



## HISTORY OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRE-K ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION ACT OF 2008

### 1964

Washington DC's Anacostia Pre-School Project serves as a pilot site for the Federal Head Start Program.

### 1972

Washington DC's Public Schools (DCPS) become one of the first jurisdictions in the country to offer pre-Kindergarten to four-year-old children.

### 1979

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD) is established to hold public hearings on early childhood education issues; increase public awareness of programs; recommend methods of upgrading services; and improve communications between providers, the public and the government.

### 1989

A report by the DC Committee on Public Education (COPE) calls attention to critical problems in DCPS, including declining achievement levels as students moved through grades; the poor condition of school facilities; and lack of accountability among school and related agencies. The report makes several recommendations for public school reform, including the need to expand and upgrade the quality and quantity of early childhood programs. In response nearly 500 pre-Kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms across the city are refurbished.

### 1990

A coalition of business, government and community organizations forms the DC Early Childhood Collaborative. The Collaborative pools public and private sector resources to improve the well-being of DC children and families. In 1993, the Collaborative establishes the Frederick Douglass Early Childhood Development and Family Support Center. The Center is later turned over to DCPS to operate.

### 2002

Washington DC receives two major national grants that provide new energy for the early childhood education community and a renewed focus on quality programming. The first grant is a \$5 million, five-year award from The W.K. Kellogg Foundation to the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) to participate in the Supporting Partners to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) initiative. SPARK DC helps unite local resources, including advocates, providers and parents, to focus on preparing children for school. The second grant is an Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) award from the U.S. Department of Education to the MACECD. This funding helps educate parents, caregivers, child care providers, librarians and health providers on how to make sure children are ready to learn. The SPARK DC and ELOA efforts collaborate to focus on children and families in DC's poorest wards.

### 2003

A group of more than 200 early childhood education and K-12 organizations come together to form the Universal School Readiness Stakeholder Group (USRSG). Founding partners include the DC Department of Human Services-Office of Early Childhood Development; NBCDI-SPARK DC; the Early Childhood Leadership Institute of the District of Columbia (ECLIUDC) and Citywide Early Childhood Initiatives, DCPS. The USRSG becomes the "umbrella" under which diverse groups work toward universal, high-quality pre-K.

### 2004

Under the banner of the USRSG, early childhood education advocates develop the *Road Map to Universal School Readiness*, which becomes a seminal document in the movement to develop high-quality, universal pre-K programming.

**2005**

DCPS grants \$4.6 million to the Department of Human Services-Early Care and Education Administration to provide high-quality pre-K programs in community-based settings. These dollars fund the Pre-K Incentive Program, which operates 20 high-quality pre-K centers across DC. Centers in the Pre-K Incentive Program become models for the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008.

**2006**

The Pre-K for All DC Campaign is launched with funding from Pre-K Now and the CityBridge Foundation. The Campaign raises additional funding from the DC Early Childhood Collaborative, PNC Bank and other private sources. Pre-K for All DC is housed at the National Black Child Development Institute, which also serves as fiscal agent.

**2007**

DC Council Chair Vincent Gray asks Pre-K for All DC to work with him to develop pre-K for all legislation. The Campaign Steering Committee forms a legislative policy sub-committee and begins drafting a legislative framework.

**2008**

Pre-K for All DC organizes a public hearing at the DC Council for Bill 17-537/The Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007. Testimony is heard from 60 people, including local early childhood education advocates and providers; national early learning experts; city officials; parents; and members of the DC business community.

**May 2008**

The DC Council unanimously passes the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008. The Act expands pre-K to serve the approximately 2000 three- and four-year-olds in the city who do not have access to programming. The law also provides resources and support to improve the quality of pre-K programs, and assist individuals in obtaining the appropriate credentials to serve as teachers and assistant teachers in DC pre-K classrooms.

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## Acknowledgments

In conducting this study, I learned that Washington, DC has had a long-standing, vibrant and dedicated early childhood education community. Many members of this community were generous with their time, records and contacts in helping me gather the information included in this report, and understanding DC's journey in pursuit of *Pre-K for All*. Thank you!

I am particularly indebted to three members of the Pre-K for All DC Board of Directors. Carrie Thornhill was an ever-present support. She was always available to talk and provided an unflinching analysis of the issues surrounding pre-K in DC. Maurice Sykes sat for repeated interviews, read every page of this document and provided a detailed critique that helped shape the final product. BB Otero was one of my first interviews. Her remarks about the development of the DC early childhood education community were so insightful they helped set the direction for this study.

I also owe a huge thank you to Jesse Bailey, Manager of the Pre-K for all DC Campaign. Throughout this work, Jesse's friendship and support was often above and beyond the call. Finally, I must thank my colleague, Maxine Sherman, who did her usual, brilliant job in processing, copyediting and formatting this document.

This work was supported by the Strategic Knowledge Fund, co-funded by the Foundation for Child Development and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The Strategic Knowledge Fund is a partnership between the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) created to fund projects that increase knowledge about children, birth to eight years old and their families, particularly children who are at-risk for poor educational outcomes.

For more information about the Foundation for Child Development visit [www.fcd-us.org](http://www.fcd-us.org).  
For more information about the W.K. Kellogg Foundation visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).

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## I. Introduction

On May 6, 2008, the District of Columbia passed the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, designed to ensure that all three- and four-year-olds have access to high-quality pre-Kindergarten programs. This Act was the culmination of decades of activism by the DC early childhood education community, including a spirited, two-and-a-half-year campaign for “universal pre-K” carried out by Pre-K for All DC, and supported by national funder Pre-K Now and local sources. This case study tells the story of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and how the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act became law. To carry out this study, over 30 interviews were conducted with Pre-K for All DC Campaign staff and Steering Committee members, as well as other important constituents across the city, including early childhood education providers, parents and community, civic, foundation and political leaders. In addition, seven meetings and site visits were attended. (See Appendix A for a list of Interviewees and meetings/site visits attended.)

While conducting this study, it was important to interview a broad range of people in order to understand early childhood education in DC and, as much as possible, get the “real story” of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. As a practice, the same questions were asked of a variety of people in an effort to corroborate the statements of individuals and gain a sense of where there was consensus or difference in perspective around important issues. Often, the same people were interviewed repeatedly in order to check facts and clarify information.

In addition to interviews, meetings and site visits, this study is based on the voluminous records of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign; public records, such as legislative documents and testimony before the DC Council; reports from various organizations; local media; and relevant websites.

Chapter II documents the history and context of early childhood education in this country, including the role of the District of Columbia. Chapter III reviews the local environment for early childhood education in DC, including the development of an infrastructure that laid the groundwork for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. Chapter IV outlines how the Campaign was organized: the funding, structure, leadership and direction, and most important, the theory of change that guided all activity. Chapters V to VIII tell the story of the Campaign itself—the strategies used, constituencies involved, adjustments made and, finally, how the 2008 law was passed.

Chapter IX of this study analyzes the Campaign, looking at the factors that allowed Pre-K for All DC to achieve its goal of legislation; how effectively the Campaign was carried out, including how well various groups were mobilized; the challenges involved in carrying out campaign strategies; and the potential impact of the new legislation on some constituencies. Chapter X reviews the early implementation of the Pre-K legislation, and the final chapter offers concluding thoughts and lessons other jurisdictions can take from the DC experience.

## II. The National History of Pre-K and Context for the DC Pre-K Campaign

*The concept of caring for young children outside the home away from the mother began in 18th century Europe but arrived in America during the Industrial Revolution.*

Pre-K Now, The History of Pre-K

In documenting the Pre-K for All DC campaign, it is important to understand the history and context of the national pre-Kindergarten movement, since it greatly influenced the pre-K movement in DC. The idea of pre-school was first introduced in the U.S. in the 1800s, when some factory owners, charities and churches supported “infant schools.” These schools allowed parents to spend their days working without having to worry about their children. In the mid-nineteenth century, some states—Wisconsin, New York and New Jersey—began using public funds to provide pre-Kindergarten education—in the case of New York, to mitigate some of the effects of poverty on children.

Federal funds were first used on a large scale to support public nursery schools during the Depression, as part of the New Deal. These schools were seen by the federal government as a way to create jobs for unemployed teachers and other school staff—although enrollment was limited to children of poor parents. Funding for these schools was largely terminated when the economy recovered. National events again spurred federal government involvement during World War II, when federal funds provided “pre-Kindergarten” schools to support parents working in the defense industry. These federally funded centers were largely closed after the war, as public opinion shifted away from separating young children from their mothers for long hours—although California and Washington, DC continued to fund centers for low-income children and single working mothers.<sup>1</sup>

The Head Start program, launched in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society program, is still considered one of the most important investments the federal government ever made in early childhood education. The Head Start story is important, because the program served as a catalyst for significantly increasing early childhood education activity at the state level, with many programs following elements of the Head Start model. Head Start was developed in response to research from child development experts, whose findings concluded that early intervention programs could significantly affect the cognitive and socio-emotional development of low-income children. Head Start began as a summer program for approximately 560,000 three - to four-year-old children in poor communities; the initial budget was \$96.4 million.<sup>2</sup>

Washington, DC, always a pioneer in early childhood education, was a pilot test site for the Head Start program in 1964, continuing its long-time attention to “at-risk” pre-schoolers. New York, also a pre-school pioneer, started a half-day program for at-risk four-year-olds in 1966. In 1972,

Washington, DC became one of the first jurisdictions in the country to offer pre-K for four-year-olds in a public school setting.

By the 1980s, several states—Maine, Rhode Island, Oregon and New Hampshire—were supplementing Head Start to increase the program’s capacity; and additional states, including West Virginia, Texas, Illinois, Louisiana and Michigan, were using state funds to open new pre-K programs. The majority of these programs targeted four-year-olds and children considered to be “at risk.” In response to this proliferation of programs, in 1985, the National Association for the Education of the Young Children (NAEYC) created the first comprehensive system to measure the quality of early childhood programs.

In 1990, the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) became law. CCDBG is the largest federal source of funding to states for providing child care assistance to low-income families. This allowed jurisdictions with existing programs, including the District of Columbia, to expand their services for low-income families, and opened the way for other jurisdictions to implement programs to serve this population. Most programs continued to focus primarily on at-risk four-year-olds, but the idea of more comprehensive efforts was growing.<sup>3</sup> For example, Kentucky, Ohio, Minnesota, Connecticut, Nebraska and Tennessee began serving “at-risk” three- and four-year-olds; Arkansas opened programs that served “educationally deprived” children, aged three to five; and New Mexico and Missouri began programs for children birth to five. Georgia became the first state to offer a program open to all four-year-olds, followed a few years later by Oklahoma. New York expanded its programs in an effort to include all four-year-olds.<sup>4</sup> California and South Carolina created “comprehensive initiatives”. California established commissions in several counties dedicated to providing pre-K services to all children birth to five; South Carolina’s initiative served all children up to age six.

This increased state-level program activity during the 1990s was not only due to additional federal dollars but also correlated with findings from studies about child brain development by organizations such as the National Research Council’s Institute of Medicine. Specifically, the studies concluded that birth to five in a child’s life is a prime time for child brain development and learning; that early environments and nurturing relationships matter to the development of young children; and that supportive out-of-the-home relationships and environments can have positive impacts on young children from unstable homes.<sup>5</sup> In fact, in 1994, Congress established Early Head Start for children birth to three in order to respond to this new evidence.<sup>6</sup>

The decade of 2000 saw continued and important growth in pre-K activity—with existing programs expanding to serve more children and with an increase in the total number of states offering programs. By 2000, Head Start had expanded significantly, and by 2005, more than 22 million children had been served in the program; the annual budget had grown to almost \$7 billion. Most Head Start programs were operating for the full school day and for nine months of the year.<sup>7</sup> Many state-funded pre-K programs were collaborating with Head Start and considered it to be a critical component of their early childhood education systems.<sup>8</sup> Also, the idea of providing pre-K services *for all* was spreading. Notably, Nevada began serving children birth to five and required no official eligibility criteria; Florida voters approved a ballot initiative to require quality pre-K for all four-year-olds; Massachusetts created a new Department of Early

Education and Care to develop a plan to establish pre-K for all of the state's three- to four-year-olds; and California counties began implementing their pre-K for all programs.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, in addition to program growth, program quality was becoming an increasing concern. In 2002, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the nation's seventh largest foundation, established the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at the Rutgers University School of Education. NIEER's research is designed to help raise the quality of early childhood education programs and assess the degree to which state pre-K programs are meeting important minimum qualifications for effectiveness.<sup>10</sup>

Two new factors helped to spur pre-K activity during the decade. In 2002, The Pew Charitable Trusts also created the Trust for Early Education (TEE), a new advocacy center in Washington, DC to provide funding and technical assistance to states attempting to advance high-quality pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds. In 2005, TEE officially became Pre-K Now, and continued working with states and the District of Columbia to support advocates and other leaders trying to secure policies and funding to improve the availability and quality of pre-K programming. They also worked at the local, state and federal levels to educate the public and policymakers about the importance of pre-K education.<sup>11</sup> Since 2002, Pre-K Now has provided funding for pre-K advocacy in 33 states and the District of Columbia. (In 2009, Pre-K Now became a campaign of the Pew Center on the States, which is a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts.)

Another major factor influencing the growth of Pre-K during the 2000 decade was the release of findings from several long-term research studies, which showed the sustained and positive impacts of high-quality pre-K programs. Included were studies of The High Scope Perry Pre-School, Abecedarian Early Intervention and Chicago School District's Child Parent Center (CPC) programs. Each of these programs provided primarily low-income, African-American pre-school age children with high-quality early education experiences and social supports. Research studies compared these children with a similar group of children that did not receive these services and followed both groups into adulthood, measuring their progress in a number of key areas over time. All three studies concluded that the group that had received high-quality pre-K "treatment" as young children fared much better over the years than those that had not. The "treatment" group achieved significantly higher academic levels, had better employment and earnings records, had fewer arrests, and were generally doing better in life. Further, cost-benefit analyses of each program concluded that the benefits to the youth participants and society far exceeded the costs of the programs.<sup>12</sup>

These findings showed that quality pre-school programs had an impact not only on kindergarten readiness but also on participants' learning and success later in life. Taken together, and along with child brain development research, these findings helped pre-K advocates in numerous states and the District of Columbia convince various constituencies that high-quality pre-K was a good investment.

By 2008, 38 states had funded pre-K programs. In May 2008, Washington, DC passed the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act, designed to expand pre-K to all three- and four-year-olds, and improve quality of all existing programs by 2014. Across the country, more than one million children of all ages were enrolled in state-funded programs—an increase of 100,000 over those

enrolled in 2007. State funding for pre-K programs was on the rise—with a nearly 23 percent increase over 2007. Still, access to services, funding and program quality were problems, varying widely from state to state.

According to NIEER, the recession of the past two years may be limiting the growth of pre-K nationwide. Data for the 2008-2009 school year shows that states continued to make progress in the provision of pre-K education to children, but that progress was slower than in previous years. Enrollment in state-funded programs across the country increased by approximately 81,500 children of all ages—19,000 children less than between 2007-2008. Twenty-nine states had increases in the percent of three- and four-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K programs, while nine states had decreases. Overall, when enrollment in general and special education programs is combined, 30 percent of four-year-olds and 7 percent of three-year-olds were served across the states. This was only a 2 percent increase in enrollment for four-year-olds over the previous year and less than 1 percent growth in enrollment for three-year-olds. Oklahoma was the only state where almost every four-year-old had the opportunity to attend a quality pre-K education program; 13 states with state-funded programs offered no services to three-year-olds; and 12 states had no regular program.

In the 2008-2009 school year, state spending on pre-K, slightly more than \$5 billion, represented a nominal 10 percent increase over the previous year and did not increase enough to keep up with inflation. This reversed a two-year upward trend in real spending by states. Federal efforts to increase support for early childhood programs have focused on childcare and Head Start, largely excluding state pre-K programs.

States differed greatly in per-child spending on pre-K—from approximately \$1,500 per child in Maine to more than \$11,000 per child in New Jersey. State spending per child averaged \$4,143, an increase of \$86 per child over 2007, but a decrease of \$36 per child after adjusting for inflation. In fact, after adjusting for inflation, state spending per child declined in 24 of the 38 states with pre-K programs. Regarding quality, according to NIEER, many states failed to provide enough funding to ensure programs could meet minimum quality standards. Only 16 states could be verified as having provided enough funding to meet all 10 benchmarks for quality standards.<sup>13</sup>

NIEER is not the only organization concerned about the impact of the “great recession” on pre-K services for children. Recently, the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) published the *2010 Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI)*, which offers data on child well-being from the first year of the recession and projections for years 2009 to 2012. The CWI projects that by 2010, the recession will cause a “decrease in community engagement,” including a decline in pre-K enrollment, a finding that mirrors many of the state-level trends NIEER is reporting.<sup>14</sup>

The Pre-K for All DC movement is closely intertwined with the history, growth and current challenges surrounding early childhood education in this country. This case study will show that as the District of Columbia implements the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, it must address the same issues facing other state-funded pre-K efforts—program access, program quality and adequate funding in a time of shrinking resources. Where will DC’s new effort fit in the ever changing, national pre-K story?

### III. The Local Environment for Pre-K

*Not many jurisdictions have our public policy history with pre-K. We opened the Anacostia Pre-School Project in 1964, which was a precursor to Head Start and have had free, publically funded pre-K for four -year-olds since 1972.*

Maurice Sykes, Director, Early Childhood Leadership Institute, University of the District of Columbia;  
Member, Pre-K for All DC Campaign Steering Committee

#### A. The Early Landscape for Pre-K

Ask any of the local public officials or advocates about pre-K in the District of Columbia (DC) and they will proudly tell you that DC is a pioneer in the provision of early childhood education services. In fact, in 1964, the United Planning Organization (UPO), a private, non-profit, human service corporation in the city, began providing early childhood education through the Anacostia Pre-School Project, a test site for the federal Head Start program, which officially opened in 1965. That DC was an initial testing ground for an early federal childhood education program makes perfect sense to Maurice Sykes, Director of the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the District of Columbia (ECLIUDC). According to Sykes, “DC has always been fertile ground for federal ideas on social reform since its right here in the government’s backyard. And back then in the 1960s, we didn’t have home rule. The federal government could do whatever it liked here. Besides, Head Start came out of the War on Poverty, and at that time a number of areas in the city were extremely poor.”

In 1972, DC became one of the first jurisdictions in the country to offer pre-K in public school settings. The program, operated by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), focused solely on four-year-olds and was funded through the school-funding formula on a per-pupil basis. Services were free and available citywide on a first-come first-served basis—something that was very important in DC, a city that has historically been polarized by race and geography. For example, 57 percent of black children and 64 percent of Hispanic children in DC lived in low-income households compared with 2 percent of non-Hispanic white children. There is also a correlation between geography and poverty in DC. In Ward 3, which is predominately white, only 7 percent of children lived in low-income families as compared with 70 percent in Ward 8, 62 percent in Ward 1, and 61 percent in Ward 7—all of which are predominately black and Hispanic.<sup>15</sup> In an effort to provide equitable access to services, each public elementary school in the city had at least one pre-K classroom.

According to people in DC who remember those early days, the demand for these public school pre-K programs was high. Barbara Kamara, former Executive Director of the DC Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), Department of Human Services (DHS) recalls that people of all races and classes in every neighborhood would wait in line all night to get their children into these programs.<sup>16</sup>

## B. Building on a Legacy

Since the 1970s, political, community and child care industry leaders have built on DC's early provision of publicly funded pre-K services, and worked to expand access to and improve the quality of these programs. One critical step in this process was the establishment of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD) under Mayor Marion Barry in 1979. MACECD, whose members were early childhood education leaders, academics, advocates and DC government staff, was established to make recommendations to the Mayor on early childhood education policies and programs; increase public awareness of programs; and improve communications between providers, the public and the government.<sup>17</sup> The MACECD worked closely with OECD-DHS and held open public meetings every other month from September through May. The establishment of MACECD signaled the willingness of DC's early childhood education community leaders to work across traditional boundaries on a comprehensive approach toward early education programming, something that would be a trademark of the pre-K movement.<sup>18</sup>

In 1989, a report by the DC Committee on Public Education (COPE) gave early childhood education leaders in the city additional ammunition to pursue issues of access and quality. One of COPE's co-chairs was Terry Golden, President and CEO of Host Marriott Corporation, and an early leader in the DC pre-K movement. The COPE report called attention to critical problems in the DC Public Schools, including declining achievement levels as students moved through grades, the poor condition of school facilities, and the lack of accountability among school agencies.<sup>19</sup> The report made several recommendations for public school reform, chief among them, the need to expand and upgrade the quality and quantity of early childhood programs. Maurice Sykes, who, during the 1980s and 1990s, served as executive director of early childhood education, and Deputy Superintendent of the Center for Systemic Educational Change in DCPS, says the COPE report served as another catalyst for the movement to improve the education of pre-K-age children, "The COPE report became the framework for reform in the public schools...and I thought it was important to use it to help create a new climate around the quality of early childhood education in DC and push young children to the forefront of the school system's reform agenda."

Sykes used the COPE report to try to "change the conversation" among principals, teachers and parents, so that everyone was focused on "doing the right thing for children." To signal this new direction, Sykes worked with the DC Board of Education to have the 1990-1991 school year declared "The Year of the Young Child." Activities during the year were designed to focus on quality indicators related to classroom learning and environment, parental support and involvement, and comprehensive community services to support healthy childhood development. In 1990, Sykes also conducted the first all-day, citywide Early Childhood Institute for pre-Kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers and teachers' aids in an effort to promote good practice.<sup>20</sup> Sykes also credits the COPE report for a Congressional appropriation of \$1.3 million to DC that was "set aside" for DCPS. The resources were used to upgrade nearly 500 pre-Kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms with new furniture, materials and equipment, since, as Sykes put it, "you can't ask people to improve their craft if they don't have the tools to do it."

There was another early signal that the DC early childhood education community would work across sectors toward the goal of high-quality pre-K education. The Early Childhood Collaborative of the District of Columbia was founded in 1990 as a coalition of local government agencies, schools, community and social service organizations, and business leaders. The purpose of the Collaborative was to coordinate public and private sector support for excellence in early childhood education. Among the Collaborative's Board of Directors were Terry Golden, Katharine Graham (former Publisher of *The Washington Post*), Barbara Kamara and Maurice Sykes. In addition to other activities, the Collaborative raised more than \$1 million in private sector funds to establish the Frederick Douglass Early Childhood Development and Family Support Center. The Center, which opened in 1993, is located in Ward 8, one of the poorest wards in DC and provides residents with on-site infant care, early childhood development training programs, activities for school-age children, parent education, and health, housing and employment referrals. According to Sykes, the Center served as an early prototype of high-quality child development. Eventually, the Frederick Douglass Center was turned over to DCPS to operate.<sup>21</sup>

While Sykes worked to improve the quality of early childhood education in public school programs, as Executive Director at OECD-DHS, Barbara Kamara focused on program quality and expanded services in community-based programs. Extending programming to three-year-olds was a particular emphasis. In taking this approach, Kamara was influenced primarily by two factors: widely publicized research showing the value of early education for child brain development and the increased need in DC for family economic stability due to welfare reform. Kamara advocated for additional local and, in particular, federal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Child Care Development Block Grant dollars to significantly increase the number of low-income families that could participate in subsidized early childhood education services. According to Kamara, "In the late 1990s, and with the beginning of welfare reform, folks had to go to work. You had to have something for the children. Between 1995 and 1999, our federal allocation for child care increased from \$10 to \$50 million. During that time, we also expanded the number of children served in the subsidy program from around 7,000 to 20,000, and the number of participating providers from 50 to over 400. We developed a major outreach campaign to inform people that there was money available for child care. We also established a diversion program, so needy parents could receive child care and go directly to work, instead of having to go through the welfare system."

BB Otero, President and CEO of Centro Nia, a DC, community-based organization that provides early childhood education and family support programs, remembers the 1990s and Kamara's push to expand the child care subsidy funding. She says Kamara's work was critical to the evolution of DC's early childhood education community, "There were lots of low-income folks in the city who needed child care in order to be able to move forward. Because of the policies Kamara put into place, there was a substantial subsidy pot. Parents were able to go to work and many organizations, including this one, were able to move from providing *child care* to providing *early childhood education* and become stable community institutions."

By 2000, in another move toward improving program quality, Kamara and OECD-DHS instituted Going for Gold, a tiered-rate reimbursement system that pays higher reimbursement rates to providers in the subsidy system that meet the highest quality standards. In this system,

programs are rated in the areas of accreditation, compliance with licensing regulations, director and staff qualifications, staff compensation and benefits, parental involvement and satisfaction, and learning environment. Providers who meet lower standards (silver and bronze) are paid less.<sup>22</sup> Also in 2000, Kamara asked Maurice Sykes, who had moved on from DCPS to start the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the District of Columbia, (ECLIUDC) to start a professional development program for community-based early childhood education providers—similar to the work he had done earlier in the public schools.

The two decades of activity described above begin to show the relationships and resources with which DC had to work in building a movement focused on high-quality pre-K for all. For many years before the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, there were people at the table, including some of the most powerful people in DC, who could make things happen. Just as important, these people crossed sectors and worked together for the benefit of children. This kind of leadership and collaboration would lay the groundwork for pre-K efforts to come.

### **C. The Impact of National Recognition on DC’s Early Childhood Education Efforts**

By the year 2000, 70 percent of three- and four-year-olds in DC were participating in some publicly supported early care and education, and the city was gaining increased national attention for its focus on pre-K programming.<sup>23</sup> In 2002, DC received two major grants that represented recognition from important national funders. One award was an \$800,000 federal Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Since the ELOA grant needed to go through a state or city early learning Council, the funding was awarded to the MACECD, which coordinated with OECD-DHS for program implementation. The funding was designed to educate parents, caregivers, child care providers, librarians and health providers on how to make sure children were ready to learn and to help early childhood educators and program directors improve their practices.<sup>24</sup> The grant was another step in helping the DC early education community focus on the quality of programming.

