# Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) - Frequently Asked Questions

**Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)**

**Updated August 15, 2018**

## PEEA Funding

1. **Will funding be provided beyond the 2018-19 school year?**
   Funding is expected to continue through Preschool Education Aid.

   Please note that districts that receive PEEA funding will be expected to develop a plan for implementing all elements of high quality across the preschool program in the coming years, including conversion of all half-day slots to full-day slots and decreasing maximum class size to 15 children.

2. **Will the district be funded if it only applies for enhancements?**
   No, our focus is expansion of students/seats and priority will be given to those districts. Districts who may not have space in-district should consider contracting with Head Start or private child care, even if the district can only expand by one classroom.

3. **How should the district show their funding on this application budget?**
   Submit your budget all-inclusive. Everything you are projecting for the 2018-19 school year, including new expansion dollars, should be included in your application budget.

4. **Can districts have classrooms with blended funding (i.e., half ECPA or ELLI students with half PEEA students)? What does this mean in terms of the per pupil rates for those students in the classroom with the blended funding?**
   Yes, classrooms with blended funding are permissible, as long as the classrooms adhere to PEEA requirements (15 students in a classroom, resident status, etc.). This practice is recommended in order to ensure that classrooms do not become income segregated

   Moving forward, there will not be two per pupil rates. The new PEEA funding will offset the lower per pupil rates that some districts may currently receive in state aid. Once you enter your projected enrollment numbers on Table 1 (i.e., students entered in the PEA line and students entered in the PEEA line), you'll notice the award amount on the Budget Statement will reflect the same per pupil rates for both PEA and PEEA.

5. **If PEEA and PEA funds are intended to fund the cost of serving only the general education students in the district's preschool program, how are the preschool children with disabilities funded?**
   Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should fund programs for students with disabilities with State and local funds, with the exception of PEEA and PEA funds, in the same manner as they would fund

programs for all students.[1] LEAs may also use IDEA Part-B funds for the excess cost of educating students with disabilities. That means, in general, IDEA Part B funds must be used only to pay for providing special education and related services to children with disabilities that are *in excess* of the regular education costs. The excess cost rule (34 C.F.R. §300.202) applies to children in states with publicly funded regular early childhood programs. The excess costs of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, such as costs for special education teachers and administrators; related services providers (speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); materials and supplies for use with children with disabilities; professional development for special education personnel; professional development for regular education teachers who teach children with disabilities; and specialized equipment or devices to assist children with disabilities may be funded with IDEA Part B funds. If a local education agency (LEA) provides full-day preschool programs to all children, using State and local funds, the LEA must use IDEA Part B funds only to pay for the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities in those preschool programs. Additionally, it is important to note that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.1(c), the length of the school day and the academic year for students with disabilities, including preschoolers with disabilities, shall be at least as long as that established for nondisabled students. Thus, if an LEA is offering a full-day general education program, children with disabilities must have access to a full-day program either in a general education or special education setting.

6. **Can we use the PEEA funds to cover tuition-based students who are not residents?**
No, eligible students must be residents.

If the student lives in a district that also receives PEEA funds, that home district for which the student resides can send PEEA funds to the new PEEA district so the family doesn't have to pay tuition as a non-resident.

7. **Is there an income requirement for a child to be eligible?**
No, PEEA is open to all age-eligible children who are residents of your district. It is important to remember that there are "hard to reach" populations within every district. Districts should ensure they have a plan to recruit children who may remain unserved without outreach efforts.

8. **What budget amount should be included on the title page in the Operational Plan?**
The amount of PEEA funding requested from the state.

9. **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.

10. **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.

11. **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.

12. **Are districts required to provide transportation? Can PEEA funds be used for transportation?**
If the district provides busing for K-12 students, it is required to provide transportation for preschoolers as well. PEEA funds can be used to cover costs of transportation for preschoolers.

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[1] Preschool students with disabilities are included in the resident enrollment count which is used to determine State aid pursuant to the School Funding Reform Act. Therefore, LEAs should use local funds and funds made available under SFRA, excluding PEA, for the education costs of students with disabilities. Additional information can be found in the September 20, 2011 guidance issued by the Department.

