
WHAT’S NEW
The Maine Department of Education (DOE) was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award in 2018 for over $1 million to conduct a needs assessment of programs and services for children birth to age five and their families to determine overlaps and gaps. The state received an extension to use funds through December 31, 2020. In March state-funded preschool programs had the option to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Decisions to close and reopening delivery options (in-person, hybrid, or remote) were made at the local level.

BACKGROUND
Maine established its Two-Year Kindergarten initiative in 1983 by allocating resources to local districts through the school funding formula. Since 2007, state-funded programs for 4-year-olds have been separately defined as the Public Preschool Program (PPP), still funded through Maine’s school funding formula, with distribution of funds to 150 of the 194 school administrative units (SAUs) that operated kindergarten.

PPP classrooms function as either stand-alone programs located in public schools or SAUs partner with community-based child care programs or Head Start agencies. Schools are required to provide a local match to draw down a per-pupil state subsidy. The required local match is part of the school funding formula based on property wealth.

Maine’s Public Preschool Program Standards, promulgated as a regulation in December 2014, outlined programmatic changes including reduced child-staff ratio and group size, the use of evidence-based curricula, and child screening and assessments.
MAINE PUBLIC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment ..................................................... 6,155
School districts that offer state program ....... 78% (eligible school administrative units)
Income requirement ................................................................. No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation ......................................................... 2 hours/day
Operating schedule ................................................................. School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ....................... 1,964
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ........... 2,209
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................. 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | ME PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | ✔
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | ✔
Teacher degree | BA | BA | ✔
Teacher specialized training | ECE | Specializing in pre-K | ✔
Assistant teacher degree | Educator Technician II | CDA or equivalent | ✔
Staff professional development | 6 credit hours/5 years (teachers only); PD plans (teachers only) | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | ☐
Maximum class size | 16 (4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ✔
Staff-child ratio | 1:8 (4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ✔
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ✔
Continuous quality improvement system | Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement | Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement | ✔

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .................................................. $23,887,543
Local match required? ......................................................... Yes
State Head Start spending ................................................... $3,124,038
State spending per child enrolled ......................... $3,881
All reported spending per child enrolled* ....................... $8,392

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30</th>
<th>$ THOUSANDS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-K*</td>
<td>$8,392</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDST**</td>
<td>$13,389</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-12***</td>
<td>$15,105</td>
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Data are for the 2019-2020 school year, unless otherwise noted.

[1] Estimates children in Head Start not also enrolled in state pre-K.