

Good evening board members,

My name is Kathleen Leipzig. I am a parent of a 4 year old preschooler at Garibaldi Grade School and a 3 year old potential preschooler for the 23/24 school year.

Today, I would like to discuss the importance of preschool education for 3 and 4 year olds, why it should be accessible for all families and the need for expanding the preschool program. As well as some suggestions to fund an expanded program to increase accessibility.

The decision to move my family to Bay City from the Portland area it was an exciting and scary one. One of my biggest concerns was the quality of education my children would receive. I was excited to learn that the Neah-Kah-Nie school district would be one of the early subscribers to preschools integrated into the public school system, so I jumped on process of getting him registered right away. The 1st year of preschool registration had its challenges, navigating through Preschool Promise and being a non-income eligible family. During that time. Income eligible families had early access to registration that I did not have. So I was in limbo when it came to finding out if my son would receive a spot. I was the squeaky wheel personified, to ensure that my child would be in preschool at Garibaldi Grade school even when spots were very limited. I am huge proponent of public school education, both my parents were public school teachers. I am so thankful that he did get a spot.

The preschool program at Garibaldi Grade School has been transformative for my son and his social and educational Development. Ruth Weston, now Ruth St. Laurent and her aids Ms. Sheri and Ms. Madi have been nothing short of amazing. However, I am not just here to preach about the success of the program, which I am sure you are aware of but also its importance in our community and the need for expansion. As I mentioned before I have another child will be preschool age for the 23/24 school year. I want her to have the same opportunity as my son had, integrating into the Neah-Kah - Nie school system from the beginning of her educational career starting at preschool. I know that there are several other families in this same situation. For next year in Garibaldi Grade School alone there are 11, four year old and 17, three year olds. For Preschool Promise there are twelve slots and Garibaldi usually gets 5 or 6 of those. In total twenty-nine children are on the list for next year already. As our population grows and our demographic changes to more families with young children are we meeting the changing need of the community? Although there are other preschool options as a parent who will have a children in the school district throughout their I want them to be here and start here.

Preschool provides children with a solid foundation for future academic and personal success. It helps children develop their cognitive, social, and emotional skills, which are essential for lifelong learning. Preschool provides a nurturing environment where children can learn and grow at their own pace, while also interacting with their peers and learning important social skills. It can also help children develop a love for learning and a sense of curiosity about the world around them. Long-term Benefits: Studies have

shown that children who attend high-quality preschool programs (like Garibaldi or Nehalem) are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and have higher earnings as adults compared to those who do not attend preschool. Early childhood education has been shown to have a positive impact on individuals and society in the long term, including reducing crime rates and increasing economic productivity.

Preschool education should be accessible for all families not just those who **can** or **cannot** afford it. Education is a basic human right, and access to preschool education in our public schools should be no exception.

There are several ways in which we can expand and fund preschool program to make it more accessible. Including:

1. Government funding: The government can allocate funds for preschool education, especially for low-income families, to make it more affordable and accessible.
2. Corporate partnerships: Companies can partner with preschools to provide funding for programs and sponsor scholarships for low-income families.
3. Philanthropic donations: Private foundations and individuals can donate to preschool education programs to support expansion and accessibility.
4. Collaboration with community organizations: Community organizations can collaborate with preschools to provide additional resources, support, and funding.

To conclude, preschool education is important for the healthy development of 3 and 4 year olds, and it should be accessible for all families (*not just those who CANT or those That CAN, There are many families like mine who are in between*). We can expand and fund preschool programs by partnering with government, corporate, philanthropic, and community organizations. By doing so, we can help ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their educational and personal lives though the Neah-Kah-Nie school system. And that our community thrives. I care and I want to help support a strong future for not only my own children but for the students of the Neah-Kah-Nie school district.

Thank you, your time and the opportunity, to bring to your attention the need and importance of preschool expansion.

Kathleen Leipzig

Citation: Barnett, W. S. (2013). The preschool education industry: What we know and what we need to know. *Economics of Education Review*, 36, 166-179.

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