



Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) - Frequently Asked Questions

Division of Early Childhood Education and Family Engagement (DECEFE)

PEEA Funding

- 1. Will funding be provided beyond the 2018-19 school year?**
Funding is expected to continue as Preschool Education Aid.
- 2. Can awarded PEEA funds be used for start-up costs?**
Yes, start-up costs are built into the per-pupil rate and are an allowable expense.
- 3. Can funding be used for minor facilities improvements?**
Yes, funding can be used for minor facilities improvements, such as retrofitting bathrooms, but may not be used for major construction such as building an addition.
- 4. Is the funding for full-day programming only?**
Yes, any classes that are supported through PEEA funding must provide a full-day program with a minimum of six hours.
- 5. Are districts required to provide transportation? Can grant funds be used for transportation?**
If the district provides busing for K-12 students, it is required to provide transportation for preschoolers as well. Grant funds can be used to cover costs of transportation for preschoolers.
- 6. Can grant funds be used for lease or purchase of a modular unit or building?**
Grant funds can be used to lease or rent a modular unit or space in a building, but cannot be used to purchase either.
- 7. How do districts plan the budget for administering a contract with Head Start or a private provider?**
The county rates each include funding for "district-wide costs" (master teachers, nurses, early childhood supervisors, professional development, etc.). Regardless of whether children are served in district, Head Start, or provider settings, the Department expects the district to take some funding off the top of each of the applicable per-pupil amounts for those costs, but it varies widely from district to district in terms of how much is needed. The budget sheet does not automatically pull out the district share, so the district needs to negotiate a rate with the Head Start or private provider that allows it to run its program, while leaving the district an appropriate amount of funding for those district-wide costs.

8. What are the Fund and Program Code's for Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) and Is there a different program code a district should use if they have a half-day program?

The two pieces of state funds for preschool (original Preschool Education Aid, plus the new state funding PEEA) are both recorded in fund 218. Districts can reference the budget document on the early childhood section of the website

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/peea/BudgetWorkbookInstructions.pdf> to show the guidance on where to record the additional state PEEA money, if it helps to have this from an additional source. If the additional state PEEA money has now made your district's preschool program a full-day program, then you would record the amounts in program 218 as a full-day program for whatever age group the students are (3-year or 4-year). You can also reference page 94 of the budget guidelines

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/fp/dwb/guidelines/guidelines.pdf> for recording items in program 218, for additional information.

Application

9. If a district is currently serving the universe of eligible children within its district, and it doesn't have the capacity to expand, can it use PEEA to hire support positions such as a master teacher/coach to improve the quality of the program?

While it is permissible to apply for "improvements only" funding with no increase in slots, priority consideration will be given to applicant districts that both increase capacity and improve quality.

10. Is board approval required prior to submitting the application?

If a district is unable to get board approval prior to the application submission, it can include the scheduled date of the board meeting. The board resolution will need to be submitted to the Division of Early Childhood Education and Family Engagement immediately following board approval and prior to monies being awarded. It is highly recommended that board approvals be submitted by August 30 at the latest.

11. Is it permissible for districts to target and/or give priority to low income families for the program?

Yes, districts may give priority enrollment to low income families for the free preschool program and, if warranted, charge tuition for higher-income families. Competitive preference will be given to districts targeting low-income and other hard-to-reach populations.

12. Is it permissible for districts to serve children from outside the district?

Yes, districts may serve children who reside outside the district, as long as tuition is charged. Tuition charged for children from outside the district should equal the full per-pupil amount for the setting in which the children are served (i.e. district, Head Start or private provider). Out-of-district children should only be served after all in-district applicants are served.

13. What does comparable compensation mean for salaries and benefits?

In-district teachers should be compensated with salaries and benefits that are the same as other teachers in the school district. Teachers in provider settings should receive salaries on par with district teachers who have comparable education, credentials, and years of experience. A minimum of medical benefits must also be provided to teachers in provider settings and co-pays are allowable.

Program Components

- 14. When do the program components have to be in place (i.e. master teacher/coach)? Is it prior to the start of the program or can they be added while the program is being implemented?**

The district application should outline a plan for all required program components to be in place as quickly as possible upon opening new classes. Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the strength of the plan and the ability to meet all program requirements in a timely manner.

- 15. Do new classrooms have to meet the existing high-quality standard of 950 square feet for preschool classrooms?**

Yes, preschool classrooms in both district and provider settings should total 950 square feet or they will be required to submit a waiver to their County Office of Education. Detailed information about space requirements can be found on the NJDOE website in [*Guidelines for Preschool Facilities*](#).

- 16. How is a nap incorporated into the school day?**

Naptime or quiet time should be included within the six-hour school day schedule. Please refer to the naptime guidance document which can be found under Section VI: Support Services.

- 17. How do I enroll my program in Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System?**

Check the website for information about [Grow NJ Kids](#) and about [how to enroll](#).

- 18. What professional development is available to support new staff working in the role of the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT)?**

New staff working in the role of the PIRT can attend training in the Preschool Pyramid Model conducted by the NJ Department of Education. Detailed information about upcoming dates and registration can be found [online](#).

- 19. Are school districts that contract with private providers required to submit additional documentation?**

Yes, once provider contracts and budget workbooks are finalized, districts should submit copies of each to DECEFE at doeearlychild@doe.nj.gov.

- 20. How many preschool children with disabilities should be served in a preschool inclusion classroom?**

Per guidance noted in the PEEA Operational Plan, no more than one third (1/3) of the children in any classroom should have disabilities. Children should be served in the natural proportion that they are found in communities. In general, DECEFE recommends one to three students with disabilities in each general education preschool classroom.

- 21. Who pays unemployment benefits if the teachers have to be laid off and no additional funding is available after 2018-19?**

The employer would be responsible for paying unemployment benefits whether it's the school district or private provider.

22. Is the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) required or recommended for PEEA districts?

Funded districts must demonstrate a commitment to addressing preschool to kindergarten articulation and curriculum alignment and plan to participate in New Jersey's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in the 2018-19 school year.

Check the website for information about KEA, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/rttt/njkea/>

23. Can students be taken out of the classroom to receive services with a therapist?

Our Division doesn't support pull out services. Employees without a CARI and CHRI on file cannot be alone with the children. Services should be push-in, in the child's natural environment with the teacher present. This will allow the teacher to observe and extend practices in the classroom.

Other Program-Related Questions:

24. Does the district have to provide busing for the Pre-K children that will be attending contracted private providers?

If the district provides courtesy busing for their in-district Pre-K-12 population then they must also provide courtesy busing for the children in the contracted PEEA classes.

25. Does the district have to provide breakfast and lunch for the Pre-K students attending our private providers?

Yes, those students are also eligible to participate in the school breakfast and lunch program.

26. Districts were required to include at least one special education student in their PEEA classes, which resulted in reduced funding. If districts don't have any special education students, will they receive the reduced funding back?

No

27. If the funding does not continue next year and the district does not contract with providers, who keeps the materials and supplies?

As stated in the provider's contract:

Upon non-renewal, the District shall recover from the Provider all playground materials, playground equipment both installed and uninstalled, start-up classroom materials and start-up classroom technology or the monetary equivalent thereof. The amount to be recovered shall be at least equal to the amount approved for the initial start-up costs.