicomico County Public Schools in addition to many community based programs.

Through these Preschool Development Grant awards, more than 33,000 additional children nationwide will be served in high-quality preschool programs that meet high-quality standards in the first year of the program alone. States receiving grants will develop or expand high-quality preschool programs in regionally diverse communities—from urban neighborhoods to small towns to tribal areas—as determined by the state.

Preschool programs funded under either category of grants (development or expansion) must meet the criteria for high-quality preschool programs. To support states in planning their budgets, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services developed annual budget caps for each state that is eligible to receive a Preschool Development Grant. The departments developed grant funding categories by ranking every state according to its relative share of eligible children and then

identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category.

Maryland is one of thirteen states to receive an expansion grant, which were designated for states that currently serve 10 percent or more of four-year-olds or have received a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. States receiving expansion grants have ambitious and achievable plans to implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs that can reach and serve additional eligible children in two or high-need communities. Up to five percent of the expansion grant award may be used for state-level infrastructure and quality improvements.

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