Another grant was from The W. K. Kellogg Foundation (Kellogg)—\$5 million over five years to participate in the foundation’s SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) Initiative. SPARK emphasized partnerships among schools, businesses, state agencies, community organizations and families to ensure that vulnerable children, ages three- to six, were ready for school and schools were ready for children. The tagline for SPARK was Ready Children and Families, Ready Schools, Ready Communities. This grant was awarded to the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), a more than 30-year-old organization that advocates for black children and families. DC was one of eight locations in the country to be awarded a SPARK grant.<sup>25</sup> Evelyn Moore, a founder and former President and CEO of NBCDI, applied to Kellogg for the SPARK grant and sees the award as another critical step in the DC pre-K movement. Moore had been a lead teacher in the High/ Scope Perry Pre-School program in Ypsilanti, MI, one of the most successful early childhood education initiatives in the country. She says, “because of my background, I understood the value of early childhood education and NBCDI has always supported high-quality, universal pre-Kindergarten. That’s why we applied to Kellogg for the grant.” NBCDI-SPARK DC would become a key partner on the DC early childhood education scene.

This infusion of national money was very important in DC’s movement toward expanded, high-quality pre-K. The grants caused early childhood leaders in the city to begin thinking and acting strategically, and with intention about the creation of an early childhood education system. Sykes recalls, “We determined that we needed to pool our efforts and not create more silos. We decided to use both the SPARK and ELOA funds to target the same high-need neighborhoods—wards 1, 7, 8.” NBCDI-SPARK DC, under the leadership of its first Director, Andrea Young, began working with childhood development centers and schools in these wards to organize and educate parents about the importance school readiness, early literacy, the role of parents as educators and advocacy for quality pre-K for their children. The ELOA dollars were used simultaneously to educate other caregivers about the importance of quality early education. Young says Ward 1 was specifically targeted because of its high Latino population.

DC’s early childhood education leaders also knew that if they wanted to be successful in creating an early childhood education system they needed to develop a broad-based coalition, a tent big enough to include anyone interested in school readiness. Sykes says, “The reality is that we are in a city with a lot disparate interests.” In 2003, the Universal School Readiness Stakeholders Group (USRSG) was formed. Founding partners were Barbara Kamara, OECD-DHS; Maurice Sykes, ECLIUDC; Andrea Young, NBCDI-SPARK DC; and Mary Gill, Citywide Early Childhood Initiatives, DCPS. It was under the USRSG umbrella that a formal strategy for pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds, or universal pre-K, began to take shape. As Andrea Young put it, “Universal pre-K was our goal from the beginning, and everything we did was designed to move us closer to that goal.” More than 200 activists and organizations joined the group at its inception, and began meeting once a month to hear about and help shape where early childhood education was moving in DC.

While each of the major organizations involved in the USRSG went on with their individual work, the group’s leaders were determined to work collectively toward universal school readiness. According to Carol Brunson Day, current president of NBCDI, “Everyone in the USRSG leadership served on the SPARK DC advisory group. We even went so far as to hold our meetings on the same day. A USRSG meeting was followed by a SPARK DC advisory group meeting. We worked together on federal applications for early childhood care and education funding. The director of SPARK DC sat on the MACECD.”

#### **D. Public Knowledge, Public Will, Public Action**

With a high percentage of pre-schoolers already involved in early education, the USRSG leadership turned its attention to creating a system that would result in high-quality pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds. Sykes says, “Our goal was to build *public knowledge, public will and public action* around this issue.” While these advocates believed each component of this goal was important, they were particularly interested in promoting *public knowledge* about quality pre-K. As one advocate says, “We couldn’t mobilize people around quality pre-K if they didn’t know what it meant.” The USRSG not only performed an important convening function in pursuit of this goal, it carried out a number of concrete activities in an effort to make the goal a reality. Four activities were particularly critical. First, in 2003, USRSG held its first annual school readiness conference in conjunction with the ECLIUDC. The purpose of the conference was to begin to educate people about and build broader support around the importance of quality early childhood education. Over 800 city and community leaders, educators and parents attended

conference workshops on early literacy, parenting, child social-emotional development, and the transition from early care and pre-school to kindergarten. Speakers included the DC deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders; the president of the Board of Education; and several members of the DC Council and school system.<sup>26</sup> NBCDI-SPARK DC used part of its funding to help support the conference.<sup>27</sup>

Second, in 2004, early education advocates working under the USRSG banner developed *Road Map to Universal School Readiness*, a policy paper that laid out a candid picture of the DC early care and education landscape, and made recommendations for achieving universal school readiness. The team that developed the paper was led by Bobbi Blok, of the Georgetown Children's House Endowment, and Susie Cambria, of DC Action for Children. The *Road Map* document was requested by Robert Bobb, then City Administrator and Deputy Mayor in Mayor Anthony Williams' administration, in response to advocates' annual request for resources to expand and improve early childhood education services in DC. According to the *Road Map*, DC was in a strong position to move toward universal school readiness, but needed to summon "the public will and public funding to transform a decent, but disjointed system into a comprehensive, collaborative system of consistently high-quality programs and services." In assessing the early care and education landscape, the *Road Map* highlighted a number of areas that needed attention, including:

- While 70 percent of DC three- and four-year-olds participated in a publicly supported early care and education program, as of 2002, nearly 2,000 children, ages 2½ to 4, were on waiting lists for services. Approximately 25 percent of participating children were three-years-old.
- Of the close to 400 licensed child development centers in DC, only 20 percent met standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- The delivery of early care and education services was fragmented: three- and four-year-olds were being served through a patchwork of providers and funders with no oversight body. Services were being provided by a number of citywide agencies (including DC Public schools, DC Public Charter Schools, Department of Parks and Recreation, and OECD-DHS) that subcontracted with community providers.
- Fragmentation in service delivery meant problems with record keeping and reporting. It was possible for one child to participate in and be counted by three different programming and funding sources: Head Start until 3:30p.m., an after-school child care subsidy program, and another program in the summer. As a result, DC had no way to monitor services by the individual child. Private, parochial and non-licensed care settings did not report in any systemized way. The number of children served could only be estimated.
- There was a wide, confusing range of funding sources for early care and education services, including federal, local and foundation, private support, and parent fees. Also, the method of paying for services differed by each managing agency. While DCPS and DC Charter Schools were funded by a per-pupil spending formula from the central school

administration to individual schools, non-profit child development centers were paid on a reimbursement basis by OECD-DHS.

- There were numerous inconsistencies across funding agencies and centers, including differences in staff development and quality, space requirements, funding equity, curriculum standards, family access to services, and overall outcomes.

At the same time, the *Road Map* laid out the following recommendations to address the above issues and achieve the goal of universal school readiness:

- High-quality, developmentally appropriate early care and education programs that included all children, ages 0 to 6.
- High-quality, continuous professional development and training for early care and education teachers across all program sectors (public school, charter school, and community-based).
- Equitable, secure, long-term funding for programs across all sectors.
- Consistent, nationally recognized education quality standards.
- Regular assessment of program quality and improvement to measure impact over time.
- Health and developmental screenings, immunizations and alignment of all systems that impact young children and families.
- Alignment of standards and practices with K-12 systems.
- A strategy to rally the community around school readiness.<sup>28</sup>

The *Road Map* represented an important benchmark in DC's pre-K evolution. Many of the recommendations in the document would shape the actions of advocates and political leaders looking to push DC toward a more comprehensive, higher-quality system.

Another important piece of work carried out under the auspices of the USRSG was the development of *early learning standards* for children entering kindergarten in DC. The standards were developed through a year-long, collaborative process jointly convened by OECD-DHS and ECLIUD. Funding for the work was provided by the federal Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) grant received by MACECD in 2002. The purpose of the standards development process was to engage a broad cross section of the DC early childhood education community—staff from public, charter and community-based centers, as well as researchers, academics and advocates—in defining what preschool children should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten. The process was led by and the standards were reviewed by national early childhood education experts. (These early learning standards were eventually adopted by the DC State Board of Education.)<sup>29</sup>

Finally, in 2005, the leadership of the USRSG negotiated with the DCPS to redirect \$4.6 million, originally slated for public school pre-K programs, to OECD-DHS to fund a demonstration project called the Pre-K Incentive Program. The purpose of the project was to provide a concrete model of what high-quality pre-K would look like in community-based settings if the appropriate investments were made. According to Maurice Sykes, this was a strategic move by USRSG to broaden public funding for community-based, early care programs beyond child care subsidy dollars and push the issue of quality, “Our argument to the school district was that the pre-K

programs being operated by the public schools already benefited from the public school infrastructure—that community-based programs were where the investment was needed.” The idea of using public school dollars to fund community programs was not without controversy, and there was some opposition within DCPS, because public school dollars had never been used in that manner. According to Andrea Young, who represented NBCDI-SPARK DC in this effort, this use of public education dollars was considered “revolutionary.”

However, two factors were critical to making the initiative a reality. First, the reach of the USRSG included everyone in the education community—parents, community activists, K-12 teachers and administrators. This provided broad support and cover for the effort. Second, the Superintendent of DCPS at the time, Clifford Janey, had created a similar program in his former role as Superintendent of the Rochester Public schools and was supportive of the effort. Janey’s support, however, did not come without requirements. Barbara Kamara recalls, “Janey told us to go and look at what he had done in Rochester. He understood quality and wanted to make sure the Pre-K Incentive Program would actually demonstrate high-quality pre-K. We worked with a national panel of early childhood education experts to put together a proposal for him—there were a number of iterations. Finally, a memorandum of agreement was developed between the DCPS and the OECD-DHS to transfer the money for the program.”

Once money for the Pre-K Incentive Program was allotted, OECD-DHS developed a request for applications, which was sent to interested early child care centers in DC. A panel of independent reviewers helped select the respondents that would participate. In the 2005-2006 school year, classrooms in 16 pre-K sites from every section of the city were selected. The program required small class sizes (16 children and 2 adults) and an approved curriculum and child development specialist in every classroom. Lead teachers were required to have at minimum a Bachelors Degree and assistant teachers needed to have at least an Associate’s Degree. The model included monthly professional development for teachers; comprehensive services for children and their families; and a parental component, including educational workshops, parent association meetings, parent-teacher conferences and opportunities for parents to volunteer in their child’s classroom. Three- and four-year-olds would be served on a first-come first-served basis.

Sykes believes that Janey’s presence as superintendent was key to the development of the Pre-K Incentive Program, “Janey happened to know something about early childhood development. If there had been someone else in that position this program probably would not have happened. Also, Janey was new to the school system when this all started. He didn’t know anyone inside the system and was eager to attach himself to something credible. The Pre-K Incentive Program, with its panel of national experts, gave him credibility inside the system and, to some extent, nationally. He even made early education a key focus in his comprehensive education plan. So it worked for everyone—we got the money to develop a model of high-quality pre-K that everyone could see, and Janey gained a solid foothold in the system and enhanced his national reputation.” The Pre-K Incentive Program has been continuously funded since 2005, and now includes classrooms in 20 centers.

By 2006, the DC early childhood education community had come a long way. Long-time activism on behalf of early learning had been recognized with large national grants from The Kellogg Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. Community, political and business

leaders, educators, administrators, and parents had built a coalition—USRSG—across race and class to advocate for expanded access to high-quality pre-K. Time had been a friend with the release of critical research on the benefits of early learning and the appointment of a superintendent who was an advocate of high-quality early childhood education. There was now a model—the Pre-K Incentive Program—operating in community-based, early childhood centers across DC that demonstrated what high-quality child care should look like. This was the second time the early childhood education community had attempted to develop such a community-based prototype—the first being the Frederick Douglass Center in Ward 8. This time, it appears the power of a broad-based coalition made the difference.

The profile of the early childhood education issue had been raised in all sectors of the DC community. Brunson Day remembers the feeling that momentum was building, “Andrea Young, the Director of the SPARK DC initiative was really plugged in to what was going on in the foundation world and nationally because of her relationship with Kellogg. She came to me one day and said she felt we had enough going on in DC to approach Pre-K Now to support our growing push for universal pre-K.” DC early childhood education advocates had approached Pre-K Now before to no avail. Brunson Day continues, “I knew Libby Doggett, the head of Pre-K Now, from work we had done together in the past, so I approached her and made the case for what we had accomplished in DC. She was open to it.”

In talking about why Pre-K Now decided to fund a pre-K campaign in DC, Doggett says, “There are a number of reasons why we made this decision. I rely heavily on staff and they really wanted to do something in DC. We were influenced by the condition of pre-K in DC. We live here in this beautiful city and want children here to get a beautiful education. DC shouldn’t just be about monuments and dead heroes. We wanted to give back to the city. There were a number of things that needed to be in place in DC before they could be successful. The early childhood community had done a lot of work together—Maurice Sykes, Barbara Kamara and others. There was leadership at the District level—they had developed the Pre-K Incentive program. NBCDI had done terrific work with SPARK. Carol Day and I had done work together and she was willing to house the effort.”

A history of activism, strategic thinking and planning, strong leadership, coalition building, and timing were the key elements responsible for DC’s success in building a movement for high-quality universal pre-K. Movement leaders would consistently turn to these elements to take them further than they had imagined. The next section of this paper will document and explore how a movement to expand the quantity and improve the quality of pre-K services in DC became a full-blown campaign for pre-K for all.

## IV. Organizing the Pre-K for All DC Campaign

*Sometimes DC is a hard town to work in. It took a long time, but we got to the point where we had enough momentum to really push it and move to the next level.*

Barbara Kamara, Former Executive Director, Office of Early Childhood Development and Administrator, Early Care in Education Administration, DC Department of Human Services.

### A. Getting Funded, Getting Political, Setting Initial Direction

In April 2006, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was born when Pre-K Now made an initial \$75,000 grant to the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI). NBCDI agreed to house and act as fiscal agent for the Campaign. Throughout the life of the Campaign, Pre-K Now would provide Pre-K for All DC with an additional \$300,000, including \$150,000 raised from CityBridge, a DC foundation whose mission is to address complex social problems. Another \$166,500 would be raised by the Campaign including: \$140,000 from the DC Early Childhood Collaborative; \$15,000 from PNC Bank and \$11,500 from individuals and other sources.<sup>30</sup> The Campaign would have a total budget of \$541,500 for two and a half years of operations.

As the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was being planned, major political changes were underway in DC. Arthur McKee, Program Officer at CityBridge Foundation and member of the Campaign Steering Committee remembers the political atmosphere, “In 2006, Mayor Williams was retiring; he’d decided not to run again, so there was a Mayor’s race; seven Council members were up for re-election and there was a race for the Council Chair’s seat. The entire political establishment was going to be turned upside down. There were big political fights brewing; there was going to be an infusion of new blood and people running for office were looking for issues they could champion. Those of us planning the Campaign began to ask ourselves how we could take advantage of this environment to further the goal of pre-K for all.” McKee also explains the larger political context in DC, “DC is a very Democratic city in terms of what the government can and should do. In some other places, there is an argument against pre-K that comes down to *you shouldn’t have the state taking care of children*. There is no constituency where you could play on that fear here in DC. The only opposition here is that it will cost money and I don’t think we even have entrenched opposition on that issue here.”

But there were other challenges. Carrie Thornhill, a long-time community and education activist, who would go on to co-chair the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, describes what she saw as one of the major challenges facing the Campaign, “Every year, we activists had gone before Council with our various hats on to make the case for continued or new support for the expansion of early care and education. It struck us that we would have essentially a new Council and that we needed better tools to help them understand that we didn’t just need to expand numbers, but that the research says we had to have quality programs, and this is an area where DC was doing poorly. But you see many of our government leaders were convinced that we were the best in the nation because we were serving so many children. It dawned on us that the tools and strategies we were using weren’t enough and we needed a different game plan.”

Pre-K Now provided advice and resources that helped develop the “game plan” for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. Staff from the national organization briefed the DC Campaign on the successful components of campaigns in various other states, including grassroots organizing, direct candidate education, and use of technology to expand communication with constituents. Pre-K Now staff also shared information about the importance of effective messaging and branding in a campaign, and helped to shape the mission, vision and guiding principles that would ground the effort. Pre-K Now and Campaign staff discussed the necessity of forming a truly multi-cultural campaign that could reach all DC residents. The Pre-K for All DC Campaign’s initial project overview describes plans for the Campaign this way: *Pre-K for All DC will launch a non-partisan, multi-cultural and multi-lingual advocacy campaign designed to inform and engage policymakers and the public about the multiple benefits of high-quality pre-K.* Throughout the Campaign, Pre-K Now met with staff of Pre-K for All DC to provide ongoing support. Members of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign are quick to point out, however, that local early childhood education advocates did not always welcome the input of a national funder. As one advocate put it, “people in DC are fiercely entrepreneurial.” Often, the strategies and tools recommended by Pre-K Now were adapted to fit the DC context, and some were not used at all.

Early leaders of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign determined that the 2006 Mayoral and Council elections presented an excellent opportunity to make pre-K a major issue in DC. They decided that the campaign for universal pre-K should run parallel to the ongoing campaigns for political office. A key goal of the pre-K campaign would be to educate all major candidates for Mayor and Council about the issue—a formidable task, since the election was only months away in November 2006. Pre-K for All DC needed to take several initial steps to lay the groundwork, so this effort could get started strongly and quickly.

## **B. Creating a Working Governance Structure**

Because of the existence of the Universal School Readiness Stakeholders Group (USRSG), elements of a governance structure were already in place. The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) agreed to house the Campaign and provide overall support. Pre-K for All DC was added as a key partner in the USRSG, which would be an important vehicle in promoting the Campaign. Given the vast array of advocacy groups in DC lobbying for a variety of issues, the broad reach of the USRSG would be needed to help push the Campaign to the top of the political agenda. In fact, one of the major priorities of the Campaign would be to expand the USRSG to ensure representation for additional groups, such as multi-cultural businesses, and civic and education leaders, who could argue for high-quality pre-K from a variety of perspectives, and give the Campaign instant credibility with important constituencies. Also, early childhood education leaders in DC say that the USRSG was also an attempt to handle the inevitable “turfism” among early education activists, since there was not necessarily total consensus about the policy direction a pre-K Campaign should take.

A Steering Committee was drawn from the USRSG that would finalize the mission and strategic plan of the Campaign; help actualize the strategic plan by taking on specific, high-level tasks; manage Campaign staff; and guide the Campaign from start to finish. (See Appendix B for the names of Steering Committee members.)

### **C. Selecting the Right Leadership: Influential Campaign Co-Chairs and Experienced Management**

Terry Golden and Carrie Thornhill, two highly influential DC civic leaders, were selected to co-chair the Campaign. Golden is a prominent businessman, Chairman of Bailey Capital Corporation, a private investment firm, and Chairman of the Federal City Council, a powerful, business-led civic organization in DC. He is also a former Assistant Secretary of the United States Treasury. Golden developed a personal interest in pre-K through his service on the DC Committee on Public Education (COPE); his membership on the board of directors of the Early Childhood Collaborative of the District of Columbia and his role as Chair of the DC Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools.

Thornhill has been involved in public education reform and community development for more than 40 years. She is Managing Director of Israel Manor, Inc, a Community Housing Development Organization located in Northeast DC, and Vice President for Youth Investment and Community Outreach with DC Agenda, a non-profit civic organization that addresses complex urban problems. Thornhill was appointed to the DC Board of Education by Mayor Anthony Williams and is Founding President of the DC Childcare Corporation, a public-private partnership serving children and families.

The co-chairs would be the faces of the Campaign and given their influence in the community, Golden and Thornhill were important, strategic choices. Together, they gave Pre-K for All DC access to a diverse set of decision-makers and other constituencies that would be critical to the Campaign's success. Thornhill is closely connected to both the grassroots and political leadership in DC. One community activist described her as having a "multiplier effect" in terms of bringing people and attention to any project with which she is involved. Golden would be essential in pulling together the business community. As co-chairs, they would be asked to provide input on overall Campaign strategy, appear at key public events, and use their contacts and influence in support of the Campaign.

Jesse Bailey, a former Truman Fellow and intern at Pre-K Now, was hired as Manager of the Campaign and housed at NBCDI. Most people involved in the Pre-K for All DC Campaign agree that hiring Bailey was a smart move. Doggett, says, "Jesse had only a few months left on his fellowship. Jesse was young, but terrific and DC was willing to take him on. He had been involved in a number of our campaigns around the country and knew our process. I felt strongly that there was enough turfism in DC that they needed a neutral leader." It would be Bailey's job to work under the direction of the Steering Committee to manage the Campaign's daily operations. This included creating Campaign work plans; directing Campaign staff (who would be hired later in the Campaign); planning all major events; working with consultants to create all Campaign materials; working with the Steering Committee to educate key community leaders about pre-K; attending meetings of community stakeholders; assisting in recruiting volunteers; helping to develop and execute a media relations plan; and creating and executing a fundraising plan as needed.

#### **D. Clearly Articulating the Campaign's Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles and Policy Goals**

The ability of the Campaign to quickly develop clear positions and statements of its purpose and objectives was critical to garnering attention and widespread support. In developing these positions, the Steering Committee was aided greatly by the previous work of the USRSG, in particular, the *Road Map* document that had been completed in 2004, and the design for the Pre-K Incentive Program, implemented in 2005. The *Road Map* document and the Pre-K Incentive Program model provided important initial direction for the Campaign. Still, the Steering Committee held a facilitated retreat to come up with an intentional, strategic approach to the Campaign. The following statements were laid out in the April 2006 Pre-K for All DC Project Overview:

- **Mission:** *Pre-K for All DC seeks to ensure that all three- and four-year-old children and their families have access to high-quality pre-Kindergarten in the District of Columbia.*
- **Vision Statement:** *All young children and their families will have access to a continuum of comprehensive, high-quality early childhood programs and services that promote child well-being and school readiness, and ensure that all children are healthy, ready to learn and have safe passages through the early years.*
- **Guiding Principles:** *Pre-kindergarten programs in the District of Columbia will be:*
  - *Universally accessible to all three- and four-year-old children*
  - *High-quality, comprehensive and developmentally appropriate*
  - *Delivered through a diverse set of community- and school-based settings*
  - *Family focused and culturally responsive*
  - *Aligned with K-12 reform*
  - *Accredited with nationally recognized standards (such as the National Association of for the Education of the Young Child)*
  - *Well-funded through a stable source*
  - *Phased in by 2010*
- **Policy Goals:** *Based on its mission, vision and guiding principles, the Campaign will educate DC policymakers about the need for:*
  - *Adequate investment over four years to ensure all three- and four-year-olds have access to high-quality pre-K*
  - *Additional high-quality classrooms each year until all have access*
  - *Improved surplus public school space to be utilized by community- and school-based centers*
  - *Increased professional development programs to improve teacher quality over the next four years*
  - *A long-term program evaluation*

(It should be noted, and will be discussed later in the report, that the policy goal to develop and pass legislation to ensure pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds in DC did not emerge until later

in the Campaign. Also, the final pre-K legislation allows for universal pre-K to be phased in by 2014 as opposed to 2010.)

Here are the facts on the ground that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was attempting to change. In 2006:

- There were close to 13,000 three- and four-year-olds in DC—over 2,000, most of them three-year-olds, were not being served in pre-school programs.<sup>31</sup>
- Of the more than 300 center-based child care providers, only 30 percent were accredited by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the Council on Accreditation.<sup>32</sup>

### **E. Establishing a Clear Theory of Change**

A theory of change defines the steps or activities required by an effort to bring about a long-term goal. The Pre-K for All DC Campaign Steering Committee established a theory of change that would be the basis of their strategy:

*Pre-K for All DC will promote well-researched economic and scientific evidence, and use strategic communications and mobilization tools to build an informed and broad-based movement of families, community, business and political leaders in support of high-quality learning experiences for all of DC's youngest citizens.*<sup>33</sup>

The pre-K Campaign's theory of change provided fundamental guidance for the Steering Committee and staff. All of the Campaign's strategies for moving their agenda forward flowed directly and deliberately from the theory of change. According to Bailey, "Our Campaign was successful in part because we outlined a clear theory of change and stuck to it." Many of the theory's elements were interconnected, facilitating the Campaign's ability to meet objectives. Still, implementing the Campaign so that it kept pace with the political election and achieved its policy goals was daunting. As Bailey put it, "Particularly in the beginning, we had to develop the Campaign as we were generating support for pre-K. We had to build the plane as we were flying." Bailey had experience with other Campaigns, but he was not from DC. Therefore, he relied on the advice and experience of the Steering Committee, who understood the DC context and met regularly to help keep things on track. Pre-K for All DC developed strategies and tools that would help them achieve their goals for the 2006 election season—and could be adapted as the Campaign bumped up against the realities of time, resources and on-the-ground implementation in Washington, DC.

The next chapter will examine how the Pre-K for All DC Campaign positioned itself to take advantage of the 2006 DC election.

## V. Implementing the Theory of Change Part 1: A Strategy for the Election Season (April 2006-November 2006)

*Anyone who publicly supported pre-K for all was considered a champion.*

Jesse Bailey, Manager, Pre-K for All DC Campaign

Members of the Pre-K for All DC Steering Committee decided that their first job was to use the three elements of the Campaign's theory of change—*well-researched evidence, strategic communication, and mobilization*—to gain public support and credibility for the issue of pre-K, and for the Campaign itself. These leaders knew that public support and credibility were critical to making pre-K an important issue in the 2006 election and to gaining the candidates' attention. At the beginning of the pre-K Campaign, Steering Committee members believed that, if successful, their efforts would end in the new Mayor working with the DC Council to introduce a policy and appropriate funding to support high-quality, pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds in DC. The idea of pre-K legislation was not yet on the table. The Campaign decided it was critical to use the election season to do several things: educate the Mayoral and Council candidates about pre-K, so they would understand the importance of the issue; obtain candidates' commitments to support high-quality universal pre-K; and educate and mobilize various constituencies to support universal pre-K. And there was not a lot of time to accomplish all of this—just seven months between the Campaign's initial funding in April and Election Day on November 6.

