



Katie Kelly, Director, PRE4CLE
Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
June 11, 2015

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Katie Kelly and I am the director of PRE4CLE, Cleveland's plan to expand access to high quality early childhood education for all three and four year olds. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you my testimony related to House Bill 64 today.

Having met with many of you during the course of this budget process, I will keep my remarks brief.

With nearly 80 percent of Cleveland's 16,000 preschool-aged children living in poverty, and only 16 percent of children entering the Cleveland Metropolitan School District meeting full readiness on the state's kindergarten readiness exams, the Cleveland community realized we must act with urgency, intention, and strategic collaboration to address one of our greatest education challenges – school readiness.

The groundbreaking Cleveland Plan for Transforming Schools, a plan put in place through the bi-partisan support of the Ohio legislature, addresses this urgent priority through the call to expand access to full-day, high-quality pre-k for all three-and four-year old children who live in the City of Cleveland. PRE4CLE plans to accomplish that. Co-Chaired by Cleveland Metropolitan School District CEO Eric Gordon and Marcia Egbert, Senior Program Officer of The George Gund Foundation, the Early Childhood Compact charged with monitoring the successful implementation of PRE4CLE includes representatives from a diverse group of public and private sector organizations. The full list is attached to your testimony.

In Cleveland, we are putting where are our mouth is by investing local funding including \$7.5 million from CMSD, \$1 million from Cuyahoga County, and \$900,000 in philanthropic and corporate support, and PRE4CLE continues to seek additional local funds to support full implementation.

However, we cannot and should not do this alone. Meeting the needs of Ohio's most at-risk children is a responsibility that we share, and additional support is needed through partnerships with state, federal, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to reach the goal of taking PRE4CLE to scale.

We are here today to ask you to partner with the Cleveland community to support the PRE4CLE plan by allowing Cleveland's state-funded Early Childhood Education slots to be expanded to

full-day with state funds. We estimate this investment would be \$2.8 million in Fiscal Year 2016 and \$3.3 million in Fiscal Year 2017, allowing Cleveland to serve approximately 1,280 children over the biennium in full-day, high-quality preschool.

We are requesting support for full-day preschool because research, both nationally and in Cleveland, shows us time and time again that the benefits of high-quality preschool significantly increase for at-risk children with increased time in the preschool classroom. Specifically, research from Case Western Reserve University in 2014 shows that children in full-day, high-quality preschool programs in Cleveland scored significantly higher on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment compared to their peers, and that children who spent more time in these high-quality settings (measured by months) were more prepared for kindergarten.

Simply put, we know what works for Cleveland's youngest learners and we are asking the state to be a partner in our efforts to support parents requests for more time on task and the research for full-day preschool. For the past 15 years, the Greater Cleveland community has been a national leader in early learning investments, including evaluation to understand the impact of our programs, and now we are ready to take that model to scale.

Your support for the innovations of the Cleveland Plan has been critical to breaking down barriers and charting new frontiers for education in the State of Ohio. As the next step, we ask you to continue to support that transformation through support for PRE4CLE's current request.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions.

Cleveland Early Childhood Compact Members

Executive Committee

Eric Gordon, CEO, Cleveland Metropolitan School District (Co-Chair)
Marcia Egbert, Senior Program Officer, The George Gund Foundation (Co-Chair)
Rebekah Dorman, Director, Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood
Monyka Price, Chief of Education, City of Cleveland Office of Mayor Frank Jackson
Mark Sniderman, Executive in Residence, Case Western Reserve University