13. **Can PEEA funds be used for lease or purchase of a modular unit or building?**
PEEA funds can be used to lease or rent a modular unit or space in a building, but cannot be used to purchase either.

14. **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, it is permissible for 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.

15. **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?**
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 Budget Workbook Instructions 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 Budget Guidelines for recording items in program 218, for additional information.

16. **How is the pre-K universe calculated?**
The universe is the number of general education 1st grade children reported on the district's Application for State School Aid (ASSA) report on October 15, 2017, doubled (for three and four year olds). First graders in charter school locations are also included in the universe calculation.

## Application

17. **What time is the application due?**
Applicants must upload required application documents via the Department's Homeroom webpage, **no later than 4 p.m. on August 1, 2018.** The Department will **not** accept a late proposal. For existing PEEA districts, your NFO and operational plan are labeled "Existing PEEA."

18. **Can the approval process be expedited?**
In order to thoroughly review all applications and funding requests, we will not be able to notify districts until August 31.

19. **Can existing PEEA districts open 3 year old classrooms?**
Yes, if all 4 year old classrooms are full day and 15 students in a class, the district can apply to open 3 year old classrooms. The Division of Early Childhood recommends mixed-age groups, too.

20. **How should existing PEEA districts enter expansion students from last year on the Table 1?**
When completing the PEEA budget workbook, Table 1, "2018-2019 Projected Enrollment," do not put any children on the PEEA line. All state-funded children, including new slots, should be put on the PEA line.

21. **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?**
No, our focus is expansion of students/seats and priority will be given to those districts. Districts who may not have space in-district should consider contracting with Head Start or private child care, even if the district can only expand by one classroom.

22. **Can we use an existing classroom teacher to fulfill the Master Teacher role?**
No, the Master Teacher should not be a classroom teacher.

    To perform these job responsibilities in supporting classroom teachers, those fulfilling this position must have the opportunity to be in all the classrooms observing during the educational part of the day and have time to meet with teachers without the children present. The role of the Master Teacher is to coach classroom teachers on curriculum implementation and best practices as well as be able to attend and provide professional development.

    Districts can hire a part-time Master Teacher, partner with another district or Head Start to share a Master Teacher, or hire a consultant to fill this role.

    For more information on the role of the Master Teacher, please visit: Preschool Guidance and Materials: The Role of the Master Teacher

23. **We would like to hire a PIRT Specialist/Master Teacher to support our expanding program. Any suggestions or recommendations?**
There are several options for districts to consider. First, districts can hire a part-time Master Teacher or PIRT Specialist. Second, one person with appropriate experience can fulfill both roles with a split position. Third, a district may partner with another district or Head Start to share services for either or both positions. Or, a district can hire a consultant(s) to fill these roles.

    Both the Master Teacher and PIRT Specialist are coaching roles. The role of the Master Teacher is to coach classroom teachers on curriculum implementation and best practices and attend and provide professional development.

    The role of the PIRT Specialist is to coach teachers on Social/Emotional Development using the Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children and help plan interventions to support children to be successful in the classroom.

    To perform their job responsibilities in supporting the classroom teachers, those fulfilling this position must have the opportunity to be in all the classrooms observing during the educational part of the day and have time to meet with teachers without the children present.

    For more information on the role of the Master Teacher, see the question above.
    For more information on the role of the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team Specialist, go to Preschool Guidance and Materials: Planning for Pre-Referral Support, Screening and Referral Services in Preschool

24. **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 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.

25. **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. Competitive preference will be given to districts targeting low-income and other hard-to-reach populations.

26. **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.

27. **What documentation must be submitted with the application if the district partners with a provider or Head Start?**
The district must submit a letter of intent from the provider or Head Start to partner with the district.