### A. Strategic Communications

- *Branding and Identity*

One of the initial steps of the Campaign was to work with the DC-based branding firm Beveridge Seay to establish a professional identity. The firm had worked with Pre-K Now for a number of years on naming, branding and messaging projects. The Campaign staff and Steering Committee met with Beveridge Seay several times to ensure the branding would reflect the serious nature of the pre-K issue; the diversity of the city; and be warm, child-focused and professional. The firm produced templates for one-page briefs, fact sheets, brochures and Campaign stickers. The company also worked with staff to design a website that would maintain the same branding approach, and could be used to further the Campaign's communications and mobilization strategies. Pre-K for All DC staff and Steering Committee believed that having an attractive, professional and unique identity was particularly important to help the Campaign rise above the noise and competing interests of the DC election season. Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey, recalled, "Initially, some local people weren't happy about having a very specific branding placed on the local Campaign by a national organization. But in the end, we got a great look for the overall effort that helped build the Campaign's identity." The most important materials created for the Campaign were translated into Spanish.

- *Commissioning a Cost-Benefit Study*

In another early, critical step, the pre-K Campaign commissioned an independent study of the economic benefits of expanding pre-school programs in Washington, DC. The study reflected the Campaign's intention to use *well-researched economic and scientific evidence* to build a broad base of support for the issue of high-quality, universal pre-K. Campaign leaders understood that an independent, economic analysis of the benefits of pre-K would be very persuasive to the business and civic sectors in DC; and that it would be particularly useful in an election season.

Clive Belfield, noted professor of economics at Queens College of the City University of New York, conducted the study. Belfield had conducted similar analyses for other Pre-K Now-funded efforts, such as in Wisconsin and Louisiana. The fact that he is known in the field and very familiar with the pre-K terrain was critical, since the DC Campaign needed to move quickly. The resulting report is titled, *Investing in the Economic Vitality of the District of Columbia through Pre-Kindergarten for All*.

Findings from the study released in an initial report showed that an investment of \$58.5 million in high-quality pre-K for all would yield benefits of \$81.49 million to DC. This represented \$29.88 million in school system cost savings, \$27.07 million in increased tax revenues, \$17.62 million in cost savings to the criminal justice system, and \$6.93 million in healthcare savings. These findings were presented on June 19, 2006 when Belfield, flanked by Campaign Co-Chairs Thornhill and Golden, along with the superintendent of DCPS, spoke at DC's National Press Club. The event was covered by *The Washington Post*, as well as community newspapers, and radio and television press. Both Thornhill and Golden were quoted in a June 20, 2006 *Washington Post* article, titled "Coalition Wants City to Increase Pre-K Slots." Thornhill was quoted as saying, "We have to make sure that all children can take part in the new dynamic urban economy." Speaking to *The Post* about the need to improve the quality of pre-K education in DC, Golden said, "We need to break out of our pattern of low performance."

Major business, civic, education and political leaders—including the candidates for Mayor and DC Council—were in attendance at this event. The main message of the study is *high-quality pre-K is a small investment with a high rate of return for DC*—and this was a critical audience to hear this message. Copies of the initial findings report were distributed at the Press Club. The final report was released in September 2006 and an executive summary was produced using the Campaign's distinctive branding. English and Spanish language versions were distributed widely—with a particular focus on targeting the business community. In addition to providing the main points of the study, the executive summary outlined a challenge to all important segments of the DC community. The report asked:

- The ***business and foundation*** communities to embrace pre-K for all as a sound, research-based development strategy and integrate it into the DC economic agenda;
- ***Education advocates*** to promote pre-K as a critical part of school reform;
- ***Elected officials*** to make pre-K for all a legislative priority; and
- ***Families and the community at large*** to become advocates for all children, and hold elected officials accountable for creating a quality pre-K for all system.<sup>34</sup>

Members of the Campaign Steering Committee say the release of this cost-benefit study at the National Press Club was an important signal to the DC community and achieved one of the Campaign's most important goals: "instant credibility." Movers and shakers in town, including candidates for Mayor and DC Council, began to take serious notice of the Campaign. The National Press Club venue was key. As Steering Committee member Maurice Sykes put it, "The National Press Club isn't just any old place. If it's at the Press Club, it must be important."

This National Press Club event was the first of three major gatherings the Campaign would use to gain support from the business and civic communities. The Press Club would again be the venue of choice at one of these future events.

- *E- Communications*

In the initial days of the DC Campaign, Pre-K for All DC became part of Pre-K Now's E-communications system. This system allowed Pre-K for All DC to become part of Pre-K Now's network of campaigns, and learn from pre-K activities around the country. The ultimate goal of the E-communications system was to increase the visibility of the Campaign, and provide a quick way to communicate with constituents and mobilize online support. The DC Campaign worked with Pre-K Now's E-communications software provider, GetActive, and hired a communications consulting firm, M+R Strategic Services, to train staff in how to use the system effectively.

E-communications was very much a part of Pre-K Now's vision for a modern campaign, but initially, some on the DC Campaign's Steering Committee were skeptical. Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey, says, "If you recall, in 2006, not everyone was using this kind of technology to keep in touch with people and some local folks weren't sure it was worth it. They changed their minds when they saw the results." During the election season, the Campaign started out using names from the existing listserves of other organizations to build their E-communications system, but began expanding their own list as they put field mobilization strategies into place (see Mobilization Strategies below). Bailey states, "While it took some time, we were able to keep in touch with many more people using the E-communications system than we ever could with street work alone."

- *The Media Strategy*

Pre-K for All DC developed a media strategy designed to include coverage of Campaign activities by print (both *The Washington Post* and community newspapers), radio and TV outlets. The Campaign Manager was charged with cultivating and maintaining relationships with press contacts, and writing press releases for important events. A key task of the Campaign co-chairs and Steering Committee members was to speak to the press on behalf of the Campaign.

The Campaign kicked off this strategy in June 2006 when both co-chairs were quoted in *The Washington Post* at the release of the cost-benefit study at the National Press Club. (See Section II: Commissioning a Cost-Benefit Study, above.) *The Washington Examiner*, a free daily

newspaper distributed in the Washington metro area and other local newspapers also covered the event.

Media coverage of Pre-K for All DC and the pre-K issue grew as the Campaign became more well-known. *The Washington Post* followed its coverage of the cost-benefit study release with an article the following week about the Pre-K Incentive Program, noting its role as a model for quality pre-K.<sup>35</sup>

Articles about the pre-K Campaign also began to appear in smaller neighborhood papers, including the monthly publication *East of the River*—a paper that serves neighborhoods that are literally east of the Anacostia River.<sup>36</sup> In September 2006, Ed Lazere, then Executive Director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, published an editorial in *East of the River*, titled “More Police Officers?” In the editorial, Lazere challenged then Police Chief Ramsey about his proposal to hire more police officers to fight crime. Lazere wrote that the money “could, for example, fully fund universal pre-K education in the city, as a group of civic leaders called for last summer.”

Later in the year, in coordination with mobilization efforts, the Campaign would begin to implement the radio component of its media strategy. And later in the Campaign, Pre-K for All DC would deliberately focus on getting coverage in neighborhood newspapers as a way to connect with residents more directly.

## **B. Mobilization Strategies and Tools**

Because of their access to the Pre-K Now network, the DC Campaign was able to study and learn from other pre-K efforts. At the same time, the DC Campaign had to be tailored to local circumstance and constituencies. Campaign leaders knew all too well that DC was a town of numerous interest groups. From the outset, Pre-K for All DC aimed to implement an outreach, mobilizing and messaging effort that would make every DC resident feel connected to and involved in the pre-K issue. The USRSG, which had expanded during the early days of the Campaign to include as many relevant organizations as possible, was certainly critical in keeping the Campaign connected to broad segments of DC. However, other specific mobilization strategies and tools were needed and flexibility and the ability to adapt when necessary became increasingly important.

- *Targeting the Grass Tops*

In community organizing parlance, “grass tops” are defined as community members with the power to both make and/or shape public policy. Since an initial task of the Campaign was to establish pre-K as an important issue on the DC political agenda, “grass tops” were a significant target group during the election season. The political candidates for Mayor and District Council were one such group. Another group was prominent business and civic leaders who could influence DC politics. Initially, the Campaign planned to establish a Leadership Council or alliance of influential, community and civic leaders as had been done in other Pre-K Now campaigns. However, the Campaign Steering Committee rejected that idea as not appropriate for DC, since strong, productive relationships among the business, civic and early childhood education leaders already existed. The Steering Committee felt strongly that another leadership

group would be redundant. The bottom line objective was to educate the grass tops about how an improved, expanded pre-K system could benefit them, and ask them to “champion” the pre-K cause. The Campaign co-chairs and other members of the Steering Committee were very involved in implementing this strategy during the election season.

Pre-K champions are described in Campaign documents as *influential leaders whose public support advances the Campaign’s objectives and whose leadership will lend credibility to the Campaign message*. The Pre-K Champions Pledge of Support reads:

*I, the undersigned, recognize that pre-Kindergarten for all is a cost-effective strategy that ensures children enter the public school system ready to learn; that high-quality pre-K students become high-quality public school students; that investments in pre-K for all build an employable workforce; and that a well-educated workforce contributes to the attraction and retention of business and a stable local economy. Therefore, I pledge, to be a Pre-K Champion and will in word and in deed enhance educational opportunities for all three- and four- year- olds in the District of Columbia.*

Then DCPS Superintendent, Clifford Janey, was an early Pre-K Champion, as were Councilwoman, Kathy Patterson, a candidate for DC Council president, and Mike Harreld, President of PNC Bank of Greater Washington, DC.

The Campaign developed an election season strategy to obtain commitments from all 2006 political candidates to become Pre-K Champions, and include high-quality, universal pre-K in their election platforms. They developed a multi-pronged approach that was implemented by Campaign co-chairs, Steering Committee members, staff and volunteers. As a first step, initial education packets were sent to all Council and Mayoral candidates. The packets included a one-page fact sheet outlining the clear economic, educational and crime reduction benefits of high-quality, universal pre-K as outlined in the commissioned cost-benefit study; recent articles about the Campaign that had appeared in the local press; and a letter of invitation from one of the Campaign co-chairs inviting the candidate to become a Pre-K Champion. Subsequent follow-up visits were made to candidates or their staffs to further educate them on the pre-K issue and ask them to sign the official Pre-K Pledge.

According to Bailey, the Campaign was very aggressive, but flexible in getting candidates to sign the Pre-K Pledge. Some candidates signed the pledge at official events, such as the Pre-K Champions tour, which was sponsored by the Campaign. In fact, in his bid for Council Chair, Councilman Vince Gray, signed the pledge on the tour, in front of cameras at the Sunshine Early Learning Center, one of the Pre-K Incentive Program Centers, located in Southeast DC. Then Councilman and Mayoral candidate, Adrian Fenty, signed the pledge at his campaign office. Other candidates signed whenever Campaign staff could get a hold of them, often with little fanfare. Bailey says, “Since the Campaign was non-partisan it was important for us to get all candidates to sign the pledge. By the fall, we got everyone to sign, even the less well-known, third party and fringe candidates.”

Since the Campaign was trying to build a broad coalition, the support of business and civic “policy shapers” was also very important. Depending on the group, one of the Campaign co-

chairs or Steering Committee members, often accompanied by Campaign staff, would meet with members of these groups to inform them about the Campaign, the benefits of pre-K and to seek their support. Examples of the groups targeted include the various Chambers' of Commerce, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Ethiopian Development Council, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, The Children and Youth Investment Trust, The Committee for Economic Development, and others. The executive summary of the cost-benefit study was a primary outreach tool for these groups. Pre-K for All DC gave these leaders plenty of room to decide how and if they wanted to become part of the Campaign. Some leaders played an active role from the outset, such as attending Campaign events like the June 19 release of the cost-benefit study at the National Press Club. Some, like Mike Harreld of PNC, announced their support for pre-K publicly and became Pre-K Champions. Others would eventually testify in support of pre-K legislation during public hearings.

- *Mobilizing the Grassroots: Building the Base for a Field Network*

During the election season, Pre-K for All DC began building a grassroots network of field coordinators and volunteers. The purpose of this network was to assure broad community-based support throughout the Campaign. Campaign Manager Bailey admits there was a learning curve when it came to organizing a network that fit the DC context. Initially, the Campaign patterned grassroots mobilization efforts after those Bailey had seen in other Pre-K Now-funded projects. Field coordinators were assigned to each of DC's eight wards. Their assignment was to build coalitions with a wide variety of grassroots organizations that could then support the pre-K Campaign. Bailey says, "We quickly found that given the multifaceted nature of the communities and of our work, we were trying to mobilize too many groups. Plus, it was very difficult to keep eight coordinators going. Retention is a challenge in any organizing effort because people move on. Also there is a lot of mobility in low-income neighborhoods, which keeps you from having a lot of continual work being done on the ground." The initial mobilization strategy did not work well, and Bailey knew he would have to regroup. At the same time, it was critical to keep grassroots support for pre-K visible to the public and to the candidates campaigning for political office.

Throughout much of the election season, the Campaign relied on two to three field coordinators, who worked a few hours a week on what was called "targeted outreach"—activity specifically related to making sure the pre-K issue stayed visible to the candidates running for office. For example, the coordinators organized small groups of volunteers who would show up at candidate debates and other election events wearing t-shirts or carrying signs that identified them as supporters of universal pre-K. Their charge was to make their presence known and ask questions about candidates' support for pre-K. The coordinators organized approximately 100 volunteers to attend eight political events. Parents and grandparents were particularly recruited to attend these events, so candidates could see that these voters cared about the pre-K issue.

Early grassroots mobilization efforts supported the Campaign's media strategy by using radio to connect with and mobilize ethnic communities—a successful approach that continued into 2007. Pre-K for All DC did not have a budget for buying radio time to promote the Campaign. Since radio is known to be a powerful medium for mobilizing public support, particularly in ethnic communities, the Campaign wanted to find a way take advantage of this important resource.

With a goal of maximizing air time while minimizing costs, the Campaign decided to approach ethnic radio stations about a partnership. Building on ongoing outreach to the Latino community, in October 2006, the Campaign partnered with El Zol, DC's number one Latino Radio station to help sponsor Fiesta DC, the city's largest cultural celebration. With funding provided by SPARK DC, one of the founding USRSG partners, Pre-K for All DC bought a \$6,500 sponsorship of the Fiesta celebration in exchange for a paid media package worth approximately \$40,000. Prior to the celebration, Campaign field workers and volunteers attended community meetings in heavily Latino wards to promote the Campaign, and to let people know that Campaign staff would be attending Fiesta DC. Commercials for Pre-K for All DC also aired on EL Zol. The partnership and the Campaign's investment proved profitable—in total, Pre-K for All DC received fifty 30-second sponsorship mentions, ten 60-second spots, exposure on the El Zol website, a booth at the festival, full color advertising in the event publication, and more than a dozen live PSAs from the event main stage. Tangible results also included 241 additional supporters and new relationships with several key organizations in the Latino community.

These first field coordinators also helped the Campaign begin to expand the E-communication system's mailing list. Throughout the election season, the field coordinators, as well as other members of the Campaign, added names generated from their early field work to those already gathered from the existing databases of organizations like USRSG and NBCDI-SPARK DC. It was important to the Campaign that the E-communications list included names of people who signed up voluntarily, as well as names from existing databases, since voluntary signatures indicated independent interest in the pre-K issue. In building the E-communications list, field coordinators created what the Campaign called a "positive feedback loop"—a practice that would be used throughout the Campaign. This means that when a person's name was put on the E-communications list they would quickly receive information from the Campaign, so the contact would not be lost. This growing E-communications system would be a very important resource for the grassroots capacity the Campaign would soon need.

Chapter VI will look at how the Pre-K for All DC Campaign expanded and evolved in response to complex, fast moving conditions on the ground.

## VI. Implementing the Theory of Change Part 2: Ratcheting Up the Campaign for Universal Pre-K (November 2006 to June 2007)

*Pre-K for All DC ran an inside-outside Campaign—movers and shakers on the inside, advocates on the outside. They worked hand in glove effectively. Insiders wanted to make change, but needed the support of outsiders.*

Libby Doggett, Former Executive Director, Pre-K Now,  
Current, Deputy Director, Pew Center on the States

By the end of Election Day, Tuesday, November 7, 2006, it was clear that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign had gotten off to an impressive start. The Campaign had released a well-received cost-benefit study that framed pre-K as a cost-effective public policy; “knighted” the newly elected Mayor Adrian Fenty, DC Council Chair Vincent Gray, and all DC Council members as Pre-K Champions; and begun mobilizing grass tops and grassroots constituencies in support of high-quality pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds. It was now time for Pre-K for All DC to build on their work during the election season and move on to the next phase of the Campaign: making sure that implementing universal pre-K remained a high priority for the new Mayor and Council. Given all the other issues the new DC officials would have on their plates, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign believed they needed to expand the constituency for universal pre-K. The Campaign began taking steps to strengthen its mobilization, messaging, and communication tools and strategies, often combining and adapting strategies to achieve Campaign goals. At the same time, the Campaign began to work more directly with political leaders to push the pre-K agenda.

### A. Working Inside and Outside

Because of the Campaign’s work during the election season, Pre-K for All DC had become a credible force in the pre-K and early childhood education communities. As a result, newly elected Mayor Adrian Fenty, asked Pre-K for All DC Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey, to co-chair the Transition Work Group on Early Childhood Education, along with Julianne Johnson, Chair of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development (MACECD). The next several months took the Campaign to an entirely new level.

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Work Group was one of 12 groups established by the Mayor-Elect during the transition period before he officially took office (November 2006-January 2007). The purpose of these groups was to develop recommendations for implementing the new Mayor’s vision for the District of Columbia. During this transition period, Mayor-Elect Fenty said that education would be a top priority of his administration and stated his broad education vision as “reforming the District’s schools and closing the achievement gap among the District’s students.” As part of his vision, Fenty promised to launch a comprehensive pre-K initiative to prepare young children for success in school and in life. This promise would be formalized in the new Mayor’s “2007 Action Plan for the District of Columbia: 100 Days and Beyond.”<sup>37</sup>

In developing recommendations from the ECE work group, Bailey and Johnson met with more than 40 leaders in DC's early childhood education community, and conducted dozens of interviews and focus groups with providers and families. Early education advocacy and policy groups provided assistance in organizing these meetings and interviews. In total, over 100 providers, advocates, policymakers and families provided input.

While organizing people to take part in ECE work group activities, Bailey and the Campaign continued their targeted mobilization efforts right through the transition period. They organized people to attend the ward-by-ward Town Hall meetings held by Mayor Elect Fenty during the transition period. These meetings were designed to let the new Mayor hear citizens' concerns directly. Pre-K supporters would show up with their signs and t-shirts, and ask questions about Fenty's support for pre-K. This allowed the Campaign to keep the pressure on the Mayor, even while helping him develop his early childhood education agenda.

In the meantime, ongoing ECE Work Group discussions centered on factors that should be considered in building a quality system, including professional development, financing, program support and monitoring, standards, results and accountability, and governance. In interviews and focus groups, parents and grandparents were asked about how they found care for their children; factors they considered in deciding where to place their children; their experiences in seeking pre-K services; and their idea of what an ideal program would look like. Particular attention was paid to the barriers to achieving a high-quality pre-K system. The barriers cited during these discussions included the high cost of pre-K care for families; uneven program and teacher quality; the lack of information about early childhood programs among various high-need groups; lack of comprehensive services for children and families; limited professional development opportunities; limited capacity of government agencies to support a quality system; fragmentation and lack of accountability among multiple service delivery agencies; and the current systems' inability to measure child outcomes and determine school readiness. Many of these findings reflected those outlined in the *Road Map for School Readiness* document produced by the USRSG (Universal School Readiness Stakeholders Group) in 2004.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of 2006, Bailey and Johnson had developed and delivered a final report to Mayor Elect Fenty. The first page of the report laid out three overarching recommendations for ensuring a high-quality comprehensive early childhood education initiative:

- Employ strong accountability measures to drive continuous quality improvements across all programs serving young children. Set an ambitious goal of school readiness, and measure both the quality and quantity of programs and child outcomes to ensure the goal is reached (this was in response to the Mayor's specific request for quantifiable early childhood education goals).
- Expand access to pre-Kindergarten to all three- and four-year-olds. School Readiness can only be achieved if children and their families have access to quality programs.
- Build an efficient, well-coordinated early childhood infrastructure capable of sustaining quality programs for all children, aged 0 to 5. Strong accountability measures will only be effective if agencies and programs have the resources necessary to improve quality.<sup>39</sup>

## **B. The New Mayor Takes on the Schools: Is this Good for Pre-K?**

By January 2007 and the inauguration of a new administration, the goals of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign seemed within reach. On January 3, the second day of his new administration, Mayor Fenty formally announced his intention to ensure that all three- and four-year-olds would have access to quality pre-K. He asked his newly appointed Deputy Mayor of Education Victor Renoso to begin working on a multi-year plan to that effect. In what seemed a coup for the Campaign, the Mayor indicated that the policy recommendations developed by the Early Childhood Education Work Group would become the basis for that plan. In another welcomed announcement, during his January 3 inauguration address, Council Chair Vincent Gray stated that pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds would be an important part of his education reform agenda. These announcements were great news for the Campaign. But for Pre-K for All DC, the fight for pre-K was far from over. On January 4, Mayor Fenty unveiled his education reform plan in more detail than he ever had during his Campaign. In speaking about the DC public schools, he said, “We have a crisis on our hands” and asked that “responsibility (for improving the schools) be placed squarely on my shoulders.”<sup>40</sup> In April, 2007, the DC Council passed the 2007 Public Education Reform Act, giving the Mayor the authority over the schools he had requested. While the Mayor said his plan would “ensure that all children start school ready to learn,” the stakes for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign had been raised. Now that Mayor Fenty was taking on the reform of the entire school system, would he have the political will and capacity to fulfill his pre-K promise and make quality pre-K for all a true priority of his administration? It would be up to the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and its supporters to ensure that pre-K was a key piece of the new school reform agenda.

## **C. Public Will in Action: Intensifying Grassroots Mobilization**

- *Expanding the Use of E-communications as a Mobilization Tool*

While working on the new Mayor’s ECE Transition Work Group, Pre-K for All DC was also anticipating the mobilization of work ahead. During this period, the Campaign worked with M+R Strategic Services to strengthen their Campaign’s E-communications system. Through observing other Pre-K Now campaigns around the country, the DC Campaign understood that mobilizing a large number of online supporters during a critical time in a political cycle could be very effective in producing action from policymakers. The Campaign also understood that the beginning of the new Fenty administration, when policy priorities were being decided, was one of those “critical” times. Shortly after the election, the Pre-K Campaign’s E-communications system had its first big test. In December 2006, using its growing E-communications list, the Campaign launched “Make Pre-K for All a Reality”—an E-campaign organizing DC residents to sign a petition asking Mayor Elect Fenty and Council Chair Elect Gray to keep their pre-election pledges to support high-quality universal pre-K. These officials received 550 petitions from residents on the Campaign’s list. While the petitions were tailored for various audiences, the text generally read:

*Dear Mayor Elect Fenty and Council Chair Elect Gray:*

*During the 2006 election, you pledged to provide high-quality pre-Kindergarten to all of the District's three- and four-year-olds. I am writing to let you know that I share your commitment to providing a learning foundation for every child as part of the solution to fixing our city's schools. I look forward to working with you to transform your Pre-K pledge into a reality.*

The objective of this first, large e-mail campaign was to demonstrate to the new administration that Pre-K for All was indeed a movement in which the public was engaged and that officials needed to pay attention to it. The e-mails and letters were not sent directly to Fenty and Gray, but were collected by the Campaign and delivered to their offices en masse.

Throughout the transition period before the new officials took office and into the new Fenty-Gray administration, the Campaign's E-communications system was used to keep citizens abreast of issues and activities related to the pre-K Campaign and to mobilize them to *take action* on behalf of universal, high-quality pre-K. Both Fenty and Gray received hundreds of "thank you" e-mails from the Campaign at the beginning of their terms when they both formally announced support for pre-K. One of the e-mail messages sent to Council Chair Vince Gray was titled, "Gray Walks the Walk on Pre-K." Sometimes the e-mails were more pointed. For example, although Fenty had pledged to support pre-K, in his first budget (FY2008), he proposed a reduction of \$1 million in early childhood education funding, including funding for the Early Childhood Education subsidy program and the model Pre-K Incentive Program, both mainstays of the existing pre-K system. Not only did Pre-K for All DC Campaign Co-Chair Carrie Thornhill and Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey testify at Council budget hearings against the cuts, Mayor Fenty and Chairman Gray received hundreds of e-mails from Campaign supporters stating that residents were "*joining the fight for quality pre-K for all kids.*" When the Mayor put much of the early childhood education funding back into the FY2008 budget, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign could take at least some of the credit. According to Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey, "We used our E-communications system to challenge a very popular Mayor. That took guts."