Members

Kristen Baird Adams, Senior VP and Managing Director, PNC Bank Cleveland Regional Office
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Evelyn Burnett, Vice President of Economic Opportunity, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
Jennifer Dodd, Director of Operations and Development, Education Service Center of Cuyahoga County
Cindy Fareed, Quality Enhancement Director, Starting Point
Rob Fischer, Co-Director, Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development, Case Western
Magda Gomez, Cleveland Hispanic Roundtable
Shadonna Griffin, Parent Representative, CEOGC Head Start
Katie Kelly, Director, PRE4CLE
Melissa Manos, Project Director, Help Me Grow Home Visiting
Bob Mengerink, Superintendent, Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County
Ann Mullin, Senior Program Officer, The George Gund Foundation
Elizabeth Newman, COO, The Centers for Families and Children
Megan O'Bryan, Executive Director, Cleveland Transformation Alliance
Billie Osborne Fears, Executive Director, Starting Point
Judy Peters, community volunteer
Michelle Pierre-Farid, Chief Academic Officer, Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)
David Quolke, President of the Cleveland Teacher's Union (CTU)
Michelle Rzucidlo-Rupright, Teacher and CTU Secretary, CMSD
Linda Schlein, Greater Cleveland Congregations
Ken Surratt, Office of the County Executive, Cuyahoga County
Felton Thomas, Director, Cleveland Public Library
Tiana Tufts, Parent Representative, CEOGC
Nicole Vitale, Office of Early Childhood, CMSD
Susan Wagner, Content Expert, CMSD
Linda Williams, Senior Director of Educational Services, PBS Ideastream
Marianne Wolf, Special Education Preschool, CMSD



PRE4CLE expanding access to high-quality preschool programs in Cleveland: Paul Clark (opinion)

By **Guest Columnist/cleveland.com** on November 17, 2014 at 4:33 AM

Four year old Jalen Alford shows his delight at being praised for a job well done while learning about the letter J in Nicole Gentile's pre-kindergarten class at Marion Sterling Elementary.

Investing in pre-kindergarten education pays off for everyone.

Cleveland's PRE4CLE pre-K expansion initiative was lauded recently as a national model by **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro** and by Roberto J. Rodríguez, deputy assistant for education to President Barack Obama as a member of the White House Domestic Policy Council.

Castro has been traveling the country to gain a better understanding of housing and urban development issues facing communities across the country and because quality early education is one of the best investments we can make in our kids and our country.

He chose to stop in Cleveland because of the great work that's already happening. As he said, "Progress is achieved from the ground up, not the top down."

While they were here, Secretary Castro and Mr. Rodriguez met with Ohio leaders in philanthropy, business and the public sector to discuss the importance of collective investment in early education initiatives that ensure all children and families have the opportunity to succeed in school and life.

Giving children the right start to their education has never been more relevant. A ManpowerGroup **study showed** that 49 percent of employers struggle to fill jobs because too many job-seekers lack the right skills. In a world economy increasingly fueled by a knowledge-based workforce, the solution is to help prepare at-risk children for the challenges ahead so they enter kindergarten on par with their more economically secure peers.

PRE4CLE is one way to do that. **PRE4CLE is our community's plan** to expand access to high-quality preschool programs to children in the city of Cleveland by increasing the number of high-quality preschool spaces available for 3- and 4-year-olds whose families want them to attend high-quality preschool.

This groundbreaking model for partnership shows that when corporations, foundations, social service agencies, private preschool providers and the public schools work together, they can move the needle on academic achievement for our children. We know that tremendous results can be achieved when children have high-quality preschool experiences.

PNC has been an early supporter in bringing the PRE4CLE initiative to life. At PNC, early-

childhood education is the unwavering focus of Grow Up Great, our \$350 million multiyear bilingual initiative in early-childhood education. Through it, we have provided more than \$6 million in local grants to help expand access to high-quality early learning to those most in need, and to raise awareness of this critical economic development issue.

Knowing of early education's positive impact, **we worked recently to set the Guinness World Record for largest vocabulary lesson.** Locally, 136 students took part in a simultaneous lesson with 4,000 children across 37 cities to raise awareness of the critical role vocabulary has in a child's early development.

To prepare children for the challenges ahead, we must work to connect the billions of dollars of catalytic capital investments currently underway to high-quality early education that will help set all of our children on a path to the jobs of the future.

And further, indisputable research indicates that the return on investment in high-quality education and school readiness are significant and long-lasting. That's an investment that we at PNC and many of our corporate and foundation partners believe is a wise one.

The state of Ohio submitted a federal grant application earlier this month, and specifically named Cleveland, and PRE4CLE, as one of the communities that is ready to expand high-quality early education to its children.

Public-private partnership is a key to our success. As we look to the future for Cleveland's children, we know it will be brighter if we all invest to make high-quality pre-K a reality for all of Cleveland's children.

Paul Clark is the regional president of PNC Bank.

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