28. **I am considering contracting with a Head Start or private provider. Is there a template for the contract?**
Both can be found on the DOE website:
Head Start:
Head Start Guidance

Private Provider:
Preschool Education Program Contract

In addition, districts can search licensed private providers by county on the Licensed Child Care Center Explorer:
Licensed Child Care Center Explorer

29. **Do classrooms in Head Start and Private Providers have to be new/empty classrooms that are brand new?**
No, existing classrooms in a Head Start and/or Private Provider can be considered expansion if they adhere to the PEEA requirements (class size of 15, residents that meet age requirement, a P-3 certified teacher, etc.).

30. **We are leasing two modular classrooms. If the units we lease are only 716 sq. feet and not the minimum of 750 sq. feet, could we place two other classes in those units and swap the PK classes for the space in our existing building?**
Yes, the classrooms can be swapped out. The district should check with the appropriate district personnel to ensure classroom space meets the requirements for other grade levels.

31. **Can you get a waiver for less than 750 sq. feet?**
No, this year, 2018-19, no waivers will be granted. All rooms must be 950 sq. feet (which includes bathroom and storage) or 750 useable sq. feet.

32. **We are thinking of hiring a parent liaison. Can you tell me the qualification needed for parent liaison? For example, do they need a bachelor degree?**
Based on the needs of the district, this position can be filled in a variety of ways. See *N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-4.6* for more details:
Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs – New Jersey Administrative Code NJAC 6A:13A

33. **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.

34. **On Table 1 of the budget statement, where should I put the PEA students that we are converting to PEEA standards?**
Place all students that are meeting the PEEA high quality standards (15 in a class, full day, etc.) on the PEEA line. Those that will not be full day or 15 in a class this year should be placed in the PEA line.

35. **In the Operational Plan Overview (page 5 of Operational Plan), what should be included in the Budget Narrative?**
The budget narrative should be included in the 5 page limit of the general overview. In the narrative you should highlight how the new funds will be used to meet the high quality standards. One-time costs, such as renovations, playground enhancements, startup costs for brand new classrooms, etc. should be explained. In addition you should highlight additions to staff, services offered to children and families within the narrative. Intentions to contract with a private provider and/or Head Start should be included outlining the estimated amount the district will pay the provider/Head Start in the contract and any amount the district intends to hold back to provide services. This will need to be agreed upon by all parties.

36. **The paperwork we are filling out reflects a one-year plan, however, at the TA Session they mentioned a five-year plan. How should that be reflected in our responses?**
For those who receive a new PEEA award, you will have to submit a 5-year plan on November 15, 2018. More information will be available in early September.

37. **What format should we write the operational plan in? Is there a page limit for each section?**
The Operational Plan Overview (page 5) has a 5 page limit. Other sections do not have a page limit, but should address each question and bullet in the narrative included. You can type your S.M.A.R.T. goals into the table provided and add more rows as needed.

38. **Is there a sample statement of Assurances?**
The Statement of Assurances is the last page of the Operational Plan. It should be signed by all the appropriate parties in your school district and submitted with your application by 4:00pm August 1, 2018. This is in addition to the submission of a Board Resolution. If your board is not meeting until after the date of submission, please include the date of anticipated Board Approval in the Operational Plan Overview.

39. **On the budget statement, the PEA and PEEA funds pre-populate from Table 1 Is that what I have to budget for?**
No, you must manually enter your other funding streams, including PEA carryover and any federal Preschool Development Funds (including carryover/supplemental funding, if applicable), General Education children who will be tuition funded, classified special education children and children

using other funds as is applicable. Each column should be budgeted for matching the appropriate funding stream total and overall total. If there is a check total message at the end, then some total does not match, and you will need to revise.

40. **Can a sample budget be shared?**
No, as each district is unique and has different funding streams it would be impossible to share a sample budget that would be appropriate for each individual district to use as an example. However if you have any questions you can contact the DECE for further guidance.

41. **I have many "To Be Hired" (TBH) if my district is awarded additional funds. How should I represent that in the budget? What if I am unsure of the salaries?**
All TBH should be included throughout the budget on the appropriate tables (Tables 4, 4a, Schedule A and Budget Statement). The salary and benefits should be estimated based on your district's salary guides. You should factor into your salary the appropriate years' experience required of the position you are hiring for (i.e. a Master Teacher requires at a minimum of 3 years' experience but an attractive resume may have more).