As the Campaign gained more momentum and field mobilization efforts expanded, the E-communications system and mobilization efforts regularly complemented each other (see Developing a Field Network below). Subscribers to the E-communications list received regular "Action Alerts" asking them to do whatever they could to support the Campaign, including showing up for meetings and rallying with their friends and families; and sending regular "Keep Your Promise" reminders and "thank you" messages to the Mayor and Council members. Campaign staff also instituted monthly e-updates to keep supporters abreast of Campaign activities. M+R Strategic Services prepared a monthly statistical report detailing which mailings were getting the most response, allowing the Campaign to refine its efforts. On the mobilization side (described in more detail below), staff or volunteers collected names whenever new contacts were made to help build the mailing list. According to Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey, "Sometimes there were glitches in this strategy—people without e-mail addresses or defunct e-mail addresses—which caused a bit of churning." Still, the E-communications strategy was beginning to pay off.

- *Strengthening and Adapting the Field Strategy*

After the 2006 election, the Campaign began to think more strategically about how to develop and deploy their field network. Both the new Mayor and Council president had formally stated their intention to support pre-K for all. Momentum seemed to be building and the Campaign felt it was time to show elected officials that the issue had significant public support. Given limited resources, how could they best expand the constituency and demonstrate public support for pre-K, an issue people really cared about? What was the best way to advance the Campaign's objectives? What specifically did they need a network to do? The field coordinators had started to build a group of volunteers that could be called on to support the Campaign, and this was helping to develop the Campaign's E-communications and offline mailing lists. Still, the Steering Committee felt that during the election season and the FY2008 budget fight, the Campaign had missed opportunities to more fully mobilize people. In response, the Campaign moved to strengthen the field network and began to rethink how the network should be recruited and deployed.

By early 2007, the Campaign had decided on four part-time coordinators. Each was responsible for two of the eight wards in DC, although the Campaign decided to primarily target Wards 1, 5, 7 and 8, where the majority of families with pre-K-aged children resided. Also, the NBCDI-SPARK DC Program was already working on school readiness with parents in Wards 1, 7 and 8, which meant potentially fertile ground for Campaign mobilization efforts.

While field coordinators did not necessarily need to have direct knowledge of early childhood education, it was helpful if they had strong knowledge of one or more wards in DC. Campaign Manager Bailey says that the types of people who worked as field coordinators included a mechanic, carpenter, college students and custodial grandmother, Pat McMillan, who eventually became Deputy Manager of the Campaign. These coordinators were primarily of African American and Latino background. Working under the direction of the Steering Committee, Bailey oversaw the field operation and an intern helped with record keeping and data entry.

As Bailey deepened his own knowledge of and relationships in DC, he began to more fully appreciate the role the existing grassroots organizations in the early childhood education infrastructure could play in mobilization efforts. These stakeholders—NBCDI-SPARK DC, USRSG, the 20 Pre-K Incentive Program Centers and others—already had constituencies. Many of these constituencies were parents and grandparents of pre-K-age children, who naturally supported high-quality pre-K. After consulting with the Steering Committee, Bailey moved to have the field coordinators work through these existing groups to develop volunteers and foot soldiers for pre-K. The Campaign decided this would be more efficient than developing a whole new set of coalitions. The coordinators certainly would not ignore other organizations that it made sense to cultivate, but why not use the infrastructure already in place?

Bailey describes this refocus as an evolution in his thinking and in the direction of Campaign. The coordinators began to target specific groups that could help them generate volunteers and advance the Campaign's objectives. Initially, these groups primarily included child development centers, such as Barbara Chambers Children's Center, Centro Nia (both in Ward 1); Bright

Horizons (Ward 2); Sunshine Early Learning Center (Ward 7); United Planning Organization; the Pre-K Incentive Parent Councils in the Pre-K Incentive Sites; and the City-Wide Washington Association of Child Care Centers. Steering Committee members helped identify other organizations that could generate volunteers and would make good Campaign partners.

The Campaign formalized their relationships with these partners by asking them specifically how they wanted to be involved: Would the organization be willing to forward Action Alerts to their constituents? Insert Campaign materials in organization newsletters? Recruit volunteers/host volunteer trainings for the Campaign? Bring people to Campaign events, rallies or hearings? Be listed as a supporter in Campaign literature? Spread the word about the Pre-K for All DC Campaign to other groups? If the organization agreed to provide volunteers and conduct trainings, these sessions were jointly organized with Campaign staff. If groups agreed to pass on information about the Campaign to others, they were provided with messages they could use that included key concepts about the need for universal pre-K, the work of the Campaign and the need for broad support.

The Campaign's perspective about the role of individual volunteers, particularly parents, also evolved. Much of this perspective was brought to the Campaign by Pat McMillan, the grandmother Bailey met at a Campaign event and eventually promoted to Deputy Campaign Manager. McMillan had deep ties in the community and a personal interest in the pre-K issue—her grandchildren. She also had ideas and beliefs about grassroots organizing that she put into practice during the Campaign. First, she was adamant that field coordinators take time to understand the culture of their assigned wards. She was also very practical about field work, “I believe you have to be realistic about what you can achieve when you're trying to organize in the community. The cause is important but it's not the center of the universe for people. You have to meet people where they are.” McMillan believes that everyone in the community has something to offer the Campaign, “Everyone learns and participates differently. Some people are auditory—they will hear something and can tell everybody; some people are visual—they see everything and can be helpful in telling you things about the community; others are tactile—they can pass out flyers, sign petitions or address and seal envelopes. Some will show their support by just coming to meetings. The trick is finding out what people can do and meeting them where they are.”

When gathering people for events or trainings, Bailey and McMillan worked as a “tag team.” As the person known in the community, McMillan “warmed up the room”; Bailey, the “outsider,” followed up with information about the Campaign. McMillan also had “principles” she instituted to help bring people, particularly parents, out to Campaign events and make the most of their presence, including:

- **Timing:** Events should take place not long after work; food and child care should be available.
- **Location:** Locations should be easily accessible and safe.
- **Communication:** Flyers for events should be clear, understandable (no spelling errors!) and provide directions; give people a “take away” to read or pass on.
- **Maintain a Connection:** Make sure to collect contact information to build the mailing lists and stay in touch.

McMillan also believes that in order to recruit people to a campaign, it is important to make them care about the pre-K issue on a personal level. She says that when talking to people about pre-K, she would leave them with this message, “Invest in them now or they’ll rob you later.”

During this period of the Campaign, the field organization began to solidify—although things did not always run smoothly. Volunteers came and went, as did field coordinators. And while it was difficult, the Campaign came to understand that in community mobilization and advocacy work, there is always going to be turnover. According to Bailey, “Some people are going to want to help out for their three-month summer; others will be around longer. I think one of the things you have to do in this work is consider how you can accommodate peoples’ busy lives. How do you unleash potential in a way that makes sense for the individual?”

By mid-2007, the Campaign had developed a network of about 200 volunteers that it could count on to *Take Action* for pre-K. There were approximately 1,100 names on the E-communications e-mail list and another 1,500 people that could be contacted through regular mail. Approximately 40 percent of the names on lists were parents and grandparents with a direct stake in the outcome of the Campaign.

- *Testing the New Field Strategy: Continuing the Partnership with Ethnic Radio*

Pre-K for All DC’s previous partnership with El Zol radio had resulted in significant visibility in the Latino community. Therefore, as the Campaign continued to combine its media strategy with grassroots mobilization, staff looked for other opportunities to partner with ethnic radio. In January, 2007 the Campaign formed a partnership with Radio One, a national media organization with several radio stations in DC that primarily target the African-American community. Radio One agreed to host two major Town Hall events for the Campaign—one at Town Hall Education and Recreation Center (THEARC) in Ward 8 in February, and the second at Turkey Thicket Community Center in Ward 5 in March. The Campaign picked up expenses for the events, but the partnership with Radio One was still lucrative. Contributions from Radio One included: 200 radio ads for the Campaign in the weeks leading up to each Town Hall; popular Radio-One personality, Joe Madison, known as “The Black Eagle,” who would host and run a panel discussion at each event; and appearances by Pre-K Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey on several of Radio One’s DC stations.

These Town Halls gave the Campaign an opportunity to test the new strategy of mobilizing through the existing pre-K network. For the first Town Hall at THEARC, the Campaign worked with some of the partners the field coordinators had begun to cultivate. Both Council Chair Gray and Councilman Kwame Brown, also a vocal proponent of pre-K for all, attended. Seventy-five to 100 people attended, and according to many of those in the audience, the discussion was excellent. However, the Campaign had expected to fill the 300-seat auditorium and was disappointed. Both Chairman Gray and Councilman Brown, meanwhile, were pleased. In remembering the event, Gray says, “I thought the turnout was great!” It was also at the THEARC Town Hall meeting that Gray gave the first public indication that he intended to introduce pre-K legislation in Fall 2007. Bailey states, “The Chairman surprised everyone with his announcement. But it was becoming clear that the Mayor was going to focus on K-12 reform and

probably would not have the time or political capital to work on a pre-K policy. If pre-K for all was going to happen it was probably going to have to be a legislative initiative.”

For the next Town Hall meeting in March, Campaign Manager Bailey was determined to have a bigger turnout. Radio One did the same sort of advertising and again, The Black Eagle was the host. However, for this event, Bailey dug deeper into the organized pre-K network and reached out to long-time established advocates and partners, in particular two of the most respected Child Care centers in the community: Sunshine Early Learning Academy, where then candidate Vincent Gray had first become a Pre-K Champion; and Barbara Chambers Children’s Center. Both had been consistent supporters of the Campaign, and both had a history of significant parental involvement and strong community ties. Also, for this meeting, Pat McMillan was fully on board and able to put some of her community mobilizing principals into action: Turkey Thicket was a much more accessible location, child care was available and food was provided. The Campaign’s new mobilization approach paid off—close to 400 people, many of them parents, came out. Many people involved in the Campaign still remember the Turkey Thicket Town Hall as a highlight. Council Chairman Gray and Ward 5 Councilman Harry Thomas, a long-time early childhood education supporter, participated in the discussion, and saw the outpouring of public support for pre-K—this was exactly what the Campaign wanted them to see. In fact, again Chairman Gray spoke at the event and stated that he would introduce pre-K legislation in the fall. Other key members of the community also came out to show their support, including Barbara Kamara, then Administrator of DHS Early Care and Education Administration and Dr. Cheryl Roberts, then Director of DCPS Office of School Readiness and Early Childhood Programs. Most important to the Campaign, however, was that they had worked through their partners in the existing pre-K network and had a big victory. This was a strategy the Campaign would continue to use in their grassroots mobilization efforts.

#### **D. Refining the Media and Messaging Strategy**

As the Campaign’s mobilization strategy evolved, so did the strategy for engaging the media—particularly newspapers. While coverage by *The Washington Post* continued and was definitely welcome, the Campaign decided to put more focus on getting exposure in community newspapers, such as *The Washington Informer*, the *Capitol Community Newspapers* (i.e., *DC North; East of the River*); and the *Current Newspapers*. *The Washington Informer*, which primarily serves the African-American Community, became a particularly valuable partner to the Campaign. With a circulation of more than 50,000 readers, some in the African-American community refer to the *Informer* as *The Black Dispatch*.

This focus on community newspapers supported the Campaign’s grassroots mobilization efforts and fostered closer ties to the community. According to Jesse Bailey, “I believe people in this town pay attention to the national news and then to their community newspaper because it tells them what’s happening in their own neighborhoods.” To illustrate this strategy, Bailey was quoted in the March 2007 edition of the community newspaper, *DC North*. In an article titled, “The Movement for Quality Early Childhood Education in DC,” Bailey talked about the need to improve the quality of pre-K instruction in DC, particularly in community-based programs, and said of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, “Our goal is have every early childhood program in DC accredited by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC).”

Also, as the number of people speaking for the Campaign grew (Steering Committee members, Campaign staff, community partners and volunteers), there was a growing need for consistency in the messages being delivered about Pre-K for All DC and its work. In response to this issue, the Campaign began to use a strategy called The Message Box. According to Bailey, the Message Box concept was developed by James Carville while working on Bill Clinton’s 1992 Campaign. This messaging strategy was intended to provide spokespeople with the main messages of a campaign, allowing them to speak clearly and succinctly to the media and other important audiences. The Message Box also ensures that key spokespeople are consistent in how they speak about a campaign’s issues—they can simply read from the Message Box. Bailey worked on Message Box statements for Campaign spokespeople. The messages included:

- **DC Will Benefit When All Children Receive a Quality Pre-K Education**  
*Children who receive a strong pre-K start are less likely to be referred to special education or held back a grade. With the high cost of special ed, pre-K for all translates into a big cost savings to the school system in the long run.*
- **DC Faces Challenges in Ensuring a Strong Start for Our Children**  
*While most three- and four-year-olds are in some form of early care, more than 2,000 children lack access. Quality programs are scarce—most current programs do not meet national quality standards.*
- **Pre-K for All DC Seeks to Ensure All Children Enter School Ready to Learn and Succeed in Later Years**  
*By providing access to quality pre-Kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds, the District of Columbia can accomplish this mission.*
- **If You Want Every Child to Receive a Strong Start in Life, then Pre-K for All DC Has Some Ways You Can Make It Happen**  
*Sign up to receive news and opportunities to take action online.  
Spread the word by telling your friends and neighbors.  
Respond to Action Alerts. Pre-K for All DC will notify you of ways to make a difference.  
Attend future events and bring your friends.*

## **E. Solidifying Grass Tops Support**

As the Pre-K for All DC Campaign moved to show policymakers it had strength among the grassroots, it was just as important to show a growing alliance with DC’s business and civic leaders. For assistance the Campaign reached out to the Committee for Economic Development (CED), a key business collaborative with an interest in education issues, to help host a second major gathering of business and civic leaders. A few weeks following the 2006 election, CED helped to organize a luncheon, titled “The Economic Promise of Investing in Pre-Kindergarten.” More than 150 local business and civic leaders attended. Mike Harreld of PNC Bank of Greater Washington, DC and an early Pre-K Champion, was the keynote speaker and made business arguments in favor of quality early education. Other speakers included Terry Golden and Carrie Thornhill, Co-Chairs of the Campaign; Carol Brunson Day, President of NBCDI where the Campaign was housed; and leaders from the DC Chamber of Commerce and the DC Fiscal

Policy Institute. At this gathering, CED released their publication, *Financing Public Pre-School Programs: Current Practices and Future Possibilities*, which argued the “broad economic and social benefits to society from high-quality early learning experiences.” Several business people and organizations announced their support for the Campaign that day and PNC became a formal funder of Pre-K for All DC.

On June 18, 2007, Pre-K for All DC joined the District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce and the Freddie Mac Foundation in hosting a third major event for business and civic leaders. Again, the Campaign used the prestige of the National Press Club to release a study that showed the economic value of pre-K for the DC region. The study, *Ensuring A Vibrant City: The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in the District of Columbia*, was commissioned by the University of the District of Columbia’s Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy, CityBridge Foundation, and the DC Department of Human Services Early Care and Education Administration.

At this event, authors Dr. Saskia Trail and Brentt Brown presented the study’s main findings. According to the report, which was disseminated at the Press Club event, every year, the Early Care and Education (ECE) industry generates \$221 million in gross receipts in DC, exceeding those of computer programming services, nursing care facilities and advertising. Further, the report states that the ECE industry supports more than 6,300 full-time equivalent jobs in DC—five times more than investment banking. At the Press Club, the authors repeated the report’s main recommendations to policymakers: *increase public and private investment in the ECE industry and provide quality pre-Kindergarten for all three- and four- year- olds in the District of Columbia.*<sup>41</sup>

Like the cost-benefit analysis that initiated the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, the release of *Ensuring A Vibrant City* at the National Press Club was also considered a pivotal moment in the push for universal pre-K in DC. Barbara Lang, President of the DC Chamber of Commerce, called for action, stating, “Having an educated workforce is of particular interest to DC business owners.” Many other important voices made the same call, including the Pre-K for All DC Campaign co-chairs. Mayor Fenty again pledged his support for expanding and improving pre-K programs. Chairman Gray again promised to introduce pre-K legislation in the fall, stating, “It is not only a good thing to do for people, it makes economic sense.” His announcement was printed in the next day’s *Washington Post*.

Clearly, DC Council Chair Vincent Gray was going to be the main *champion* of the Pre-K for All movement in DC. Since his election in November 2006, Gray had worked closely with the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. He had chosen one of the Campaign’s community Town Hall meetings to make the first public announcement that he would sponsor pre-K legislation.

Gray chose another event, co-hosted by the Campaign at the National Press Club, to make the same announcement to a largely business sector audience. Obviously, Gray respected the Campaign’s work. In speaking about Pre-K for All DC Gray says, “They are a good example of how, if you get the right people together, if you have a strong advocacy group, which Pre-K for All DC is, you can make some things happen.” That’s exactly what Gray had in mind—working with Pre-K for All DC to make something happen. In July 2007, Gray asked the Campaign to

work with him to develop pre-K for all legislation for introduction to the Council in November 2007. There had been previous attempts in the DC Council to introduce universal pre-K legislation, but none had the broad based support that was building with the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and had not been successful.<sup>42</sup> Both Gray and Campaign leaders seemed to understand that they had a real opportunity this time. The Campaign moved ahead and Pre-K for All legislation became the policy goal. As the fiscal agent and home for the Campaign, NBCDI sought an exemption from the IRS, so that Pre-K for All DC could officially lobby for the legislation.

## VII. The Campaign Enters a Critical Phase (July 2007 to December 2007)

*Early childhood education does not cost—it pays. This is the message that must resonate with all DC residents.*

Metropolitan Group, Social Marketing Consultants

*Well-researched evidence, strategic communications and mobilization tools.* With Summer 2007, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign would again look to their theory of change for energy and direction—this time, to meet their biggest and most critical challenge. The Campaign now needed to work with Chairman Gray to develop and introduce into the DC Council pre-K legislation that would provide high-quality learning experiences for all of DC’s three- and four-year-olds. At the same time, the Campaign had to demonstrate a strong, widespread base of public support not just for the issue of universal pre-K but now for a specific piece of legislation. This would mean intensifying both their *inside* and *outside* game. The leadership of the Campaign Steering Committee would be paramount.

### A. Drafting a Legislative Framework

Vincent Gray says that the first six months of his tenure as DC Chair (January-June, 2007) were spent helping Mayor Fenty get his school reform agenda off the ground. But he says, “In July 2007, I brought my staff together with the Pre-K for All folks and said, okay, let’s start working on a bill we think we can do.”

As a first step, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign Steering Committee formed a legislative policy sub-committee to begin drafting a legislative framework for discussion with Chairman Gray. In a key move, Pre-K for All DC hired an attorney who had spent 12 years as general counsel to the DC Council to help with the drafting of this legislation. Pre-K for All DC Co-Chair Carrie Thornhill says, “We hired the most knowledgeable person we could find to help us draft the pre-K legislation. She spoke the language and knew the legislative process and it really made all the difference.” By July 15, the committee had produced a draft, titled, *Conceptual Framework for Universal Pre-Kindergarten Legislation*.

The framework paper opened with the following statement: *The Education Reform Act of 2007 generated broad-based public discussion regarding the importance and urgency of K-12 educational reform. In view of the fact that only ten percent of the District’s 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored at the proficient level in math on a recent National Association of Educational Progress (NAPE) test, it is time to make a commitment to prepare our children for school before the deficit develops. It is time to invest in high quality pre-Kindergarten programs for all of the Districts three- and four-year-olds.*

The legislative sub-committee had a great deal of information to draw on in developing the framework: the early work of the USRSG in the *Road Map to Universal School Readiness*; recommendations made by the Transition Work Group on Early Childhood Education; research

and best practices from other pre-K legislative initiatives around the country (i.e., Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma); the experience of the Pre-K Incentive Program that the Council had authorized in 2004; and the ideas of the Steering Committee themselves, most of whom had been dedicated to the pre-K cause for decades.

There was general agreement in the DC early childhood education community that the purpose of any new pre-K legislation should be to significantly improve the quality of the pre-K education system across all delivery sectors (public schools, charter schools, community-based programs) and expand the pre-K system to provide universal pre-K. Therefore, the framework paper developed by the Campaign legislative committee addressed three additional areas:

- **Key programmatic results the legislation should achieve:** Children ready for success in school; access to publicly funded, high-quality pre-Kindergarten programs for all approximately 2,000 underserved three- and four-year-olds; opportunity for parental engagement in child’s development.
- **Issues the legislation should consider:** Financing, administration and delivery of the new system; accommodation for special target groups (i.e., children with disabilities); expanding services and improving facilities; teacher and program quality improvements; coordination/provision of comprehensive social services; and evaluation and accountability systems.
- **Cost the legislation should cover:** Direct services; program and teacher quality improvement and infrastructure development; five years of activity.<sup>43</sup>

This framework paper was prepared for the first meeting the legislative committee would have with Chairman Gray regarding the pre-K legislation. The meeting was held on July 19, 2007 and the paper was labeled *for discussion purposes only*. The paper was an initial attempt to frame the issues any pre-K legislation would need to address. The committee would use the framework and Gray’s initial feedback to begin drafting what would eventually be introduced in Council as the *Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007*. This was an important start, but during the next several months there would be details to flesh out and debate, several drafts of legislation to produce, and constituencies to be educated and courted.

## **B. A Strategic Plan for Success: Marketing Universal Pre-K and the Pre-K for All Legislation**

Early in the Campaign, Pre-K for All DC had established a unique identity and approach for promoting universal pre-K. However, with the Campaign now working with Chairman Gray on pre-K legislation, the months between July and November were critical. While the Pre-K for All DC Campaign had been in operation for more than a year, this was the last opportunity to solidify support for universal pre-K—from the public as well as policymakers. The level and effectiveness of Campaign activity needed to increase dramatically. The Pre-K for All DC Steering Committee determined that the Campaign needed additional help.

In August 2007, Pre-K for All DC hired Metropolitan Group (Met Group), a social marketing and communications company with offices in Washington, DC. Met Group’s charge was to build

on Pre-K for All DC’s experience, established brand, identity guidelines and relationships, to help hone and target the Campaign’s message about the benefits of universal pre-K and the importance of the upcoming legislation.

Working together, Met Group and the Pre-K for All DC Steering Committee and staff laid out a plan that would help the Campaign:

- **Identify audiences crucial to the Campaign’s success:** These included political decision-makers whose support of universal pre-K was critical for the legislation to pass; policy shapers/key leaders who could influence the policymakers; pre-K advocates willing to take action and who held credibility with policymakers; community partners that could spread the word and mobilize the grassroots; and grassroots groups, such as high-engaged families, individuals and informal groups, willing to volunteer directly for the Campaign.
- **Develop messages that communicate the need for and benefits of quality pre-K for all, the work of the Campaign, and a request for support:** The Campaign had already developed a Message Box to help spokespeople deliver clear, consistent messages. However, the new plan called for messages that would also emphasize the values and interests of various constituencies—providing people with compelling reasons to support universal pre-K. The Campaign’s new messages would draw from the following statements:
  - **A Problem Statement:** *We all know that the DC education system has a history of failing our children. Good changes are now being made. Part of these changes must include high-quality pre-K for all three- and four-year-old children in the District.*
  - **Urgency Message** (Shows why this needs attention now): *High-quality pre-K education for all children must be a key component of the plan to close our city’s education gap and support a strong K-12 system.*
  - **About Pre-K for All DC Statement:** *Pre-K for All DC is advocating to bring high-quality pre-K for all children, so they can get a good start in school and in life.*
  - **Action Statement:** *Support a high-quality pre-K education as part of a strong DC education system.*

Messages to engage audiences with interests and values in specific areas included:

- **Economic Interests:** *The economic vitality of the city is dependent on a highly skilled workforce. Quality pre-K for all children in the District gives them a strong start in school and in life, and will contribute to their employability in the future.*
- **Financing Interests:** *Early childhood education does not cost—it pays. The savings of pre-K education far outweigh the costs.*
- **Health:** *Many DC children lack access to health care. Quality pre-K for all students would provide better access to health screenings, immunizations and*

*early detection/intervention of developmental needs, including mental health issues.*

- **Crime:** *Children who attend high-quality pre-K programs are better prepared to succeed in school, will have many more opportunities in life and are less likely to become involved in crime.*

One specific message developed by Met Group was a very simple but powerful tag line that communicated the most important reason to support universal pre-K—*Invest in Our Children’s Future*. This message was printed on all major materials developed for this phase of the Campaign.

- **Complete a solid draft of the legislation, and develop strategies and tactics that promote the need for pre-K legislation:** Met Group helped Pre-K for All DC produce materials using new values/interests messaging. The purpose of the materials was to promote the Campaign and pre-K legislation; and educate and garner support for the legislation among key audiences, including legislative and executive branch policymakers. The plan also called for the Campaign to use media to promote the legislation and to augment the E-communications system for this new phase of mobilization.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout Summer and Fall 2007, the Campaign would use this new plan to guide activities. Jesse Bailey says, “This was a time when everything was clicking—everyone was energized and we felt we would be successful.”

### **C. Educating, Engaging and Mobilizing the Grassroots**

Met Group had identified grassroots organizations, other advocates and families as groups necessary to the Campaign’s ultimate success. Fortunately, Pre-K for All DC had already spent considerable time developing and refining grassroots mobilization and communication strategies. There were field coordinators in place to organize mobilization efforts; community partners that would spread the word and turn out constituencies for Campaign events; hundreds of names on the E-communications and regular mail lists; and scores of volunteers who would respond to the Campaign when called. Now there would be materials with clearer, more direct messaging designed to educate the public about universal pre-K and the upcoming legislation, and mobilize them to action.

Earlier, Pre-K for All DC had successfully used mass mailings from constituents to press the newly elected Mayor and Council Chair to *keep their promises* regarding universal pre-K. Now, during the time leading up to the introduction of pre-K legislation, the Campaign saw another opportunity for mass grassroots action.

