



## Office of Innovation & Grants

*Unlocking the Potential in ALL Students*

**Natalie Forbes, Director of Innovation & Grants**

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Board of Education Report
June 6, 2024
Executive Summary: Cigna Foundation: MPS Kindergarten Preparatory Academy

Middletown Public Schools has submitted a proposal to the Cigna Foundation to support our 2024-25 School Year Kindergarten Preparatory Academy (KPA) to ensure children have a high quality, developmentally appropriate, joyful, and responsive experience prior to entering kindergarten. KPA is community-responsive as it eliminates the financial barrier of paying for an additional year of child care for our families.

Research suggests that an early childhood educational experience has a strong, positive impact on children's brain development, relationships, and knowledge acquisition, as well as a broader return on investment for society. Our program is designed to address the needs of 4-year-old children to close the preparation gap. It incorporates structured and unstructured play activities that promote literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. Integrating play fosters creativity, social interaction, mindfulness, emotional literacy, social skills, and language development, as well as honing **social-emotional skills and well-being, and makes learning enjoyable and effective for young children**. The initiative also incorporates training for program staff and families in the Circle of Security-Parenting and Classroom.

Application prepared in collaboration with Jasmine James, Nurse Supervisor, Vacianna Spaulding, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education, Dawn Dubay, Supervisor of School Readiness, Early Learning and Family and Community Engagement, and Cassie Steinhilber, Finance and Resource Management Specialist.

**Grant Request: \$150,000**

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalie Forbes, Director of Innovation & Grants