42. **If we have taken tuition for our 3 year old students, should we place them on the General Education Children in General Education Classrooms (Tuition) line on Table 1?**
Tuition for the 2018-2019 school year should only be taken if your school district accepts children who do note reside in your town. All children who will be served meeting the PEEA requirements should be counted on Table 1 in the PEEA line. Those who will be in a half-day or have a larger class size than 15 should be counted in the PEA line. All tuition that was already accepted for children who will be paid for with state funding must be returned upon approval of funding, including any tuition collected by contracted providers.

43. **Where on the budget should I list my out of district placements?**
There is no place on the budget to list your out of district placement, however you should include them in the Operational Plan under the "Outreach, Recruitment and Enrollment" section.

44. **What do I do if my application gets rejected?**
If your application is not approved by the Department of Education, your district will continue to receive Preschool Education Aid in the amount shown on your most recent FY19 state aid notice.

## Program Components

45. **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.

46. **I plan on hiring a Master Teacher and/or PIRT Specialist if we are awarded PEEA funds. Should I sign them up for the upcoming seminars?**
No, the DECE will be hosting separate training for PEEA Master Teachers and PIRT specialists. If awarded funds, your district will be notified when registration is opened.

47. **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 sq. ft. or 750 useable sq. ft. Detailed information about space requirements can be found on the NJDOE website in *Guidelines for Preschool Facilities*.

**48. 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.

**49. 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.

**50. 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 DECE at doeearlychild@doe.nj.gov.

**51. 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 – i.e. If 10 percent of the preschool population have IEPs, then an average of 10 percent of the children in each classroom have disabilities.

**52. In terms of equity (and code requirements) for children with disabilities/IEPs, they should have access to the same length of day as those in general education. We are increasing our general education classroom day from ½ day to full day with the new funding. But we will have 3 ½ day preschool disabled self-contained classrooms that we won't be able to increase their day until next year. (Because of funding and space) What do we do?**

As discussed in question #5 above, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.1(c), the length of the school day and the academic year for students with disabilities, including preschoolers with disabilities, shall be at least as long as that established for nondisabled students. Thus, if an LEA is offering a full-day general education program, children with disabilities must have access to a full-day program either in a general education or special education setting. LEAs should first consider whether the preschool students with disabilities may be educated, with appropriate supports and services, in a general education setting. As noted by the United States Department of Education 2017 Dear Colleague letter, "[t]he LRE requirements under Part B of the IDEA state a strong preference for educating children with disabilities in regular classes alongside their peers without disabilities." An LEA may use IDEA Part B funds to support the costs associated with placing a student with disabilities in a general education setting through for example, materials and supplies, additional instructional staff, or specialized equipment or devices. LEAs should use State and local funds for the general education costs of students with disabilities.[2] Specific information on funding and accounting for preschool program costs for children with disabilities and preschool general education children is available in a September 20, 2011 memorandum issued by the Department.

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

PEEA funded districts that were funded in the 2017-18 school year 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/

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

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[2] Preschool students with disabilities are included in the resident enrollment count which is used to determine State aid pursuant to the School Funding Reform Act. Therefore, LEAs should use local funds and funds made available under SFRA, excluding PEA for the education costs of students with disabilities.

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:

55. **Does the district need to provide breakfast and lunch to all students, including those attending in private provider settings?**
Only if they are eligible to participate in free and reduced lunch.

56. **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.

57. **Who should serve on a district's ECAC?**
An Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) means an "advisory group of community stakeholders interested in the education and welfare of children in preschool through grade three that is convened by the school district" (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-1.2). These community stakeholders may include (but are not limited to): "Child care providers, pediatric medical providers, Head Start agencies, child and family advocates, municipal government, health professionals/agencies, social service providers, higher education, philanthropic community, mental health agencies, school district central office, teacher's union, business community, parents, kindergarten through grade three teacher(s), bilingual education specialists, supervisors and administrative organizations, early intervention/special education groups, community groups such as: NAACP, Urban League, churches, YMCA/YWCA, and The New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children (NJAEYC)" (NJDOE, Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, 2015).