- *Taking Action by Mass Mailing*

In August 2007, the Campaign developed a direct mail, four-page brochure with the headline, *CITY LEADERS EMBRACE PRE-K FOR ALL CHILDREN*. It had the same attractive look of all

of the earlier materials, but was strategically designed to clearly communicate many of the Campaign's newly refined messages:

- *The Mayor and Council Chair pledged to support universal pre-K;*
- *There is a critical need for high-quality universal pre-K in DC;*
- *Research shows that high-quality pre-K pays (in economic, educational and social benefits) more than it costs;*
- *Quality pre-K programs are a building block for strengthening school reform in the DCPS;*
- *Take Action! Urge City Leaders to Make Pre-K for All DC Children a Reality.*

Steering Committee member, Maurice Sykes, still refers to this brochure as the Campaign's "manifesto." This mailing went by regular mail to more than 130,000 residents in the Campaign's target Wards—1, 5, 7 and 8. In a test of the Campaign's focus on community newspapers, the brochure was also included as an insert in *The Washington Informer*. The purpose of the brochure was to educate people about the stakes involved in the pre-K Campaign and to encourage them to **TAKE ACTION**. In bold letters, the brochure told readers just what they could do: ***Write or call the Mayor and your Council member and tell them to make pre-K a part of the upcoming legislative and budgetary agenda.*** Readers were also reminded about other action they could take to support the Pre-K for All DC Campaign: ***Sign up to receive Action Alerts and Email updates. Tell a Friend about the Campaign or Volunteer.***

About the mailing, Jesse Bailey says, "People began e-mailing and responding right away. I know, because some people copied me on their e-mails to the Mayor and Council. I don't know exactly how many people responded to the mailing, but there was lot of buzz about it; it generated a lot of response."

Throughout the Fall 2007, the Campaign also put their E-communications system and other mailing capacities to good use. The "manifesto" was followed by a series of e-mailed Take Action Alerts, which used consistent messaging—continually encouraging people to tell their elected officials to support universal pre-K. These alerts also kept people informed about Campaign activities and about how they could volunteer. To use these mailings to the best affect, the Campaign worked hand in hand with neighborhood partner organizations. Campaign staff kept the partner organizations informed of when Take Action alerts were e-mailed; organizations could then follow up with their constituents, encouraging them to get and stay involved. Some partner organizations sent out the Action Alerts themselves and helped the Campaign get access to neighborhood list serves that could also be used to distribute mailings.

- *On-the-Ground Mobilization Activities*

The Met Group plan reinforced the Campaign's already established grassroots mobilization strategy of working through community partners to help supply volunteers and generate turnout for activities. During this critical stage of the Campaign, staff were careful to hold periodic meetings with their community partners to keep them abreast of Campaign activities and the developing pre-K legislation.

Deputy Campaign Manager Pat McMillan continued to play a lead role in grassroots mobilization activities, using her knowledge of the community, as well as her mobilization philosophy. Wards 1, 5, 7 and 8 continued to be the main targets for mobilization, but field staff connected with organizations and activities wherever a payoff seemed likely. Child Development Centers remained key resources, but additional “mobilizers,” such as community-based advocacy organizations and smaller, neighborhood-based, parent-led groups also became important partners. The Campaign especially liked to recruit “highly engaged” parents—parents who were very involved with their children; who wanted a better educational system for them and were willing to spend a little of their time working for it. Some of these parents had been trained in early education advocacy by the NBCDI-SPARK DC initiative and were eager to participate.

Mobilization and outreach opportunities were listed on a monthly activities calendar that the deputy Campaign Manager and field coordinators used to deploy volunteers. Every activity was seen as a chance for volunteers to educate the public by talking with others about universal pre-K and passing out Campaign literature. One piece of Campaign literature the volunteers distributed was an easy to read postcard that explained what the pre-K legislation would do and what a quality pre-K program should look like.

In August 2007, the field coordinators and Campaign volunteers worked with the non-profit group GCH Endowment to hold “Play Block Parties” in Wards 7 and 8 to bring attention to the need for improved early childhood education. The parties were held on blocks where actual 22-inch, colorfully painted blocks created by a local DC artist were displayed. Each block was inscribed with the sayings, “Every Child is a National Treasure” and “Quality Pre-School Matters.” Families came out to the parties for fun and to listen to pre-K advocates talk about the importance of pre-K education and the upcoming legislation.

Other mobilization activities involved canvassing neighborhoods, or holding signs supporting pre-K on corners or in shopping centers. The exact canvassing strategy depended on the neighborhood and how the volunteers wanted to do their work.

Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey says that the communication and mobilization strategies used during this period were as much about encouraging the grassroots to “TAKE ACTION” as they were about building the public’s knowledge about pre-K and the need for universal pre-K legislation, “We used multiple venues to get our messages out—people got the message in their mail, and their newspaper, and from our volunteers in their neighborhoods. When people heard Council members or the Mayor talk about pre-K we wanted people to know what pre-K is.”

Bailey believes volunteers were particularly critical to the Campaign during this period—even those who only did “low-level stuff” like show up at meetings or hand out literature on street corners. He acknowledges that sometimes there were more people who wanted to “take action” than the Campaign could handle. Bailey says, “I think we were successful in doing what we set out to do, but one thing that disappoints me is that we didn’t have the internal capacity to take advantage, as much as we could have, of the groundswell that was building for pre-K. If I were doing this again I’d take the advice Tip O’Neill gives in his book, *All Politics is Local*. O’Neill says, even if you don’t have something for people to do when they show up, give them

something to do. Let them lick envelopes, stuff envelopes, even if you end up throwing the envelopes away. Give them something to do. I don't think we did enough of that.”

#### **D. Continuing to Educate the Policy Shapers (Grass Tops)**

From the beginning of the Campaign, particularly after releasing the cost-benefit study in June 2006, Pre-K for All DC had the support of many “influentials” in DC. Now, with the introduction of legislation so near, it was time to make sure these people and groups really understood the benefits of pre-K and why they should support legislation to expand access and improve quality. In the process of working with Met Group, the Campaign had developed a list of people and groups who had significant influence on the policymakers who would be making decisions about universal pre-K. Near the top was a group the Campaign had been courting all along—the business/civic community. As he had from the start, Co-Chair Terry Golden continued to play an important role with this group during this phase of the Campaign, by calling on members of the business community, providing them with information and asking them to support the upcoming pre-K legislation. Among the specific groups with whom Golden met were the DC Chamber of Commerce and the Federal City Council. Since both of these groups have significant influence in DC, their support was essential.

In addition to his own long experience in early childhood education, and knowledge of the issues and relationships in the business community, Golden had at his disposal specific information from the two economic studies the Campaign had commissioned: *Ensuring a Vibrant City: The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in the District of Columbia*, and *Investing in DC's Economic Vitality Through Pre-K for All* (cost-benefit study). The key message of both studies was the message Golden delivered to the business community: *universal pre-K will be a boon for the DC economy.*

#### **E. Gaining the Support of Policymakers**

Throughout Summer 2007, the Campaign's legislative sub-committee had been meeting with Chairman Gray to review progress on the developing legislation. By Fall 2007, the Campaign was ready to concentrate its attention on key policymakers who had the power to facilitate or hinder the legislation's passage. The Campaign put a multi-pronged strategy into place to educate policymakers about the importance of the pre-K legislation and the benefits of universal pre-K. The Campaign's E-communication's system was once again put into service. On October 12, 2007, the Campaign launched another Take Action Alert, asking people on their e-mail list to send DC Council members a *Dear Decision Maker* letter urging them to “*make pre-K legislation a priority.*”

Pre-K for All DC also continued its media strategy. *The Washington Informer* had become a reliable partner in the fight for universal pre-K, regularly carrying information about the Campaign and the upcoming legislation. In October 2007, *The Washington Informer* printed a commentary by Pre-K for All DC Campaign Co-Chairs Terry Golden and Carrie Thornhill. The article was titled, “It's Time to Invest in Our Children's Future,” a message the Campaign had been driving home for several months. At the end of the piece, Thornhill and Golden asked all constituency groups—parents, business and community leaders, funders, and early care and education advocates—to encourage their elected officials to make pre-K a priority.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, throughout September and October, in addition to this ongoing “outside” mobilization, the Campaign stepped up its “inside” work with Chairman Gray, both by continuing to work on the legislation but also pressing policymakers for their support. As part of the social marketing work with Met Group, the Campaign had produced one-page policy briefs about the educational and economic benefits of high-quality, universal pre-K. One brief focused exclusively on the vital role the early care and education industry played in the DC economy. In mid-September, these materials were delivered to key policymakers in both the Executive and Legislative Branches to help educate them about the issues. Steering Committee members held follow-up meetings with these policymakers in order to answer any questions about universal pre-K and garner support for the legislation. According to Co-Chair Carrie Thornhill, the Campaign wanted very much to have Mayor Fenty join Council Chair Gray in supporting universal pre-K legislation—particularly since the Mayor had indicated his support for this issue during his election campaign. However, according to Thornhill and other members of the Steering Committee, the Mayor indicated that since the passage of the education reform legislation granted him authority over the DC public schools, he needed to focus all his attention on K-12. Thornhill, Carol Brunson Day and other Steering Committee members also met with Executive Branch officials Deputy Mayor for Education Reinoso, State Superintendent of Education Deborah Gist, and then newly appointed schools’ Chancellor Michelle Rhee. According to the Steering Committee members, these officials all echoed the Mayor’s message.

DC Council Chairman Gray took the lead in arranging meetings between Campaign Steering Committee members and other members of the DC Council. All of these Council members had become “Pre-K Champions” during the 2006 election season, but the purpose of these meetings was to nail down their support for the upcoming legislation. In October 2007, Chairman Gray arranged for the Campaign Steering Committee to provide a pre-K briefing for the Council members as a group. Every member of Council was present or represented. Campaign Co-Chair Thornhill says of the meeting, “It was important that we got them all in a room and answered all the questions they had, to make sure they were clear on who we were and what we were trying to do. This was a critical piece because there were individual members with specific things they wanted to achieve. In most instances, we were able to accommodate them in the legislation, but there were a couple of ones we didn’t go for. In most cases, we were able to get them to understand why it was not a good idea.”

Thornhill remembers discussions during the group briefing with one Council person in particular, “I remember this Council person who was sitting across from me in the meeting. She had little knowledge of the current system and she was advocating for expansion only in the schools. Hers was probably the strongest held view at that particular group session that was contrary to what we were trying to achieve. We were able to bring her on board during that session and subsequent sessions by explaining the value of a diverse pre-K delivery system---that it is not inconsistent, but is in fact consistent with the education reform that she, the Mayor and all the Council members were trying to advance.”

In fact, getting all of the Council members to support the pre-K legislation was a process. Pre-K for All DC Steering Committee members had several one-on-one briefings with members to answer their questions individually. Chairman Gray continued to play a major role. He described

his role this way, “I really was deeply involved. This was a labor of love for me, so I spent a lot of one-on-one time with the members to try to make sure they understood the value and importance of pre-K, that it wasn’t a secondary issue to K through 12, which, of course, got a lot of attention because the Mayor had proposed that we approve the takeover of schools. But if we did pre-K well, it would give us the ability to enhance K through 12 and do it right. So, I spent a lot of one-on-one time with the members, helping them to understand the legislation and its importance. What was important to me was to try to get as many Council members as possible to co-introduce the legislation with me, because that means you have folks on board as you move into this.”

On November, 15, 2007, *The Washington Informer* ran a front-page article stating that Chairman Gray would propose universal pre-K legislation on November 20, 2007. The article quoted parents, pre-K providers and members of the Pre-K for All DC staff and Steering Committee about the benefits of high-quality pre-K and the importance of the legislation.<sup>46</sup>

#### **F. The Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007”/Bill 17-0537 is Introduced**

The Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007, Bill 17-0537 was actually introduced in the DC Council’s Committee of the Whole on December 11, 2007. Chairman Gray introduced the Bill with 11 other Council members. The 12<sup>th</sup> member of Council signed on as a co-sponsor of the legislation. A summary of the Bill in Section 103 states the key purposes and provisions of the Act:

- Establish a voluntary, high-quality pre-K program as part of the education continuum of the DC’s pre-K to 12 education system to give DC families the option to access high-quality pre-K programs in community-based and school settings. The Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) would be transferred from the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), which would have programmatic, fiscal and administrative oversight of the Pre-K for All DC program. (This move of pre-K programming from DHS to OSSE followed a national trend as states began to view pre-K as education rather than a social service.)
- Provide an administrative infrastructure able to support a high-quality Pre-K for All DC system to include all publicly funded community-based organizations (CBOs), and Public School and Public Charter School programs providing pre-K care for three- and four-year-old children.
- Expand the number of DC Public School, DC Public Charter School, and community-based classrooms available to DC’s approximately 2,000 un-served three- and four-year-olds that meet quality national standards by making available 125 new high-quality classrooms by 2014.
- Improve the number of existing DC Public, Charter and community-based classrooms serving three- and four-year-olds by having an additional 125 classrooms meet national standards by 2014.

- Provide parents and guardians with quality pre-K programs that will actively engage them as partners in promoting children’s social, emotional, cognitive and academic development toward school readiness standards, while supporting children and families toward self-sufficiency.
- Provide a workforce development system to enhance the teaching and administrative staffs’ knowledge and skills necessary to support children’s school success.
- Encourage the alignment of standards, curriculum and teaching practices between pre-K for all DC classrooms and grades K-3 in the DC Public Schools.

The Act also designated that 10 percent of all Pre-K for All DC slots be reserved for children with disabilities, and 5 percent of annual improvement dollars funded by the Act to be set aside to expand and improve the quality of infant and toddler programs.<sup>47</sup> This was in response to early childhood education advocates who felt the legislation should not just cover three- and four-year-olds, but infants and toddlers also.

The introduction of the Pre-K for All DC Enhancement Act of 2007 into the DC Council Committee of the Whole was a significant accomplishment for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and its supporters across DC. However, there were still steps to go before the Bill could become law. A notice of *intent to act* on the Bill was published in the DC Register on December 28, 2007. A public hearing was scheduled for January 3, 2008.

## VIII. Public Knowledge + Action = Victory!

*This may be the most important thing I ever do.*

Vincent Gray, Chair, DC Council

*There were naysayers who felt there was no way we could get this legislation approved... Not only did we get what we wanted approved, we got more.*

Carrie Thornhill, Co-Chair, Pre-K for All DC

### A. The Public Hearing

On January 3, 2008, there was a 10-hour public hearing in the DC Council on Bill 17-0537, Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007. Sixty people testified about the legislation, including Carrie Thornhill, Pre-K for All DC Co-Chair; Dan Tangherlini, City Administrator (representing The Executive Branch); members of the business and advocacy communities whose support Pre-K for All DC had cultivated throughout the Campaign; national experts who testified about the impact and cost/benefits of quality pre-K, the importance of early intervention, and best practices in other states; parents who supported quality pre-K for all; early childhood education providers, including those who had mobilized parents throughout the Campaign; representatives from higher education and other interested parties. (A partial list of those who testified at the hearing is included in Appendix C.) In addition, several members of the business community submitted letters in support of a high-quality pre-K initiative in DC.<sup>48</sup>

The Pre-K for All DC Campaign organized the public hearing. Among the parents the Campaign recruited to testify were some whose children had been fortunate enough to attend the high-quality prototype Pre-K Incentive program and others who previously had difficulty finding quality pre-K. The Campaign helped prepare the parents for their testimony by telling them when to arrive at the hearing (30 minutes before their assigned time); the amount of time they had to speak (three minutes), and how to introduce themselves (name, occupation, ward of residence, name/age of child and why they were testifying). The Campaign also gave parents examples of what they might talk about in their testimony. For example, parents in the Pre-K Incentive Program were encouraged to talk about how their children grew in the program and signs the children were learning. Parents who had trouble finding quality pre-K for their children were asked to talk about what their search for pre-K was like—how many centers they had to go to and if they had ever found a high-quality center.<sup>49</sup>

Chairman Gray says “the public hearing was one of the best” he had ever attended, “We had people not only from the District of Columbia who were involved in early childhood education but also from other parts of the country. Many of them brought experiences from other jurisdictions to help us with the legislation. They were pretty universal in believing this was an important investment to make. This hearing added a lot to the public record about why this pre-K legislation is important.”

No one gave testimony that was totally against Bill 17-0537. In fact, as *The Washington Post* reported in an editorial on the day after the hearing (January 4, 2008), there was a “wave of popular support surrounding a measure that would enroll an additional (approximately) 2,000 children in 125 new classrooms over the next six years.” However, issues raised during the public hearing, as well as by other stakeholders who made their voices heard, indicated that a number of provisions in the Bill were still subjects of debate. According to the same *Washington Post* editorial, “No doubt Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray, who is leading the reform effort, realizes the Bill is a starting point.”

## **B. Responding to Constituents’ Concerns**

After the public hearing, the DC Council’s Committee of the Whole continued to receive and discuss feedback about the new pre-K Bill. The Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007/Bill 17-0537 was proposing an entirely new system for the provision of early childhood education in DC. The Bill coordinated Public School, Public Charter School and publicly funded CBO programs under a single government agency; and aimed to significantly raise the quality of pre-K education across all three sectors and make high-quality pre-K universally available to three- and four-year-olds. As mentioned above, there was great agreement about the legislation’s ultimate goals. However, with such sweeping changes in the structure and delivery of pre-K in DC there were bound to be supporters and opponents of aspects of the Bill. For two months, the Pre-K for All DC legislative sub-committee worked with Chairman Gray and the Committee of the Whole to respond to constituents’ concerns and shape a final Bill. Some of the concerns included:

- **A Voluntary Program?** As introduced, the 2007 Bill created a “voluntary” pre-K program, meaning the Bill only provided funds to pre-K programs that voluntarily agreed to improve the quality of their services according to the standards outlined in the legislation. Several Council members questioned voting for legislation that did not mandate high-quality standards that all programs had to adopt—particularly since the goal of the legislation was to improve the quality of pre-K across DC. *The Bill was revised to require OSSE to develop and publish high-quality standards that all programs within the pre-K system would have to achieve by 2014. As part of the revised legislation, a fund was established to provide pre-K programs with grants as necessary to help them meet high-quality standards.*
- **Do Credentials Make Quality Teachers?** The issue of teacher qualifications was probably the most controversial of any addressed by the pre-K legislation. The 2007 Bill specified the specific type of academic qualifications pre-K teachers and assistant teachers needed to have or obtain. The legislation also proposed that teachers in CBO programs not have to possess or obtain the same level credentials as teachers in Public and Public Charter Schools. At the public hearing, several witnesses, as well as representatives from the executive office, testified that the criteria for qualified teachers should be uniform across all pre-K education programs and that such qualifications should be determined by OSSE. At the same time, several providers testified against requiring all pre-K lead teachers to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree and requiring all assistant teachers to obtain at least an Associate’s Degree. These providers argued that degrees

did not necessarily equal quality; and that such a requirement would put a strain on many pre-K programs. The Committee, and some Council members in particular, were sympathetic to these arguments. However, ultimately determined that DC would follow trends in Head Start and the national universal pre-K movement generally, where increasingly, teachers were being required to obtain Bachelor's and Associate's Degrees within a given time frame. *The Bill was revised to require all teachers and assistant teachers to meet the academic and degree requirements outlined by and within a time frame specified by OSSE. Taking into consideration the likely hardship and cost of this requirement, particularly for CBO programs and teaching staff, the committee established a grant program designed to assist pre-K teachers and assistant teachers, as necessary, in earning advanced credentials.*

- **Program Expansion:** A number of issues were raised about the Bill's plans for program expansion. Bill 17-0537 provided for improving the quality of 25 programs that voluntarily agreed to upgrade to high-quality standards. The Bill also provided for expansion at the rate of 25 new high-quality programs per year. Many people who testified before the committee or provided comments on the legislation were concerned that this level of expansion would spread resources thin and sacrifice improvements in quality. In investigating this issue, the committee spoke with pre-K providers and found that many of them had spaces for more children already available in their programs, but the exact number of available spaces was unknown. In addition, several sources, including the Executive Branch, had questioned the assumption in the legislation that the number of un-served children of pre-K age in DC, and that needed to be accommodated by new programming, was approximately 2,000. After additional consideration, the committee determined that this number was probably "fluid" and could not be precisely determined. *The Bill was amended to require OSSE to conduct an annual capacity audit to determine the capacity and availability of pre-K slots in existing programs. OSSE would also be required to develop a five-year expansion plan to ensure that a minimum of 15 percent of the un-served children were enrolled in pre-K every year until all children were served.*
- **The Role of CBOs versus the Role of Public Schools:** Another expansion issue concerned the provision in the Bill that 50 percent of all new pre-K programs be operated by CBOs. Some Council members were concerned that this provision restricted the growth of traditional public school programs by the rate at which CBOs were able to expand. Also, Dan Tangherlini, representing the Executive Branch, testified at the public hearing that this provision would allow CBOs to expand at a rate exponentially higher than that of the traditional public school. The Bill needed to satisfy a number of constituencies on this issue: the Council, Mayor's office and OSSE, public school officials and community-based pre-K programs. *The Bill was amended to require OSSE to use its best efforts to ensure that over the course of five years, a minimum of 25 percent of the new pre-K education programs would be operated by CBOs.*
- **Public School Funding for Community-Based Pre-K?** A final significant issue in the Bill was related to how the new pre-K program would be funded. Since under the new legislation pre-K programming would be located within OSSE and now be part of the

DCPS education system, the legislation sought to fund all the new, high-quality programs through the Uniformed Per Pupil Funding Formula (UPPFF), the mechanism by which DC Public and Public Charter Schools receive funding for educating youth. One Council member expressed concern that by funding CBO programs through the UPPFF, the legislation could be used to create hundreds of new Charter Schools, since the UPPFF can only be used to fund local education agencies, and only traditional Public Schools and Public Charter Schools were considered such agencies. Other policymakers were concerned that by funding CBOs through UPPFF, local funding might end up supplanting federal dollars. *The Bill was amended, so that CBO programs that met OSSE program requirements would receive funding equal to the UPPFF (but not through the UPPFF mechanism). A provision was added to ensure that local funding for this legislation was not to be used in place of federal funding already being received by CBOs and that DC did not expend local dollars for which federal funds were available.*

In addition to addressing constituents' concerns with various amendments, the Committee of the Whole took other important steps to finalize the legislation. For example, in response to feedback from a variety of sources, the committee decided to remove from the Bill, a provision to set aside 5 percent of funds for infant and toddler programs. Members became convinced that the issue was too important to deal with in this manner and should be handled separately. Also, the committee included in the Bill a series of reports to Council from the Mayor and OSSE on key aspects of the Bill's implementation. In one of the final steps in preparing the Bill's submission to the full Council, the committee began working with the DC Chief Financial Officer to determine the cost of the programming called for in the legislation.<sup>50</sup>

### **C. Pre-K for All DC Becomes Law**

On March 18, 2008, the Committee of the Whole formally considered the amended Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007/Bill 17-0537 and unanimously voted to send it on to the entire Council, recommending its adoption into law. To better convey the Bill's purpose, the title was changed to the "Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008."

With passage of the pre-K Bill imminent, on March 31, 2008, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign held a meeting for their community partners and volunteers to brief them about where the legislation stood, how constituents' concerns had been addressed, and the legislative process going forward. On April 1, 2008, the full Council conducted its first reading of the amended legislation, and voted unanimously to move it to a final vote. Councilmember Mary Cheh of Ward 3 was quoted in *The Washington Times* the next day, "What we are doing today is nothing short of profound. The fact of the matter is unless we have this piece there will forever be a low ceiling for many children in the District of Columbia. This piece is the foundation for our success."

On May 6, 2008, the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 was unanimously voted into law by the DC Council. (See Appendix D for the key highlights of the legislation.) The Fiscal Impact Statement for the legislation, which had been prepared for Chairman Gray by DC's Chief Financial Officer, states the five-year cost of implementation at \$64.8 million. This \$64.8 million price tag was significant, because it represented approximately \$6 million more than Pre-

K for All DC had estimated and had been asking for in discussions with Council leading up to the vote. This increase in resources was very good news for the Campaign, since it indicated that, as Campaign Manager, Jesse Bailey, put it, Council was endorsing “a complete overhaul of the pre-K system.”

Was everyone on the Council totally happy with the legislation? Chairman Gray admits that is still not the case. For example, he says, “There continue to be people who feel we shouldn’t necessarily focus on all three delivery sectors—traditional public schools, public charter schools and community-based organizations. There are some who really believe that it should be either the public or public charter schools that deliver these services. My belief is that the CBOs played a very important role in the development of our early childhood education system and should continue to be supported. So we have a three-sector approach. And there are other issues still out there. Ultimately, we kept bringing people back to the purpose of this. Nobody could deny the worthiness of the purpose and we were able to work through whatever issues there were and get a unanimous vote.”

## IX. Analyzing the Campaign

*If we hadn't had an infrastructure, it would have definitely been a different kind of movement.*

BB Otero, President and CEO, Centro Nia Education Center

According to a Pre-K for All DC brochure describing the new legislation, “On May 6, 2008, the District of Columbia Council under the extraordinary leadership of Chairman Vincent C. Gray, unanimously passed historic legislation to ensure all three- and four-year-olds in the District have access to high quality pre-Kindergarten programs.” There is no doubt that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was a key partner in this accomplishment and successful in achieving its main goal. Given Pre-K for All DC’s success in achieving this goal, it is important to explore the following questions: What factors allowed the Campaign to be successful in carrying out its theory of change and achieving its goal of pre-K legislation? How effective was Pre-K for All DC in building a broad-based movement for universal pre-K in DC? Do all constituents agree that the Campaign was successful? What role did parents play? Will there be losers and winners as a result of the Campaign for universal pre-K?

