OVERVIEW
During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Rhode Island preschool enrolled 1,848 children, an increase of 428 children from the prior year. State funding totaled $14,399,362, up $335,333 (2%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled $7,792 in 2020-2021, down $2,112 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Rhode Island met 10 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT’S NEW
The Rhode Island State Pre-Kindergarten (RI Pre-K) programs expanded by 428 seats in the 2020-2021 by continuing to braid state and Head Start funding. All programs were physically open for in-person learning during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Virtual options were available for teacher professional development, coaching and technical assistance visits.

Rhode Island created four new pilot model delivery systems during the 2021-2022 school year to capitalize on all ECE funding in the state to expand RI Pre-K and strengthen the birth–5 child care system. An interagency state UPK team continued to work towards achieving universal Pre-K for 4-year-olds and began to strategize extending preschool to 3-year-olds. RI Pre-K is currently utilizing GEER funding to accelerate preschool expansion for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

BACKGROUND
The Rhode Island State Pre-Kindergarten Program, launched in 2009, is provided in public schools, Head Start programs, and private childcare. All children who turn four years old by September 1 and are living in participating communities are eligible for the program, even though enrollment is also determined by lottery.

The Rhode Island Department of Education oversees the pre-K program, funded through the Rhode Island school funding formula that was approved in 2010. Using a phased-in approach, $10 million was invested over ten years to expand access to high-quality pre-K, commencing with communities containing a high proportion of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In 2014, Rhode Island received a $19 million federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to expand access to its high-quality pre-K program. This funding was used to expand access in high-need communities and to enhance program monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance. Enrollment nearly doubled between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years as a result of the PDG support; the support did, however, level off, as planned, in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Teachers in the program must hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides training and technical assistance through a vendor to all staff on an ongoing basis. The Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program has been assessed for both process quality and program impact/child outcomes, including classroom quality and child outcomes in literacy, arithmetic, and social-emotional development.
RHODE ISLAND STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment .................. 1,848
School districts that offer state program .......... 41% (communities)
Income requirement ................................................. No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation ....................... 6 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule .................................................. School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............ 1,616
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 1,787
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 130

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>RI PRE-K REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>9 or more ECE/CD credits (public); HSD + 12 ECE/CD credits or CDA (nonpublic)</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>20 hours/year; PD plans; Coaching</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>20 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:10 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ...................................... $14,399,362
Local match required? ........................................... No
State Head Start spending ...................................... $1,190,000
State spending per child enrolled .................... $7,792
All reported spending per child enrolled* ............... $9,504

* 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

- State contributions
- Federal contributions
- Federal COVID-19 relief spending
- Local contributions
- TANF spending

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.