### **A. What Factors Allowed the Campaign to be Successful in Achieving its Goal of Universal Pre-K legislation?**

There appear to be several factors that contributed to the success of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. They are infrastructure and history, national support, strategic thinking, the use of technology and messaging, and timing.

- *Local Infrastructure*

Throughout this report, there are references to DC’s long history of involvement in early childhood education, including selection as an early test site for the federal Head Start program in 1964. The time between 1964 and 2008, when the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act became law, represents almost 50 years of activism and experience in DC related to early childhood education issues. This activism generated a strong and significant infrastructure on which the Pre-K for All DC Campaign could build when it began in 2006. Well before Pre-K Now funded the DC Campaign, the city had pre-K in public schools for four-year-olds; hundreds of well-rooted, community-based child care centers, many with activist directors; institutions that were already dedicated to expanding pre-K and improving quality; and a local government that was relatively responsive to citizens’ demands for investment in child care.

Of particular note, however, is the wealth of early childhood education leaders that developed with this infrastructure—grassroots, grass tops, institutional and political—and dedicated themselves to the DC campaign for universal pre-K. In fact, Libby Doggett, formerly of Pre-K Now, cites this leadership as one reason DC was selected to receive funding for a pre-K campaign. There were many such leaders, but a few were and continue to be especially significant including Barbara Kamara, a former national Head Start official and former

Administrator, of the Early Care and Education Administration in the DC Department of Human Services; and Maurice Sykes, a former deputy superintendent of the DC Public Schools and current Director of the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at University of the District of Columbia. These two had worked together for years before the Pre-K Campaign to promote the issue of quality in early childhood education. Both brought not only their knowledge and backgrounds to the Campaign, but also the power and influence of their institutions.

Evelyn Moore, a founder and long-time President and CEO of the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) had been a lead teacher in the High Scope Perry Pre-School Program, and, therefore, had a deep understanding of the importance of quality in early childhood education. She was responsible for bringing the first national foundation (Kellogg) dollars to the early childhood education movement in DC. Those dollars funded the NBCDI-SPARK DC initiative, which was critical in laying groundwork for and was an important partner in the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. Carol Brunson Day, who followed Moore at NBCDI, is a recognized national leader in early childhood education. She offered NBCDI, with its national reputation, organizational and administrative capacity, as a home for the Pre-K Campaign. She also served on the Campaign's Steering Committee.

Both Campaign co-chairs can also be regarded as part of the DC early childhood education infrastructure. Carrie Thornhill has deep roots in the activist community and a long-time interest in children and youth issues. As a former DC school board member, and founder of numerous civic groups, her voice is heard by people in all sectors. Thornhill brought her formidable leadership, along with citywide, community and political contacts, to the Campaign by serving as a co-chair. Terry Golden has been one of the most prominent business people in the city for years; but he is also a long-time education activist. He co-chaired the DC Committee on Public Education (COPE), one of the early groups to call for improvements in early childhood programs and is Chair of the KIPP Charter Schools. His association with the Campaign was largely responsible for bringing the business community to the table.

This leadership, along with many other early childhood education activists in DC, helped form the Universal School Readiness Stakeholders Group. This collaborative was a key component of the infrastructure that would support the Pre-K for All DC Campaign—helping to minimize “turfism” and, as much as possible, keep everyone at the table. USRSG embodied a favorite mantra of the DC pre-K Campaign—*public knowledge, public will, public action*. It was under the banner of the USRSG that three seminal steps were taken, which laid important groundwork for a successful DC pre-K campaign. These included development of *The Road Map to Universal School Readiness*, which became an important reference for developing the goals of the Campaign and the final pre-K legislation; development of early learning standards for pre-school-age children that were eventually adopted by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education for use in the newly legislated pre-K system; and obtaining funding for and implementing the Pre-K Incentive Program, which became (and remains) the model for what universal high-quality pre-K should look like in DC. Ultimately, the Steering Committee for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign came from the USRSG membership.

It seems clear from the DC experience that this infrastructure—a long early childhood education tradition, an existing, robust, early childhood education community, and broad-based, powerful

activist leadership—contributed heavily to the Pre-K for All DC Campaign achieving its legislative goal.

- *National Funding and Support*

Many in the DC community believe that it took much too long for the city to be recognized nationally for pioneering efforts in early childhood education. In 2002, that changed when in that one year, DC received two major national grants—one, an early learning grant from the federal Department of Education, and the other from The Kellogg Foundation to support DC’s participation in the foundation’s SPARK initiative. Both of these grants allowed the DC early childhood community to deepen activity aimed at preparing pre-school aged children for school. Receiving these new national resources not only highlighted DC’s thriving early childhood education community but created new momentum and energy that attracted the attention of national funder Pre-K Now.

Pre-K Now provided primary funding for Pre-K for All DC, which allowed the Campaign to leverage additional funds from local sources. However, as this report details, Pre-K Now brought more than funding to DC—this national organization brought outside credibility; experience from working with pre-K campaigns in other states; mobilization and communication ideas, tools and strategies; and technical assistance resources. Of course, the DC Campaign would adapt many of the ideas and tools in the Pre-K Now “playbook” to fit the DC context. Still, the resources provided by Pre-K Now helped Pre-K for All DC get off to a quick start, take advantage of local resources and circumstances, and mobilize constituencies in support of universal pre-K. The Pre-K Now E-communications system was an especially useful communications and mobilization tool.

Another critical contribution from Pre-K Now was Jesse Bailey, the Campaign Manager. Bailey had been a Truman Fellow at Pre-K Now and had worked on a number of pre-K campaigns before taking the DC assignment. He brought knowledge of the Pre-K Now approach, organization and a knack for working with various constituencies. Bailey’s ability to work well with the local Campaign Steering Committee, develop strong local relationships and change and adapt plans quickly when necessary, proved to be particularly important skills.

Clearly, national funding and support—from The Kellogg Foundation, the Department of Education and, most important, Pre-K Now—made a significant difference in DC’s ability to move years of effort by local activists to another level and obtain universal pre-K legislation.

- *Strategic Thinking and Decision-Making*

Members of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign Steering Committee like to use the word “strategic” to describe actions taken during the Campaign. They say that decisions to follow or change a particular course of action during the Campaign were never made blindly, but strategically. This report documents that this kind of strategic thinking was taking place among DC’s early childhood education leaders before the Campaign began and continued throughout. A line can be drawn directly from many of the strategic decisions made in the pursuit of universal pre-K, and the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, including:

- **Forming the USRSG:** Key leaders in the DC early childhood education community saw the formation in 2003 of the USRSG, the base from which Pre-K for All DC was launched, as a strategy for forming the “big tent” that would be needed to build a credible pre-K movement. This does not mean that there were no disagreements among partners in the USRSG. However, the membership of this coalition crossed organizational, class, racial and professional boundaries, and gave the movement access to all segments of the DC community. The group was broadened to make it even more inclusive once the Campaign was under way. The decision to make USRSG an active, deliberative body, and not just a ceremonial one, was also a sound strategy. USRSG provided an excellent base from which early childhood education leaders could push the pre-K agenda. The Coalition’s broad-based membership added clout to negotiations with policymakers, and actions taken by the leadership were more likely than not to have the backing of numerous constituencies. When Pre-K for All DC was added to USRSG in 2006, the Campaign gained instant and valuable partners and credibility in many sectors of the community.
  
- **Developing the Pre-K Incentive Program Model:** In 2005, the leadership of the USRSG negotiated with the DC Public Schools for public school dollars to fund pre-K programming in community-based settings—something that had not been done in DC before. The result was the development of the Pre-K Incentive Program, which became the model for what high-quality pre-K in DC should look like. Maurice Sykes described this move as a deliberate strategy to raise the quality of community-based pre-K programming, and bring more attention to the need for public investment in pre-K, particularly in non-public school settings. This strategic move paid big dividends for the pre-K movement in DC and the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. There would be 20 Pre-K Incentive sites. During the Campaign, these sites served as tangible examples that could be used to show public officials, the business community and other important constituents what quality pre-K looks like, and what their support could accomplish. Ultimately, the Pre-K Incentive Program became the standard on which the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 is based.
  
- **Selecting the Campaign Co-Chairs:** The value of Carrie Thornhill and Terry Golden as co-chairs of the Pre-K for All DC Campaign has been documented throughout this report. However, it should also be said that their selection was another strategic move by the Steering Committee. The selection of two powerful people to head a Campaign might seem like an obvious move. But Thornhill and Golden were chosen for their connections to specific constituencies that were particularly important to this effort. Thornhill had long been close to the political power structure in DC. The Campaign made the decision to take advantage of the 2006 Mayoral and Council elections to further the visibility and importance of the pre-K movement. Having Thornhill co-lead the Pre-K for All DC Campaign facilitated access to the political candidates during the election, and to political leaders as the legislation was being developed, finalized and passed. In short, Thornhill’s presence at the helm of the Campaign helped place the issue of high-quality pre-K squarely on DC’s political agenda. As chair of the Federal City Council, one of the most powerful “policy shaping” organizations in DC, Terry

Golden has unparalleled influence in both the business and political sectors. The Campaign understood that when Golden spoke, decision makers would listen.

- **Deciding to Ride the Wave of the Local Election:** At the beginning of the Campaign, Pre-K for All DC Steering Committee members decided to take advantage of the 2006 DC election to further the goal of high-quality universal pre-K. Attaching the Pre-K Campaign to the local political campaign turned out to be a very astute move. Inviting all candidates for Mayor and Council to become Pre-K Champions and sign the Pre-K Pledge put the issue on candidates' political agendas, and elevated the Campaign's visibility with the general public. This strategy also gave the political candidates a popular issue on which to campaign. When candidates showed up at Pre-K Campaign events or when Pre-K volunteers showed up at candidates' events, it was good for the Pre-K Campaign *and* for the candidates. Securing candidates' pledges of support for pre-K prior to the election put the Campaign in position to press these newly elected officials to "*keep your promise*" after they took office. Finally, the partnership between Pre-K for All DC and Council Chairman Vincent Gray appears to have been sealed during the 2006 election season. It can be argued that this partnership resulted in the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008.
  
- **Figuring out How to Best Use the Resources of National Funder, Pre-K Now:** Certainly, the support provided by Pre-K Now was key to allowing DC's early childhood education leaders to form and implement a campaign for high-quality universal pre-K. However, Pre-K Now had a model for organizing pre-K campaign's that they had used in other states and which Jesse Bailey (coming from the Pre-K Now organization) brought with him to DC. The DC Campaign Steering Committee had to determine which components of the Pre-K Now approach worked for the DC context and which did not. Bucking some local opposition that resisted the influence of a national funder, the Campaign decided to accept Pre-K Now's assistance with some initial strategy, and with identity development, E-communications and staying abreast of what was happening in other campaigns across the country. This report shows that these decisions paid important dividends for the DC Campaign. However, as the DC Campaign developed, the Steering Committee and Bailey decided that some components of the Pre-K Now model did not work locally. For example, the Campaign decided to abandon the Pre-K Now approach to grassroots mobilization, which required they develop a new set of community-based relationships. Instead, Campaign leaders recognized that they already had access to an existing infrastructure of child development centers and other organizations they could draw on for grassroots support. Some of these organizations, key among them NBCDI-SPARK DC, were already partners in the USRSG and had existing parent groups that could be tapped for volunteers. While Bailey admits this change in strategy took some time, once the decision was made to mobilize support through the existing pre-K infrastructure, the Campaign was able to move to a new level.
  
- **Understanding the Value of Credibility:** Early childhood education leadership in DC demonstrated repeatedly that they understood the value of credibility to the Campaign. This understanding started well before the Campaign, with the formation of the

USRSG. As discussed above, this broad-based collaborative gave the Campaign the ability to speak with authority to a number of segments of the DC community. The same can be said of the Campaign co-chairs.

Campaign Steering Committee members are clear that they made a strategic decision to commission two studies documenting the benefits of high-quality pre-K to the DC economy. Both the information contained in the studies and their release at the National Press Club got the attention of the movers and shakers in DC—and signaled that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was an effort that should be taken seriously. On the other end of the spectrum, the Campaign’s decision to partner with community media—El Zol, Radio One and small newspapers like *The Washington Informer*—was critical to helping get the pre-K message out to target communities.

Two other examples deserve mention here. The first is the Campaign’s decision to bring on Pat McMillan, a grandmother (looking for good pre-K) and community activist, to be deputy manager and head the community mobilization effort. McMillan’s knowledge of DC, and instincts about how to engage parents and others at the grassroots level increased the Campaign’s credibility in the community, and significantly improved mobilization efforts. The second example is the Campaign legislative committee’s decision to bring an attorney on board to help draft pre-K legislation. This was not just any attorney, but the former counsel to the DC Council. Because this person understood both legislative language and process, she helped the Campaign draft a credible piece of legislation and made Pre-K for All DC a real player in making the legislation a reality.

- **Deciding to Work Inside and Outside:** While the Pre-K for All DC Campaign mobilized outside constituencies to pressure policymakers to enact universal high-quality pre-K, they worked on the inside with these same officials to develop pre-K policy and pass legislation. For example, after the 2006 election, the Campaign accepted an invitation to work on newly elected Mayor Fenty’s early childhood education transition work group and make recommendations regarding pre-K policy. At the same time, they continued to organize and carry out a massive e-mailing effort urging Fenty and other policymakers to keep the pre-K pledges they made prior to the election. As the Campaign worked with Council Chair Gray to develop pre-K legislation, they continued their outside mobilization efforts through e-mail and street work. This inside-outside strategy “doubled” the Campaign’s effectiveness.

There are other examples of the Campaign’s strategic thinking and decision-making that have been discussed throughout this report—understanding when to bring in outside help, and deciding when and how to mobilize volunteers and other resources. These and other strategic decisions point directly to the experience and quality of Campaign leadership.

- *Use of Technology and Messaging*

The Pre-K for All DC Campaign made good use of both technology and messaging strategies to achieve their goal. The use of technology, namely the E-communications system, allowed the Campaign to take a modern approach to mobilization, making it possible to communicate with and organize massive numbers of supporters. E-communications also allowed the Campaign to respond to policy issues and policymakers quickly, thereby increasing impact—the Campaign’s Action Alerts to supporters and Keep Your Promise messages to policymakers are examples.

The Campaign’s use of messaging was one of their most important and productive strategies, and could be cited as another example of the leadership’s strategic decision-making. The Campaign used the beneficial messages about pre-K contained in the commissioned economic studies to gain the support of the business community—a key group of policy shapers who provided critical support for the legislation. Understanding the importance of consistent messaging (through the Message Box) and developing specific “values” messages for particular groups also helped the Campaign “break through the noise” and be heard by important constituents.

All of these things—a strong local infrastructure, experienced quality leadership with the ability to think strategically, national funding and support, the use of modern technology and strategies—contributed to the Campaign’s success in achieving its goal of universal pre-K legislation. Some would add timing as a factor that worked in the Campaign’s favor. The Pre-K Incentive Program model might not have been funded without a DCPS Superintendent in place (Clifford Janey) who understood the value of a high-quality pre-K model. And would the legislation have ever been passed without the leadership of a Council Chair (Vincent Gray) who had a human service background and an affinity for children’s issues? Campaign Steering Committee member BB Otero put it this way, “all the various stars aligned for this pre-K piece. We were set for this, we were ready.”

**B. How Effective was the Pre-K for All DC Campaign in Building a Broad-Based Movement for Universal Pre-K in DC? Do All Constituents Agree that the Campaign was Successful? What Role did Parents Play?**

- *A Broad-based Movement?*

Was Pre-K for All DC successful in bringing different constituencies into the Campaign? The answer is yes. Of course, the broad-based nature of the Campaign started with the USRSG, which included much of the DC’s early childhood education leadership. Nicolla Reed, CEO of Entrepreneurs United, an organization that represents child care providers, said, “I think they did a dynamic job with reaching out, because they were consistent and went all over.”

Using E-communications technology, regular mail and on-the-ground mobilizing, Pre-K for All DC reached out to and involved thousands of everyday people—many of them parents and grandparents—in Campaign activity. There were special efforts to involve the Latino and African-American communities, by publishing materials in Spanish and partnering with ethnic media.

The Campaign also cultivated strong relationships with the business community by providing credible evidence about the economic benefits of pre-K. This paid off in the number of business leaders who became Pre-K Champions, or who testified or wrote letters in support of the legislation. As discussed at great length in this report, policymakers were also targeted by the pre-K movement. The Campaign not only targeted policymakers with outside pressure to support universal high-quality pre-K, but also worked with them on the inside to pass legislation.

Are there people who are unhappy with the way the Campaign was carried out? They appear to be in the minority, but the answer is yes. Did some people and organizations feel left out of the process? Yes. This dissatisfaction appears to be due, in some cases, to substantive differences about Campaign strategy and practices and in other cases, to the scramble for resources and turf battles that inevitably happen among organizations. There is some sentiment at the grassroots level that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was being pushed by outside, moneyed forces and not by actual needs at the grassroots level. One community activist, who says her organization represents several hundred members, gave this analysis, “Pre-K for All DC was an extremely heavily funded initiative that came to DC with the goal of passing this legislation. No one is against quality pre-K. My question is, who was driving this and putting it in the forefront as the most critical issue the city should invest money in? I think there were people who were very active with the pre-K thing, even if they didn’t 100 percent agree with it, because they saw it was a moving train and they wanted to be on it. When you have enough money you can hire people to be coordinators and you can send out colorful materials, you can almost manufacture a grassroots movement. It’s not that there was a huge outcry from the community. I think the driving force of the whole thing was money and political connections. Fortunately, it’s not for some disastrous project. Pre-K quality and access are important things, but not in a vacuum.”

Other critics questioned the true value of what the Campaign accomplished. One foundation officer states, “If you think about it, historically in DC we have had universal programs for four year olds. So that they had a Campaign to include three-year-olds is a good thing. But any non-profit would have been successful, given the national trends, national funding and the leadership they had. It would have been more impressive if they would have focused on birth to five; that would have been a completely new thing.” Another critic echoed these sentiments. She says there is still a feeling among some in the early childhood education community that the legislation should have also covered children birth to three. A former Steering Committee member, who said she left the Campaign over disagreements, says, “The Campaign presented pre-K as if it was going to improve child care; but pre-K is just nine to three. What good is this to the working parent? They did not make parents understand this at all.”

Finally, there are other critics who say the Campaign happened too quickly for more people, even some providers, to be fully involved or even understand what Pre-K for All DC was about. One advocate says, “They came into the City like gang busters.” Another says, “I would say there is a lot of room for improvement in the provider community around what Pre-K for All DC’s function is, what is going to happen with this legislation and all of this. I don’t think it is as widely known as it should be at this time.” However, this same person lays some of the lack of information about the Campaign at the feet of some center directors, “Unless you are at a meeting and unless you are informed you don’t know what’s going on. A large majority of them (i.e., providers) do not know because they are in programs where the directors don’t even attend

these meetings, so that they can bring information back to their employees.” One Steering Committee member responds this way, “Yes, we lost some people along the way. For example, some people in the early childhood education community wanted legislation to cover birth to three but we made a strategic decision that it was more prudent to just cover three- and four-year-olds. Could we have done better at including everybody at the risk of missing some opportunity? Probably, but this was an education process and some people get it quicker than others. I know this is hard for some people because we bruised some egos. There are people who feel it was a small group who made all the decisions and they are right about that, but it was necessary.” Another Steering Committee member says, “Whenever you have a movement like this and you create change, you have to then go back to everyone who feels left behind and bring them along. You have to do some healing.”

- *What Role Did Parents/Families Play in the Campaign?*

Parents are such an important pre-K constituency that it is important to explore their role in the Campaign. The Head Start approach to parental involvement is generally held up as the standard to be emulated by early childhood education programs. In Head Start, parents are encouraged to be involved in program policymaking and operations. Based on that standard, Steering Committee members are clear that parents did not play a leading role in the Campaign. In fact, some members are very pragmatic about the role of parents in the DC Campaign. According to Steering Committee member Maurice Sykes, “Our theory of change said we would build a broad-based movement. It never was just about parents. There is this romanticism about parents. It is other people who make, shape and inform policy. Given everything you have to do in this city, if you want early childhood at the top of the city’s agenda, you better make sure early childhood people are at the table.”

Barbara Kamara, a former federal Head Start official concurs, “People need to understand that it wasn’t just parents on the front line, it was everyone. Even when people talk about Head Start, they talk about parents, but I know when my (Head Start) budget got cut during the Carter Administration, (former HHS director) Pat Harris asked, ‘what are you going to do, Barbara?’ and I said, make phone calls. I made some strategic phone calls around the country and the next thing we knew people were badgering the President and it wasn’t just parents. It was a lot of people who really were influential.”

BB Otero also concurs with Sykes and Kamara, pointing out, “This was not a parent-led process. This was the next stage of 20 years dedicated to moving quality to early childhood education in this city. It wasn’t a movement where a group of parents got together and said wait a minute, early childcare in this city sucks and we have to do something about it. There was an infrastructure in place. DC has had this consistent process, which is why I don’t think there was going to be a grassroots movement. People saw the investments that were already being made. Parents are aware of what they have in their communities. We had model programs (the Pre-K Incentive sites) and every one of those sites does a lot of work with parents. Parents could testify to the fact that if you did more of this, children would do better. Now, if you took those Pre-K Incentive classrooms and said, we can’t afford to do this implementation grant anymore, you will see parents. You will see them come out and say, ‘no way!’ because they have already seen the

value of these programs. I think parents are definitely partners in this process, but we had an infrastructure.”

While Otero admits “we probably could have done more” in organizing parents, she believes that the Campaign did “a fairly good job of bringing parents together in a short period of time.” The experience of the Campaign certainly seems to bear this out. The Campaign specifically targeted parents with its mobilization efforts. According to the Campaign, 40 percent of the people on the lists used in the E-communications mailings were parents. As documented in this report, the Campaign worked through child development centers and with other groups to involve parents in the Campaign. In some cases, the Campaign built on parent organizing work that had already been carried out by NBCDI-SPARK DC. As a result, parents comprised a significant portion of Campaign volunteers and those who came out to Campaign events—in particular, the two Town Hall meetings that so impressed Council Chair Vincent Gray.

With the help of a grandparent, who became the deputy manager of the Campaign, Pre-K for All DC learned to make the best and most respectful use of parents’ time and energy. One could argue that one of the most critical pieces of parental participation in the Campaign was their testimony at the public hearing for the pre-K Bill. Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey believes that “some policymakers needed to hear directly from parents in order to move.” One Steering Committee member sums up the value of parents’ role in the Campaign this way, “I think the main role parents played was keeping the political pressure on—by showing up at events and forums where they had a chance to comment—*we want quality, we want access*. They know what quality is and they know what they want for their kids.”

### **C. Will there be Winners and Losers as a Result of the Campaign for High-Quality Universal Pre-K?**

Since the Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2008 is still being implemented, it is difficult to say for certain if any particular group will win or lose as a result of the Campaign for the law’s enactment. However, there is plenty of speculation in the DC early childhood education community about who the winners and losers could be. One provider describes the current environment this way, “I think we are in a period of adjustment, of everybody kind of figuring out how they fit and what potential conflicts might bubble up. And some who weren’t paying attention are going, *oh my god I didn’t realize what this meant for me!*”

One “potential conflict” that several people, even those in favor of the legislation, have raised is the impact the 2008 law could have on community-based child care providers. As outlined in Chapter VIII of this report, the Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2008 specifies that all child care programs across the public school, public charter school and community-based sectors must meet the high-quality content standards and program requirements set forth by OSSE, including becoming accredited, by 2014. Some in the early childhood education community believe it will be very difficult for some community-based programs to meet these standards and requirements, even if they take advantage of the program and staff improvement grants provided by the law. One director who runs an accredited Pre-K Incentive program site explains the implications this way, “Some of these operators will need to move from a *day care* model to an *education center model*. It is not easy to become a high-quality, accredited center and there are some places that will never get to that level. We should help these places develop, but if they

can't or won't we shouldn't have children in low-quality places and these places will lose their funding." In fact, one Campaign Steering Committee member said, "Community-based programs that can't take advantage of the legislation should probably go out of business."

Further, some in the early childhood education sector are concerned that parents with three- and four-year-old children will soon start to *vote with their feet*, sending their children to higher-quality public and charter programs (as more space become available) as a result of the legislation—leaving some community-based programs without enough students to make their business models work. In either case, whether it is through loss of funding or loss of children, there is concern by some providers that the requirements of the new legislation will cost some community-based providers their livelihoods. Providers who take care of children in their homes could also face the same problem as more slots become available in programs that meet the standards of the 2008 legislation.<sup>51</sup> More than one skeptical activist suggests that it is, in fact, the public and charter school programs that could be the big winners in all this—with boosted enrollments as community-based and family programs lose children.

Another early childhood education leader said it is “pie in the sky” of legislators to think that community-based programs can meet the requirements in the 2008 pre-K law and doubts that the funding provided will be enough, “If a center’s business can’t support whatever is being asked, then you’re going to lose that business. Some of these things (in the legislation) are a good concept, but unless you have the funding to back it up it’s just not going to happen. I think maybe one of the first things is for someone to say what the actual costs to implement these regulations will be and make sure the funding supports what you are asking people to do.”

The Pre-K for All DC Campaign was successful in achieving its goal of universal pre-K legislation and, most would say, building a broad base of supporters. Parents did not play a lead, decision-making role in the Campaign, since there was an early childhood education infrastructure in place with the necessary contacts and resources to carry out a successful effort. Still, all evidence indicates that parents were significant contributors to DC’s pre-K movement. Clearly, there are people and institutions in the early childhood community that were not on board, either because they were unaware of the Campaign, not paying attention or did not believe in the Campaign’s goals and/or methods. This is not surprising, since, as one Steering Committee member stated, “In any big change, there will be people who are left out.” However, it is conceivable that at least some of these people could have been brought along had the Campaign not had to move so quickly. A larger concern is the strong belief among some in the early childhood education community that requirements in the pre-K legislation to increase program and staff quality will put some community- and family-based providers out of business. Time will tell. But if this concern becomes a reality, what will be the impact on DC’s early childhood education industry?

## X. Going Forward: Implementing the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008

*Implementation has been slower than expected. OSSE did not move with urgency.*

Carrie Thornhill, President, Pre-K for All

*It's All Politics. It's an Election Year*

Carla Thompson, Deputy Superintendent for Early Childhood Education, OSSE

In December 2008, after the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign was incorporated as the non-profit organization, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. Carrie Thornhill, former Campaign co-chair stayed on as President and several former Steering Committee members became Board members of the new organization. Jesse Bailey, the former Campaign Manager was named Executive Director. Thornhill describes the organization's purpose as two-fold: first, to ensure the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act is implemented with fidelity, and second, to expand and improve services for all children from birth to age five. This means focusing on the birth to three population—a provision that was taken out of the original 2008 legislation. Upon incorporation, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. immediately formed a birth to three work group, until recently, a significant amount of the organization's attention has been spent on the implementation of the 2008 Act. Early implementation has been somewhat bumpy.

### A. The Budget Battles

The Fiscal Impact Statement for the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, developed by the DC Chief Financial Officer, provides a clear estimate of the yearly funding needed for implementation as the law intends. The Statement says that the \$600,000 needed for start-up activities in fiscal year 2008 and the beginning of fiscal year 2009 was available through supplemental resources the Council set aside in the fiscal year 2008 budget. These activities included the baseline quality and financial assessments of existing pre-K programs; the capacity audit to determine the program space available to accommodate children needing services; and the development of standards and requirements that all pre-K programs would have to meet by 2014 to be considered “quality.” However, the statement also concluded that “Funds *are not sufficient to implement the provisions of the proposed legislation in the Mayor's FY 2009 Budget and the FY2009-2012 Financial Plan.*” Subsequently, in fiscal year 2009, and fiscal year 2010, Pre-K for All DC Inc. has “battled” to maintain the needed funding, as estimated by the Fiscal Impact Statement, to implement universal pre-K.<sup>52</sup>

The Fiscal Impact Statement says that an additional \$9.5 million was needed in fiscal year 2009 to complete the legislation's requirements for that year, which included starting to make program technical assistance grants, so providers could achieve high-quality standards; beginning program expansion to accommodate more students; and the establishment of workforce development programs and grants to assist current and aspiring pre-K staff with obtaining

necessary credentials.<sup>53</sup> The Mayor did not include the funding in his budget. Carrie Thornhill testified at the fiscal year 2009 budget hearings citing the need for the funding to implement the new pre-K law. The funding had to be appropriated by the DC Council.

The Fiscal Impact Statement also indicated that a total of the \$14.1 million needed to continue the legislation's implementation in fiscal year 2010 was not in the Mayor's budget projections. That became clear when the Mayor's fiscal year 2010 budget proposal was made public and showed that in an effort to close a budget gap, only \$5.1 million of the resources recommended in the Fiscal Impact Statement had been allocated—basically, a \$9 million cut.<sup>54</sup> In response to the Mayor's proposal, Pre-K for All DC employed some of the mobilization tactics they used to great affect during the Campaign. First, Pre-K for All DC's ongoing media partner, *The Washington Informer*, published an education brief titled, "Mayor Adrian Fenty Proposes Budget Changes." The brief said the Mayor's budget proposal "assaults the pre-K promise we made to our children last year effectively grinding legislative implementation to a halt."<sup>55</sup> Second, on March 4, 2009, Pre-K for All DC held a Town Hall meeting to update interested citizens on the implementation of the 2008 Pre-K Act. More than 200 people attended and *The Washington Informer's* publisher, Denise Rolark Barnes, was the moderator. At the meeting, people were also asked to sign up to testify at budget hearings against the cuts in pre-K funding.

Again, the DC Council allocated the necessary resources. On September 12, 2009, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. President Carrie Thornhill sent out this Action Alert from the organization's E-communications system: "Thanks to your advocacy work, our City Council remained steadfast in its commitment to children and families in DC during this last series of budget negotiations. Faced with the challenge of closing a budget gap of nearly \$800M, Council members could have gone back on their pre-K promise. Instead they unanimously voted to approve \$9million for the implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 for a total investment of \$14.1M consistent with the Fiscal Impact Statement for FY 10."

Currently, the District's fiscal year 2011 budget process is underway. The DC government will again attempt to close a budget deficit and Pre-K for All DC is moving to protect the \$18.3 million the 2008 Fiscal Impact Statement says is needed to cover expansion, program technical assistance, and workforce development plans for this year. On April 27, 2010, Thornhill testified on behalf of continued funding for the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act. About the current budget situations, she says, "Sometimes it's hard to follow the Mayor's budget, but we believe he has not put enough in his budget for this year's activities. But we know our pre-K Champion, Chairman Vince Gray has said on the public record he plans to make sure we get the \$18M called for in the 2008 Fiscal Impact Statement."

Some in the early childhood education are disappointed that the Mayor continues to propose cuts to the pre-K effort. One pre-K activist said about the Mayor's actions, "Yes, some people just felt like, you know, here you were talking about pre-K during your election campaign, mentioning it in the first 100 days plan, putting it in as a key component, and then you went and cut funding. Now, you can say it's because of this and this, or that it was your people lower than you who make decisions, but at the end of the day, it's going to come back and look poorly on you from a perspective of our community as a whole. That said, a lot of us were very disappointed. I, for one, having cast my secret ballot for him, felt disappointed." There are even

grumbles among some in the community that the Mayor does not actually support the pre-K effort because “it was not his idea,” but is a Council initiative. Still, Carrie Thornhill is confident that no matter what the Mayor does, the funding will be there. For her it is simple, “The Mayor proposes but the Council legislates.”

## **B. The Pace of Implementation**

Not only have there been issues around funding of the 2008 Pre-K law, but until recently, neither Pre-K for All DC Inc. or Vincent Gray, Chairman of the DC Council, had been happy with OSSE’s pace in implementing the law.

As referenced above, in the first year of the new law’s implementation, OSSE was to have completed several requirements, key among them: (1) conduct a capacity audit to determine the current capacity and availability of pre-K slots in existing programs; (2) establish high-quality content standards and program requirements in 12 areas (within 120 days of the effective date of legislation—July 2008); (3) conduct a baseline and financial quality assessment to determine existing programs’ standing in relation to the standards and requirements; (4) establish a program technical assistance fund to support programs in meeting the new OSSE standards and requirements; and (5) launch a Higher Education Incentive Grant and Scholarship program to help develop the pre-K teacher workforce. (See Appendix D for highlights of the 2008 Pre-K legislation.)

Official signs of dissatisfaction with the pace of the Pre-K law’s implementation came in March 2009, when Pre-K for All DC, Inc. published a report on their website titled, “DC Government Makes Uneven Progress in Implementing Historic Pre-K Legislation.” In monitoring the implementation of the legislation, Pre-K for All DC determined that several of the “key building blocks for quality improvement and program expansion” required during the first 120 days of the legislation’s passage remained “in progress.” The report quotes Carrie Thornhill as saying, “We applaud what appears to be a careful approach to accomplishing many of the initial legislative deliverables. However, we urge the State Superintendent to move with all deliberate speed to remove any barriers that prevent adherence to the legislatively mandated timeline.” Carla Thompson, Deputy Superintendent for Early Childhood Education at OSSE, defends the group’s performance. She says that some of the items required in the legislation were not completed because of the need to get certain things through DC’s procurement process—something the legislative timeline did not allow for, “With a new project, you often have to adjust the timeline since the legislation may say one thing, but on the ground experience tells you a totally different thing when you’re trying to put a program forward.”

In an October 2009, the Mayor’s office announced the completion of several items called for by the legislation: the capacity audit and baseline quality and financial assessments; the early learning standards; and six of the program requirements. The Capacity Audit shows that at the time of the audit, nearly 86 percent of eligible three- and four-year-olds in DC were enrolled in pre-K programs. The report also shows that while there was sufficient capacity among pre-K providers to cover 100 percent of all three- and four-year-olds whose parents wanted to enroll them, almost 2,000 children were still not enrolled (this validated the number of un-enrolled children that was originally estimated by the Pre-K for All DC Campaign in 2007). The quality assessment confirms what was already anecdotally known—that the quality of pre-K programs

was not evenly distributed across the District. The assessment also indicated that most DC pre-K programs score at the “basic” level on quality measures, which is above the national average.<sup>56</sup> However, one pre-K advocate who worked hard for the 2008 legislation states, “The national average is low anyway so that’s not acceptable.”

Regardless of this progress in implementing the new law, Chairman Gray and the Council were not satisfied. From their perspective, program requirements had not been completed; the assistance fund to improve program quality was not established and workforce development efforts were not in place.<sup>57</sup> On November 13, 2009, Council Chairman Gray held a special oversight hearing to officially determine OSSE’s progress in meeting the legislation’s first year implementation deadlines. At the hearing, several providers and other concerned citizens testified about what they saw as the lack of progress by and communication from OSSE regarding the law’s implementation. Joey Weedon, Deputy National Director of America’s Edge, a nonprofit that connects business leaders with efforts to improve public education, spoke about “the number of families who leave DC due to the undesirability of child care slots... which adversely affects our economic base.” Providers testified about the number of families on their program waiting lists. Representatives from DC’s Trinity Washington University and the University of the District of Columbia testified about their desire to partner with the City to train early education teachers, but said they had received no outreach from OSSE. Council Chair Gray remarked, “This law has little to nothing to show for it” and questioned the whereabouts of the millions that had been directed at the pre-K effort since Summer 2008.<sup>58</sup>

Kerri Briggs, DC’s State Superintendent of Education, who had only been on the job for eight months, laid out the progress OSSE had made during the first year of implementation, citing (among other things) the adoption of the early learning standards and the capacity and quality audits. She also reported the completion of a third study that had not been called for in the legislation—a *Risk and Reach* study, which pinpoints the location (according to zip code) of the most at-risk three- and four-year-olds, so services and expansion efforts can be better pinpointed. Briggs testified that she was pleased with the work OSSE had completed so far, stating, “Our objective during this first year was to get the basic infrastructure for the new comprehensive Pre-K Initiative in place and I feel we have done that.”<sup>59</sup> Chairman Gray and the DC Council did not agree.

### **C. Emergency Legislation**

In December 2008, Chairman Gray began considering a course of action to speed the implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008. Gray announced that he would introduce the *Pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2010* to “amend the original Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008...and put the District back on track in critical areas of implementation.” In his announcement, Gray stated, “We are now 18 months behind in our efforts to implement a universal, high-quality pre-K system. Given OSSE’s current implementation trajectory, I have no reason to believe we will have universal, high-quality pre-K within any reasonable amount of time.”<sup>60</sup> In an effort to “jumpstart” the implementation process, the DC Council unanimously passed the emergency legislation on January 5, 2010, requiring OSSE to:

- Complete the high-quality program requirements and the rules for the program technical assistance fund within 45 days of the effective date of the new Act; and
- Work with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the established state system for professional development and training, to establish and convene a collaborative of DC colleges and universities to develop a pre-K workforce development plan by March 2010.<sup>61</sup>

Two additional items were included in the emergency legislation. First, the Act required that within 45 days, the Executive Branch (the Mayor’s office and OSSE) convene an Early Childhood Education Coordinating Council that would provide early childhood stakeholders with a voice in the implementation of pre-K. Membership of the coordinating Council was also specified. In including this provision, the Council was responding to concern expressed at the November 13, 2009 oversight hearing that there had been little interaction between OSSE and critical stakeholders regarding pre-K implementation; and while OSSE had moved to establish a coordinating Council, local stakeholders were concerned that the proposed composition was over-represented by national organizations and non-District residents. Second, the emergency legislation clarified the types of organizations eligible to receive program assistance funds under the 2008 pre-K legislation—ensuring that Charter Schools, Public Schools and all community-based organizations—non-profit and for-profit would have access to the funds.<sup>62</sup>

On January 21, 2010, in keeping with their monitoring role and mobilization practices, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. held a Town Hall meeting to discuss the emergency legislation with concerned constituents. More than 100 people turned out, many of them community-based providers who were still concerned about whether they would be able to access funds mandated by the legislation.

As far as Carla Thompson of OSSE is concerned, “there was no need at all for the emergency legislation.” In some cases, she disputes claims that certain legislative requirements were not completed on time. About others, she says, given all the problems of the last few budget cycles, funding for implementation was not always available to carry out tasks according to the timelines in the legislation. Thompson also says that sometimes, OSSE and the DC Council just disagreed about the capacity of DC organizations to carry out certain aspects of the legislation, which is why, she says, OSSE tried to broaden the professional development collaborative and the pre-K coordinating Council called for in the legislation. Further, Thompson says, “Not one constituency group has complained to me about the implementation of this legislation. I haven’t gotten one inquiry, nothing.”

Clearly, parties may never agree on whether the Pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2010 was needed. However, by Spring 2010, implementation of the 2008 Pre-K Act had speeded up considerably. On March 31, 2010, Carrie Thornhill, testifying before the Council about the emergency legislation, cited several developments:

- The University of the District of Columbia had convened the Higher Education Collaborative and completed the workforce development plan designed to help upgrade pre-K teacher qualifications.

- OSSE had issued rules for the Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Assistance grants; grant applications were available and due to OSSE by April 19, 2010.
- The State Superintendent had announced the imminent release and vetting of the remaining pre-K regulations required by the 2008 legislation.
- Planning for the Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council provided for in the emergency legislation was underway by OSSE

Thornhill also noted that due to rapid increases in enrollment in public and charter school pre-K classrooms, and more modest increases in CBO classrooms over the past two years, DC is positioned to reach universal access for all three- and four-year-olds two years ahead of schedule. She testified, “We are on the cusp of becoming the first city-state to achieve universal access. Your landmark legislation and parent demand share credit for this intermediate achievement.”

Thornhill closed her remarks by saying, “While the start-up of implementation has taken longer than we had hoped and a few major missteps have been made, I do believe that there is finally a critical mass of activity that will permit us to now focus on the qualitative difference Pre-K can make in the critical preparation of our children for school and life in the District of Columbia.”<sup>63</sup>

## XI. Lessons and Conclusions

According to Libby Doggett, former Director of Pre-K Now, “Pre-K for All DC ran an excellent campaign.” Based on the interviews and research conducted for this case study, this sentiment is widely held across a number of constituencies in DC. Although there are some dissidents, the evidence indicates that the Pre-K for All DC Campaign effectively used the city’s early childhood education infrastructure and leadership, national support, strategic thinking, technology, and messaging and mobilizing strategies to achieve their goal of pre-K for all legislation. Given DC’s success, what lessons can other jurisdictions, looking to develop movements for high-quality, universal pre-K, learn from the DC experience? And what does the future hold for the implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008? *What does the future hold for Pre-K for All DC, Inc.?*

### A. Lessons for Other Jurisdictions

As was evident during the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, all jurisdictions are different—approaches and strategies that work in one locale may not fit the context of another. Still, there are lessons from the DC Pre-K Campaign that can be useful to others. These lessons are summarized below.

**Lesson #1: *Understand the changes that are needed in your early childhood education programming. Develop a theory for making those changes and stick to it.***

The early childhood education community in DC did their homework prior to starting the Pre-K Campaign. They organized the Universal School Readiness Stakeholders Group (USRSG), which became a forum for wide-ranging discussion of the problems in DC’s early childhood education programs. Through the USRSG, they also conducted research and produced such documents as the *Road Map for School Readiness* and *Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers*, which helped define the pre-K debate in DC. This work allowed early childhood education leaders to intelligently identify two main issues that needed to be addressed in a campaign: increased access to programming and, particularly, improved program quality. The Pre-K for All DC Campaign could then confidently develop and *stick to* a theory for how to make the changes everyone wanted to see.

**Lesson #2: *Inventory the resources in your community that can help you reach your goal and use them.***

In discussing mobilization strategies used by the Pre-K for All DC Campaign, Jesse Bailey, former Campaign Manager says, “Every community has an infrastructure that you can tap into to do this. So, identify what your infrastructure is and form those relationships.” This study documents DC’s infrastructure of early childhood education leaders and institutions that helped to anchor the Campaign. Pre-K for All DC also strategically expanded that infrastructure by cultivating specific resources in the, business, political, social service and media communities that could be helpful in the push toward pre-K for all legislation.

**Lesson #3: Consider the local context: What strategies will work in your environment and which will not? What local circumstances and resources should you take into account and even exploit to meet your goals?**

The leaders of Pre-K for All DC understood the DC context very well and took it into consideration when developing Campaign strategy. For example, given the timeline they were attempting to meet and the power dynamics in DC, Campaign leaders understood that the movement for universal pre-K needed to be led by the existing early childhood education infrastructure and *supported* by parents and the grassroots—not the other way around. And while it took a little time to come to this realization, the Campaign used an existing network of childcare centers to provide volunteers rather than develop a new set of organizational relationships for that purpose.

Also, acknowledging the broad-based nature of DC’s early childhood education community, Campaign leaders knew they needed a “big tent” approach in order to organize support for universal pre-K and keep opposition to a minimum. Finally, DC is a town of serious issues and serious politics. Campaign leaders understood that if pre-K was to be on the city’s political agenda, they needed to attract the attention of the “powers that be.” This recognition of the DC context led to decisions to tie the Campaign for universal pre-K to the 2006 Mayoral and Council elections, commission two well-researched studies about the benefits of pre-K for the DC economy, and release both studies at the prestigious National Press Club.

**Lesson #4: Take advantage of technology.**

This may seem like an obvious issue, but may still be people in early childhood education communities who do not trust or rely on technology. There were people in the Pre-K for All DC Campaign who initially did not see the value in using the E-communications system provided by Campaign funder Pre-K Now. However, Campaign leaders decided to run a “modern” Campaign. The use of E-Communications rather than canvassing and regular mail alone allowed Pre-K for All DC to communicate with thousands of citizens and mobilize hundreds of volunteers to *Take Action!* Former Campaign Manager Jesse Bailey believes this technology multiplied the effectiveness of the Campaign.

**Lesson #5: Understand who you are trying to reach and speak directly to them.**

The Pre-K for All DC Campaign developed numerous messaging strategies to help get their message across to specific groups. Important Campaign documents were translated into Spanish and Spanish radio was used to help mobilize the Latino community. African-American media and radio personalities were used to reach out to the Black community. Also, the Campaign developed “values” messages to educate specific groups of people about the benefits of pre-K—such as those with special interests in education, the economy, crime and other quality of life issues.

**Lesson #6: *Be realistic about working with volunteers and part-time staff, and understand that volunteers require support and respect.***

Pre-K for All DC learned early in the Campaign that turnover can be a problem when working with both part-time staff and volunteers. This affected the Campaign's mobilization efforts until they began to expect and plan for turnover. Also, the DC Campaign learned that there needs to be an infrastructure to support volunteers—to see that they are trained properly, given enough work to do, and that basic needs for food and day care are met. Most important, they learned to meet volunteers where they are—allow them to contribute what they can in the time that they have to give.

**Lesson #7: *Be flexible. Change Campaign tactics if necessary.***

Throughout the Campaign, Pre-K for All DC adjusted tactics when necessary without abandoning their basic theory of change. The shift to a more targeted media strategy that focused on community rather than major outlets; the move to use existing community-based child care partners to provide volunteers rather than cultivate new partnerships; and refining messaging strategies to target particular constituencies were all mid-course corrections that paid off for the Campaign.

**Lesson # 8: *Get expert help when needed.***

Pre-K for All DC fortified the Campaign with critical expertise when necessary. The Campaign called in marketing and messaging experts when, during the months before pre-K legislation was introduced in the DC Council, they needed to more clearly get out the pre-K message. The Campaign also hired the former lawyer to the DC Council to help them draft pre-K legislation. Both moves increased the Campaign's effectiveness and credibility.

**Lesson # 9: *Don't be afraid to work both inside and outside.***

This is something Pre-K for All DC did exceedingly well. First, the reach of Steering Committee members and co-chairs gave the Campaign the capacity and credibility to work inside with policymakers and outside with other citizens. While educating and mobilizing the public to Take Action!, Pre-K for All DC was also staffing newly elected Mayor Fenty's Early Childhood Education Work Group; working with Council Chair Gray to write the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act; and meeting with policymakers to educate them about the benefits of pre-K and solicit their support for the legislation. This ability to work inside and outside made the Campaign a very useful partner to Chairman Gray and helped him get the legislation passed.

**Lesson #10: *You'll never please everyone, so keep your eye on the prize!***

At the beginning of the Campaign, the Steering Committee expanded the USRSG to include as many early childhood education voices as possible. At the same time, Campaign leaders knew that, when necessary, a few people would have to make the major decisions in the Campaign in order to keep moving things forward. As indicated in this case study, there were people and organizations in the DC early childhood education community who did not agree with the way the Campaign was operated and questioned the Campaign's policy direction. Pre-K for All DC

seemed able to absorb dissent and handle the reality that they would leave some people behind. The ability to not get paralyzed by dissent likely helped the Campaign achieve its goal.

**Lesson #11: *Once you achieve your policy or legislative goal, the fight may have just begun.***

In May 2008, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign achieved its goal of legislation designed to provide access to quality pre-K programs for all three- and four-year-olds. However, in December 2008, the Pre-K for All DC Campaign re-organized as the non-profit Pre-K for All DC, Inc. Part of the new organization's charge is to monitor the implementation of the 2008 law they fought so hard to pass. Apparently, this new organization is needed. Each year, since the passage of the 2008 legislation, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. has had to rally the troops to make sure funding for the law's implementation stays in the DC budget and push to keep implementation on track. This has meant continuing many of the same mobilization strategies used during the Campaign. No one at Pre-K for All DC, Inc. expects this to change any time soon.

**B. Pre-K for All? What Does the Future hold?**

Currently, implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 seems to be moving satisfactorily and all parties seem hopeful that DC will achieve universal pre-K well ahead of schedule. Will OSSE continue to implement the law at a speed that meets with the approval of Pre-K for All DC, Inc. and the DC Council? Will funding needed for implementation be appropriated every year as needed? Only time and politics will tell. So far, Chairman Gray and the DC Council have made sure that funding for pre-K implementation has been appropriated as per the 2008 Fiscal Impact Statement prepared for the legislation. In fact, in her March 31, 2010 testimony before the Council, Thornhill thanked Gray and the other Council members for "joining 28 states facing budget gaps...that chose to increase or hold steady funding for pre-Kindergarten education."

How well the DC economy does over the next few years and the impact of the economy on the city's budget will be big factors in whether funding for pre-K can be maintained. As Libby Doggett puts it, "When funding is scarce, it is always tough on human services." Also, this year's election in DC could have a direct impact on the future of pre-K, reminiscent of 2006 when Pre-K for All DC tied their campaign to the Mayoral and Council contests. Council Chairman Vincent Gray is challenging current Mayor Adrian Fenty for the Mayor's office. If Vincent Gray defeats Fenty and becomes the new Mayor, it could be very good for pre-K implementation, since Gray has been the ultimate "pre-K champion." If Gray loses to Fenty and is also no longer in the position of Council Chair, it is unclear who will "champion" pre-K on the Council, be willing to override the Mayor's budget decisions or push OSSE with emergency legislation. Adrian Fenty and his public schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee have already made it clear that their priority is K-12—not pre-K.

There are other challenges that may arise even if funding for the implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act is appropriated in full. While, as Carrie Thornhill reported to the DC Council, the city may be close to achieving universal access for three- and four-year-olds, achieving system-wide quality appears to be DC's biggest challenge. As mentioned earlier in this report, some in DC's early childhood education community are concerned that it is

primarily community-based programs that will not be able to make the grade. Carla Thompson of OSSE says, “There is lots of training that has to happen. People have to understand what quality means. People come into early childhood education because they love children. We’re trying to get them to understand that there is a business and educational side to early childhood education. Programs need a research-based curriculum, training for teachers, engagement with the community and services in their facility, so that they are looking at the development of the whole child. You may just want to take care of babies, but children are also in jeopardy of academic failure unless you provide these services.” Thompson continues, “It’s not enough just to *achieve* quality, then you have to have continuous quality improvement. We need to build a system that is going to be constantly changing to address what the research is saying and be able to respond to that.”

Improving program quality has always been DC’s challenge; it was the main reason for the Pre-K for All DC Campaign. Doggett says, “It’s hard to go from poor quality to high quality. It will take time. New Jersey is a good example. It took them five years to increase quality.” The Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 also allows five years to achieve program quality throughout the pre-K system, so it is very possible that all three- and four-year-olds will be in high-quality pre-K by 2014. And what about the programs that, even with support, will not meet the high-quality standards? What if the fears expressed by some in the DC early childhood education community are true—that as a result of the requirements in the 2008 pre-K law, some community-based and family home providers will lose their livelihoods, and charter and public schools will benefit? What might the implications be for the community and for the DC economy, where the early childhood education industry plays such a vital role? Thornhill says, “The bar has been raised by the legislation and everybody is expected to improve. We know where people are. That’s why we did the quality and capacity audits so we would have real information about the improvements that programs need to make. We’ve made provisions in the legislation to help people get there. Is there an expectation that everybody will get there? Some may not. But that’s the way it works in any industry.”

As for Pre-K for All DC, Inc. they continue to fight the good fight. The new organization is continuing to monitor the implementation of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act using many of the mobilization strategies from the Pre-K Campaign. The organization is also taking on a new issue—an issue some believed should have been part of the Pre-K Campaign. On May 6, 2010, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. officially launched their effort to improve early care and education for children, birth to three, with a Leadership Summit titled, “The Future of the City’s Youngest Children: Laying The Foundation for School Success.” The Summit was organized in typical Pre-K for All DC fashion—to make DC leaders take notice. Over 100 DC policymakers and shapers attended. In an e-mail communication about the meeting, Thornhill wrote, “The goal of the Summit is to engage our city’s legislative and, business leaders, and the education and philanthropic community in thoughtful dialogue and action that will ultimately lead to a policy/legislative agenda around a system of programs and services for the District’s birth to three population.” A number of prominent experts from leading national early childhood education and policy institutions led roundtable discussions. Council Chair Vincent Gray gave remarks and pledged his support.

In speaking about Pre-K for All DC's birth to three agenda, Vincent Gray says, "This can be an antidote where kids can get a head start, and also, you are reaching some parents who may still be salvageable as parents. Again, if you get a child who is one or two- years-old in the program, the parent may only be 19 or 20, or younger, herself. In many instances, we are also talking about one parent, and not two. So, it is a chance to reach parents at a stage where they still may be valuable and teachable, and frankly, an opportunity to reach these kids where that intervention can make a difference in their own achievement levels later."

Thornhill says there will be a "full campaign" by Pre-K for All DC, Inc. on behalf of the birth to three population. However, things are a lot different now than they were in 2006 when the organization launched its campaign for universal pre-K for three- and four-year-olds. Thornhill acknowledges the more difficult environment, "There is less of a consensus for birth to three. Many people still think these babies should be home with their mothers." Thornhill also cites the impact of today's economy saying that for several months, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. had to "piece funding together." Last year, one local funder passed on a proposal from Pre-K for All DC, Inc. citing the economy. The funder's representative said, "Portfolios are being cut by one-third; any start-up would find it hard to get funding in this environment." However, on June 14, 2010, Pre-K for All DC, Inc. received welcomed news—they had been awarded a one-year \$300,000 grant by The W.K. Kellogg Foundation as part of the foundation's effort to "expand access to high-quality, early care and education for all infants, toddlers and preschoolers in our nation's capital." In response to the grant, Thornhill says, "The support of The Kellogg Foundation will strengthen our efforts to continue building public knowledge, public will and public action, so that all children get a great start in school and in life. Specifically, the grant will enhance our ability to advocate for full implementation of the District's Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2008 and develop a policy/legislative agenda based on our recent Birth to Three Leadership Summit. Both of these efforts are critical building blocks for the District's educational reform agenda and its long-term economic vitality."<sup>64</sup>

There is another major difference between 2006 and 2010 for Pre-K for All DC, Inc. Jesse Bailey, who managed the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and was the first Director of the new pre-K organization, has joined Chairman Vincent Gray's staff as a senior legislative aide. Of course, he can still be very helpful in this role, but it is clear that Pre-K for All DC, Inc. misses his dynamic leadership. However, the early childhood education infrastructure that supported the Pre-K for All DC Campaign and helped make the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 the law of the land in DC appears to be in place and supporting the birth to three agenda. And whatever the political future, Council Chairman Vincent Gray is currently fully on board as a "birth to three Champion."

If Washington DC becomes one of the first jurisdictions in the country to achieve pre-K for all three- and four-year-olds, it would not surprise many locals. As far as they are concerned, DC has always been a pioneer in the early childhood education arena. But Carrie Thornhill understands that there is a lot more work to be done to build a solid, *high-quality* pre-K system in DC for all children birth to five. She is also aware of the policy and economic challenges, but says of the work ahead, "we're building on success."

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED FOR PRE-K FOR ALL DC CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY

- Jesse Bailey, Former Executive Director, Pre-K for All DC Campaign; Senior Legislative Analyst, Office of Vincent C. Gray, District of Columbia Council Chairman\*
- Josephine Baker, Executive Director, DC Public Charter School Board
- Bobbi Blok, CEO, Georgetown Children's House Endowment
- Carol Brunson Day, Executive Director, National Black Child Development Institute\*
- Hye Sook Chung, Washington Area Woman's Foundation
- Sonia Di-Majo, Program Director, Barbara Chambers Children's Center
- Libby Doggett, Former Executive Director, Pre-K Now; Deputy Director, Pew Center on the States\*
- Deborah Gist, Former State Superintendent, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)
- Terry Golden, Chairman and CEO, Bailey Capital Corporation; Chairman, Federal City Council
- Vincent C. Gray, District of Columbia Council Chairman\*
- Group Interview with Pre-K parents and providers at Pre-K for All DC Town Hall Meeting, March 4, 2009
- Julianne Johnson, Former Chair, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Education
- Barbara Kamara, Former Executive Director, Office of Early Childhood Development/ Former Administrator, Early Care in Education Administration. D.C. Department of Human Services\*
- Deborah Lyons, Director of Applied Research and Urban Policy, University of the District of Columbia
- Patricia McMillan, Grandparent and Deputy Director, Pre-K for All DC Campaign
- Evelyn Moore, Founder and Former Executive Director, National Black Child Development Institute
- Parisa Norouzi, Co-Director Empower DC, Community Activist
- Arthur McKee, Program Officer, CityBridge Foundation
- BB Otero, CEO, Centro Nia Education Center; Pre-K Provider
- Nicola Reed, President, Family Home Provider Association; Pre-K Provider
- Frances Rollins, President, DC Chapter, National Association for Education of the Young Child (NAEYC); Pre-K Provider
- Maurice Sykes, Executive Director, Early Childhood Leadership Institute, University of the District of Columbia\*
- Carrie Thornhill, Chair and CEO, Pre-K for All DC, Inc.; Managing Director, Israel Manor, Inc.\*
- Andrea Young, Executive Director, Andrew J. Young Foundation; Former Founding Director, SPARK DC

\* Interviewed at least twice

**Meetings Attended/Site Visits Conducted:**

- Pre-K for All DC Strategic Planning Retreat—August 2008
- Teach for America: Early Childhood Education Initiative 2008 Career Summit—October 2008
- Committee for Economic Development, Business Roundtable: *Investing in Our Children's Future*—November 2008
- Site Visit: Centro Nia Education Center—November 2008
- Site Visit: Barbara Chambers Children's Center—June, 2009
- Town Hall Meeting: Update on the First 120 Days of the DC Pre-K Legislation—March 4, 2009
- Community Briefing on Emergency Pre-K Legislation—January 2010

## APPENDIX B

### PRE-K FOR ALL DC CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

#### CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

**Terry Golden, Campaign Co-Chair**

Chairman and CEO, Bailey Capital Corporation; Chairman, Federal City Council

**Carrie Thornhill, Campaign Co-Chair**

Chair and CEO, Pre-K for All DC, Inc; Managing Director, Israel Manor, Inc.

#### CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Bobbi Blok**

CEO, Georgetown Children's House Endowment

**Carol Brunson Day**

President, National Black Child Development Institute

**Libby Doggett**

Former Executive Director, Pre-K Now; Deputy Director, Pew Center on the States

**Bill Hughey**

Office of Child and Family Development, United Planning Organization

**Arthur McKee**

Program Officer, CityBridge Foundation

**BB Otero**

CEO, Centro Nia Education Center

**Maurice Sykes**

Executive Director, Early Childhood Leadership Institute, University of the District of Columbia

**Andrea Young**

Founding Project Director  
NBCDI-SPARK DC

**Felicia Dehaney**

Project Director  
NBCDI-SPARK DC

## APPENDIX C

### PARTIAL PUBLIC HEARING/WITNESS LIST FOR BILL 17-0537 “PRE-K FOR ALL DC AMENDMENT ACT OF 2007 JANUARY 3, 2008, 10:00AM

1. Panel – Investment in Our Children’s Future  
Carrie Thornhill, Pre-K for All DC Campaign Co-Chair  
Barbara Lang, DC Chamber of Commerce  
Jim Dinegar, Greater Washington Board of Trade  
Mike Petro, Committee for Economic Development
2. Panel – Landmark Studies and Impact of Quality Pre-K  
Craig Ramey, Ph.D., Georgetown University, Center for Health and Education  
Barbara Bowman, Ph.D., Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education  
Libby Doggett, Pre-K Now
3. Cherita Whiting, Ward 4 Educational Panel, Parent
4. Panel – Best Practices Across States  
Jacqueline Jones, Division of Early Childhood Education, New Jersey Department of Education  
Ralph Grafwallner, Division of Early Childhood Education, Maryland Department of Education
5. Panel – Pre-K Incentive Parents  
Patricia William  
Jamie Eaton  
Michael Cannery
6. Panel – Costs and Benefits of Quality Pre-K  
Clive Belfield, Ph.D., Queens College, City University of New York  
Mary Levy, Washington Lawyer’s Committee  
Craig Pascal, PNC Bank of Greater Washington
7. Panel – Importance of Early Intervention  
Sharon Ramey, Ph.D., Georgetown University, Center for Health and Education  
Bill Hughey, United Planning Organization  
Brenda Harris, Pre-K Comprehensive Services  
Dr. Janice Edwards, Pre-K Incentive Comprehensive Services Team
8. Panel – Pre-K Education Reform  
Nathan Saunders, Washington Teacher’s Union  
Jeff Smith, DC Voice  
Robert C. Bobb, President, DC State Board of Education

9. Panel – Higher Education Perspective  
Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis, President, Southeastern University  
Patricia McGuire, President, Trinity University  
Stanley Jackson, Acting President, University of the District of Columbia
10. Panel – Pre-K Incentive: DC’s Prototype of Quality  
Brooke McKie, Howard University, Pre-K Incentive Program Evaluation Project  
Jo-Ann Manswell-Butty, Howard University, Pre-K Incentive Program Evaluation Project
11. Panel – Early Care and Education Associations  
Frances Rollins, DC Association for the Education of Young Children  
Shirley Cooley, Washington Association of Child Care Centers  
BB Otero, Centro Nia
12. Panel – Pre-K Champions  
Ellen London, DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation  
Chuck Bean, Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington  
Maria Gomez, Mary’s Center for Maternal
13. Debbie Hall, Big Momma’s
14. Panel – Obstacles to Accessing Quality Pre-K  
Selstine Willmore, Parent  
Diane Gwinn, Parent  
Archie McMillan, Parent  
Valerie Jackson, Parent
15. Panel – Parents in Support of Quality Pre-K  
Nelly Valdez  
Kevin Cannaday
16. Sara Mead, Senior Research Fellow, New America Foundation
17. Executive Branch  
Dan Tangherlini, City Administrator

## APPENDIX D

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PRE-K ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION ACT OF 2008

#### Key Legislative Highlights

##### Planning for Systemic Change

The legislation requires the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to conduct two studies for the purpose of informing planning and implementation. The two studies are:

- A Capacity Audit across all sectors to determine the current capacity and availability of pre-k slots in existing programs.
- A Baseline Quality Assessment to measure the overall quality of pre-k programs across all sectors. The assessment will measure a sample of pre-k programs in the following areas: program structure; levels of language and literacy experiences; and teacher instructional experiences and student interactions.

The legislation further requires OSSE to submit to the Council a report by September 2009 that establishes benchmarks for on-going assessment of pre-k programs based on these two studies. By September of each subsequent year, OSSE is required to provide a report on progress made toward those benchmarks across all sectors.

##### Expansion

The legislation requires the development of a five-year expansion plan that ensures:

- A minimum of 15 percent of the unserved children are enrolled in pre-k programs each year until all children are served.
- A minimum of 25 percent of expansion programs should be operated by community-based organizations.

##### Program Requirements

OSSE will develop high-quality program requirements for the following areas:

- Curriculum aligned with DC Early Learning Standards
- Adult-to-child ratios
- Teacher Qualifications
- Professional Development and Training
- Parental Support and Involvement
- Accreditation
- Inclusion of Children with Disabilities
- Facilities
- Licensure
- Continuous Improvement, Classroom Assessment, and Child Outcome Assessment

The legislation requires all existing locally-funded classrooms to meet OSSE program requirements by September, 2014. All expansion classrooms must meet these requirements prior to opening.

### **Funding**

Public schools and public charter schools will continue to be funded through the District's Uniform Per Pupil Funding Formula (UPPPF) for three- and four-year-old education. Community-based organizations that meet the OSSE program requirements will receive funding equality to the UPPFF.

Funding authorized by this legislation is not intended to replace or supplant existing funding for three- and four-year-old care and education. Additionally, the legislation requires that all federal funds are to be utilized first and maximized to serve all children.

Within this year's budget supplemental and next year's budget, the DC Council dedicated a total of \$9,790,000 new dollars to fund the first year of activities specified in this legislation. These activities include 380 new pre-k program slots, the creation and initial funding for a program assistance fund, workforce development programs, infrastructure expansion, and the execution of the two planning studies.

### **Pre-K Program Assistance Fund**

The legislation establishes the Pre-K Program Assistance Fund to support programs in meeting OSSE program requirements. Over the next several years, grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to programs that commit to participating in a continuous quality improvement process.

### **Workforce Development**

The legislation establishes two major programs to assist individuals in attaining the credentials necessary to serve as a teacher or assistant teacher in a District pre-k classroom. These two programs are:

- The Higher Education Incentive Grant Program will award continuing education grants to current teachers and assistant teachers to attain the appropriate credentials.
- The Higher Education Incentive Scholarship Program will award scholarships to recent college graduates to attain appropriate credentials. Individuals who receive the scholarship must commit to teaching in the District for at least three years.

## APPENDIX E

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY RISK INDICATORS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER DATA BY WARD<sup>65</sup>

Table 1. District of Columbia Family Risk Indicators by Ward

Ward	# of Children Under 5*	% Population Under 5	% Children Under 5 Living in Families Below Poverty Level*	% Children Under 5 Living in Single Mother-Headed Families Below Poverty Level*	% Births to Single Mothers**	% Births to Teen Mothers**	% Low Birth Weight Infants**	% Births to Mothers who Received Adequate Prenatal Care**	Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births***	% Children in Families Receiving Aid Through TANF <sup>^</sup>	% Children in Families Receiving Aid Through Food Stamps <sup>^</sup>
Population Characteristics											
1	4,105	5.8%	26.3%	19.1%	58.9%	11.0%	9.7%	61.9%	11.8	13.1%	18.5%
2	1,803	2.6%	18.9%	9.1%	29.9%	5.2%	9.4%	72.0%	5.1	9.4%	14.7%
3	2,857	3.9%	2.1%	1.4%	5.3%	0.3%	8.4%	85.8%	6.9	0.2%	0.3%
4	4,196	5.6%	11.9%	6.4%	53.1%	10.0%	9.9%	62.7%	12.0	12.2%	18.0%
5	4,001	5.6%	21.4%	17.3%	68.4%	14.6%	13.8%	57.5%	17.6	24.4%	32.7%
6	3,342	4.9%	23.9%	20.6%	44.6%	9.2%	9.7%	71.4%	11.5	21.6%	28.0%
7	4,963	7.0%	29.3%	25.9%	82.5%	19.7%	13.8%	54.5%	15.5	33.0%	43.8%
8	7,269	10.2%	35.5%	31.1%	83.4%	17.7%	14.8%	52.2%	22.6	36.8%	47.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,536</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>

\* Data are from the 2000 Decennial Census.

\*\* Data are from 2006 Vital Statistics Data, DC Department of Health and Neighborhood Information at the Urban Institute.

\*\*\* Data are from 2005 Vital Statistics Data, DC Department of Health and Neighborhood Information at the Urban Institute.

<sup>^</sup> Data are from 2008 Income Maintenance Administration, DC Department of Human Services and Neighborhood Information at the Urban Institute.

Table 2. District of Columbia Child Development Center Research Data — Ward Level, 2008

Ward	# of Children Under 5*	# of Child Development Centers**	# of Slots for Infants/Toddlers (Ages 0-2)**	# of Slots for Older Children (Ages 3-5)**	Total Capacity**
1	4,105	29	512	1,836	2,348
2	1,803	72	1,163	3,261	4,424
3	2,857	33	173	2,260	2,433
4	4,196	38	470	1,916	2,388
5	4,001	36	374	2,267	2,641
6	3,342	44	590	1,904	2,494
7	4,963	35	298	1,707	2,005
8	7,269	43	590	2,055	2,645
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,536</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>4,170</b>	<b>17,206</b>	<b>21,376</b>

\* Data are from the 2000 Decennial Census.

\*\* Data are from the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, 2008.

Table 3. District of Columbia Child Development Homes Reach Data — Ward Level, 2008

Ward	# of Children Under 5*	# of Child Development Centers**	# of Slots for Infants/Toddlers (Ages 0-2)**	# of Slots for Older Children (Ages 3-5)**	Total Capacity**
1	4,105	10	19	29	48
2	1,803	7	13	18	31
3	2,857	4	8	12	20
4	4,196	36	68	101	169
5	4,001	27	54	81	135
6	3,342	31	61	92	153
7	4,963	45	87	135	222
8	7,269	30	57	89	146
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,536</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>924</b>

\* Data are from the 2000 Decennial Census.

\*\* Data are from the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, 2008.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Pre-K Now Resource Center. “ABCs of Pre-K.” [www.preknow.org/resource](http://www.preknow.org/resource).
  - <sup>2</sup> [paheadstart.org](http://paheadstart.org).
  - <sup>3</sup> Pre-K Now Resource Center. “ABCs of Pre-K.” [www.preknow.org/resource](http://www.preknow.org/resource).
  - <sup>4</sup> In 1997, the New York legislature passed a law for the purpose of making pre-K available to all four-year-olds by 2002. However, lack of funding has limited access to about one-third of the state’s four-year-olds and most children served come from low-income families. Pre-K Now Resource Center. “ABCs of Pre-K.” [www.preknow.org/resource](http://www.preknow.org/resource).
  - <sup>5</sup> <http://books.nap.edu/openbook>.
  - <sup>6</sup> [paheadstart.org](http://paheadstart.org).
  - <sup>7</sup> [paheadstart.org](http://paheadstart.org).
  - <sup>8</sup> [Preknow.org/policy/](http://Preknow.org/policy/).
  - <sup>9</sup> Pre-K Now Resource Center. “ABCs of Pre-K.” [www.preknow.org/resource](http://www.preknow.org/resource).
  - <sup>10</sup> [NIEER.org/yearbook2003](http://NIEER.org/yearbook2003).
  - <sup>11</sup> Pre-K Now. *Final Report and 2007-2008 Prospectus*, p.1.
  - <sup>12</sup> Schweinhart, Lawrence J., Ph.D. “The High Scope/Perry Pre-School Study Through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions and Frequently Asked Questions.” *Harvard Education Newsletter*. Abecedarian Early Intervention Project. *Research Points to the Long-Term Benefits of Pre-School*. January/February 2006. <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrcrdarian>, Early Intervention Program, <http://ayfp.org/forumbriefs/2001>.
  - <sup>13</sup> *National Institute for Early Education Research: State Pre-School Yearbook, 2009.Executive Summary*.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Foundation for Child Development 2010 Child Well-Being Index*. June 8, 2010 Press Release.
  - <sup>15</sup> *Infants and Toddlers in the District of Columbia: A Needs Assessment*. Prepared by HyeSook Chung, MSW, for the District of Columbia State Board of education, p.10.
  - <sup>16</sup> Barbara Kamara was also the Associate Commissioner for Developmental Services for Head Start in the Carter Administration.
  - <sup>17</sup> *History of DC Early Childhood Education*, available at [www.prekforalldc.org](http://www.prekforalldc.org).
  - <sup>18</sup> The Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development was disbanded by Mayor Adrian Fenty in 2009.
  - <sup>19</sup> Go to [GAO.gov/new\\_items/do8549T](http://GAO.gov/new_items/do8549T), for testimony of Cornelia Asby, Director of Education, Workforce and Income Security.
  - <sup>20</sup> *Doing the Right Thing for Children in a Major Urban School System*. *Young Children*, November 1994, pp. 4-6.
  - <sup>21</sup> Brochure: *Early Childhood Collaborative of the District of Columbia, Inc*. The Early Education Collaborative ceased operations earlier this year , but as this report documents, several of its former board members continue to lead the pre-K movement in DC.
  - <sup>22</sup> *Road Map to Universal School Readiness in the District of Columbia*. Blok, Cambria, Fritel, Otero, and Young. 2004, p.23.
  - <sup>23</sup> *Road Map to Universal School Readiness in the District of Columbia*, p.9.
  - <sup>24</sup> *Early Care and Education Matters: Quality Early Care and Education in the District of Columbia: Making the Case for an Increased Local Investment*. January 2004. DC Action for Children, p.6.
  - <sup>25</sup> The other SPARK sites were Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina and Ohio.
  - <sup>26</sup> The USRSG conference has been held yearly since 2003. In 2009, 1,800 DC community, civic and education leaders, and parents attended.
  - <sup>27</sup> The Universal School Readiness Conference has been held annually for eight years.
  - <sup>28</sup> *Road Map to Universal School Readiness in the District of Columbia*. Blok, Cambria, Fritel, Otero, and Young.
  - <sup>29</sup> *Early Learning Standards for Children Entering Kindergarten in the District of Columbia: Building a Strong Foundation for School Success and Lifelong Learning*. January 2005.
  - <sup>30</sup> All monies raised for the Campaign from all sources were held at the Foundation for the Capitol Region.
  - <sup>31</sup> Fiscal Impact Statement: “Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008.” p.8.
  - <sup>32</sup> *Infants and Toddlers in the District of Columbia: A Needs Assessment*. October, 2008. p.12.
  - <sup>33</sup> *Pre-K for All DC Project Overview, April, 2006*.
  - <sup>34</sup> *Investing in the Economic Vitality of the District of Columbia Through Pre-Kindergarten for All: Executive Summary*. September, 2006.

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- <sup>35</sup> *Program Works to Expand Pre-K*. Theola Labbe, *The Washington Post*, June 29, 2006. [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).
- <sup>36</sup> The Anacostia River is considered by many to be a dividing line in DC that cuts the city by separating poor neighborhoods from more affluent ones.
- <sup>37</sup> *100 Days and Beyond: 2007 Action Plan for the District of Columbia*. The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor, District of Columbia. January 11, 2007.
- <sup>38</sup> *Fenty Education e-Transition Early Care and Education Work Group, Final Report and Recommendations*. December 28, 2006, p.3.
- <sup>39</sup> *Fenty Education e-Transition Early Care and Education Work Group. Final Report and Recommendations*. December 28, 2006, p.1.
- <sup>40</sup> District of Columbia Government, Mayor Adrian Fenty Media Advisory, “Mayor Adrian Fenty Announces Education Initiative.” January 4, 2007.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ensuring a Vibrant City: The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in the District of Columbia. Executive Summary*. April 2007.
- <sup>42</sup> There were other attempts by DC Council members to pass universal pre-K legislation, key among them a Bill by former Councilman Kevin Chavous that never made it out of the Education Committee. Members of the DC early childhood education community say there was not widespread support for Chavous’ Bill because it would have been mandatory and was believed to be too costly.
- <sup>43</sup> *Conceptual Framework for the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Legislation*. (For Discussion Purposes Only: Meeting with Council Chair, Vincent Gray, July 19, 2007. Draft 15, 2007.
- <sup>44</sup> *Pre-K For All DC Comprehensive Plan. Metropolitan Group Final Plan*. September 24, 2007.
- <sup>45</sup> *The Washington Informer*. October 4-10, 2007, p.13.
- <sup>46</sup> *The Washington Informer*. November 15-13, 2007, p.1.
- <sup>47</sup> Referral of Proposed Legislation: Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007, Bill 17-0537. December 13, 2007.
- <sup>48</sup> *Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole Draft Report*. Bill 17-0537, the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 Introduced as the Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007. March 18, 2008.
- <sup>49</sup> Memo from Pre-K for All DC: “Public Hearing on the Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act.” January 3, 2007.
- <sup>50</sup> *Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole Draft Report*. Bill 17-0537, the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 Introduced as the Pre-K for All DC Amendment Act of 2007. March 18, 2008.
- <sup>51</sup> Family Care homes are not included in the 2008 Pre-K legislation. Leaders in the DC early childhood education community determined that including these providers would make legislation more difficult to craft, communicate about and pass.
- <sup>52</sup> The DC fiscal year begins in October so FY 08 began in October 07 and FY 09 began in October 2008.
- <sup>53</sup> Fiscal Impact Statement “Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act 2008.” Natwar M. Ghandi. May 6, 2008.
- <sup>54</sup> Pre-K for All DC Education Brief. April 23, 2009.
- <sup>55</sup> *Washington Informer Archives*, April 23, 2009
- <sup>56</sup> Fenty News Release, October 9, 2009.
- <sup>57</sup> Taken from Chairman Vincent Gray’s remarks prior to introducing the pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2010.
- <sup>58</sup> *State Superintendent blasted over missteps in DC pre-K initiative*. Leah Fabel, *Examiner Staff Writer. The Examiner*. November 13, 2009.
- <sup>59</sup> Testimony of Kerri Briggs, State Superintendent of Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education. November 13, 2009
- <sup>60</sup> Taken from Chairman Vincent Gray’s remarks prior to introducing the pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2010.
- <sup>61</sup> The Pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2010.
- <sup>62</sup> Taken from Chairman Vincent Gray’s remarks prior to introducing the pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2010.
- <sup>63</sup> Testimony of Carrie L. Thornhill. March 31, 2010.
- <sup>64</sup> June 14, 2010 Press Release, “W.K. Kellogg Foundation Announces New Grants to Model Programs Promoting Access to Quality Early Care and Education.”
- <sup>65</sup> These tables were taken from *District of Columbia Early Childhood Risk and Reach Assessment, Fiscal Year 2008*.