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**TO:** Superintendents of Schools with Universal Pre-K Grants  
UPK Program Contacts  
UPK Fiscal Contacts

**FROM:** Jason Breslin, Director of the Office of Early Learning

**SUBJECT:** Understanding Your 2020-2021 Universal Prekindergarten Allocation

**DATE:** August 14, 2020

Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) grant funds are allocated to school districts in accordance with a formula set forth in Section 3602-e (10) of Education Law. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the grant awards for the Additional Grants for the Prekindergarten for Three- and Four-Year Old Students (EPK4) will be merged into districts' Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) allocations. The 2020-2021 UPK Allocations List can be accessed on the [UPK website](#).

Allocations and the number of children to be served for districts that received only UPK funding during the 2019-2020 school year are unchanged. For districts that received an EPK4 grant award in the 2019-2020 school year, the allocations list provides information about the districts' new consolidated UPK allocation.

**Please note that the Division of the Budget has approved the 2020-21 UPK allocations with the caveat that, because of State revenue losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, payments of these grant funds could be reduced by a minimum of 20% in the absence of sufficient federal support for the State.**

The below chart defines the contents of each column of the UPK Allocations List.

Column	Column Heading	Description of Contents
A	Code	The first six digits of the district's BEDS Code
B	District Name	Name of school district
C	2020-21 Maximum UPK Aid	The maximum UPK funding that the district is eligible to receive for the 2020-2021 school year
D	Base Eligible Half-Day 3-Year Old Pupils	The maximum number of 3-year old half-day students for which the district could have received funding in 2019-2020
E	Base Eligible 3-Year Old Full-Day Pupils	The maximum number of 3-year old full-day students for which the district could have

		received funding in 2019-2020
F	UPK 3-Year Old Base (FTE Pupils to Serve) $(D \times 0.5) + E$	<p>The number of 3-year old students that must be served for a district to access its full UPK allocation</p> <p>This number is expressed as full time equivalent students. For this calculation, full-day students are counted as 1.0 and half-day students are counted as 0.5. The formula for this calculation is the product of the base eligible half-day 3-year old pupils (Column D) multiplied by one half (0.5) plus the base eligible full-day 3-year old pupils (Column E).</p>
G	Base Eligible Half-Day 4-Year Old Pupils	The maximum number of 4-year old half-day students for which the district could have received funding in 2019-2020
H	Base Eligible 4-Year Old Full-Day Pupils	The maximum number of 4-year old full-day students for which the district could have received funding in 2019-2020
I	UPK 4-Year Old Base (FTE Pupils to Serve) $(G \times 0.5) + H$	<p>The number of 4-year old students that must be served for a district to access its full UPK allocation</p> <p>This number is expressed as full time equivalent students. For this calculation, full-day students are counted as 1.0 and half-day students are counted as 0.5. The formula for this calculation is the product of the base eligible half-day 4-year old pupils (Column G) multiplied by one half (0.5) plus the base eligible full-day 4-year old pupils (Column H).</p>

**Half-day Conversion Coverage**

The half-day conversion coverage only applies to districts that receive UPK funding designated for the provision of full-day Pre-K to three- and/or four-year old students; that is districts with numbers in Column F and/or Column I of the UPK Allocations List. It does not apply to districts that receive funding designated for half-day programming but have elected to provide full-day services.

The half-day conversion coverage is intended to discourage districts from converting either 3-year old or 4-year old full-day Pre-K slots to half-day. If a district serves more than 30 percent of its base eligible 3-year old (Column E) or 4-year old full-day slots (Column H) in half-day slots, the district is subject to a reduction in its grant payable. This reduction is equal to the funding allocated for the number of full-day slots served as half-day slots in excess of the 30 percent

threshold. This loss of funding will not impact the maximum grant payable or base eligible pupil count for following year.

Districts may apply to the commissioner for a hardship waiver that would allow a district to convert more than 30 percent of full-day slots to half-day slots and receive funding for such pupils served. This waiver will be granted upon a demonstration by the school district that due to a significant change in the resources available to the school district and absent this hardship waiver, the school district would be unable to serve such pupils in prekindergarten programs, without causing significant disruption to other district programming. After the first Universal Pre-K output reports are available in the State Aid Management System (SAMS), the Department will identify districts that are at risk of being assessed the half-day conversion overage. Such districts will be contacted with specific instructions for determining whether a waiver request is appropriate and submitting a request.

**Example:**

District A has an allocation of \$100,000 to serve 26 four-year olds in half-day slots and 10 four-year olds in full-day slots ( $26 * 0.5 + 10 = 23$  FTEs). Due to fiscal constraints, the district decides to eliminate the full-day classroom and serve 36 students in half-day slots; two half-day sessions of 18 students (18 FTEs). Under this plan, District A will lose funding for two reasons: (A) the district is serving fewer FTEs under this plan than the allocation requires, and (B) the district will incur an overage penalty.

The overage penalty is calculated as follows. District A is funded for 10 full-day slots but converted all 10 to half-day slots. The law says if a district converts more than 30% of the full-day slots (3 slots) to half-day, the FTEs served must be reduced by the number of slots in excess of the 30% (7 slots). Therefore, District A would lose funding for an additional 7 FTEs. Stated differently, because District A is converting to all half-day Pre-K, it would receive the UPK funds allocated for half-day slots, plus half of 30% of funds allocated for full-day slots.

As a result of serving fewer FTEs under this plan than the allocation requires ( $18 / 23$  FTEs is 78.25%), District A would lose \$21,739. The overage penalty would impose an additional reduction of \$30,435 (7 of 23 FTEs is 30.43%) for serving more than 30% of the full-day seats in half-day programs. This is the calculation:

- Step 1: 18 FTE pupils served
- Step 2: Overage reduction of 7 pupils reduces 18 FTE pupils served to 11.
- Step 3:  $11 / 23$  FTE pupils to serve (from Column I of UPK Allocations List) = 47.82%
- Step 4:  $\$100,000 \times 47.82 = \$47,826$  (maximum grant payable)

District A applies for a hardship waiver, which is approved. The maximum UPK grant payable would be \$203,644, calculated as follows:

- Step 1: 18 FTE pupils served
- Step 2: No overage reduction due to waiver
- Step 3:  $18 / 23$  FTE pupil to serve (from Column I of UPK Allocations List) = 78.26%
- Step 4:  $\$100,000 \times 78.26 = \$78,260$  (maximum grant payable)

### **Maximum Grant Payable**

The maximum grant payable will be calculated by dividing the **current year 3-year old prekindergarten pupils served** (the actual full time equivalent students served based on the UPK BEDS Day child count extracted from the Student Information Repository) by the **Pre-K 3-year old Base** (Column F) to get a percentage of eligible students served. The portion of the 2020-2021 Maximum UPK Aid (Column C) attributable to 3-year old pupils is then multiplied by this percentage. The same calculation is performed for 4-year old pupils. No district may receive more than 100% of the 2020-2021 Maximum UPK Aid.

### **UPK Application Process**

With the consolidation of EPK4 grants with UPK, districts will submit one application and one FS-10 for the UPK program. The UPK application will be submitted through the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System (MVPS). An email will be sent to Superintendents, Program Contacts, and Fiscal Contacts when the application is published and available to districts.

### **Questions**

Questions regarding this memo or any aspect of your Pre-K program may be directed to the Office of Early Learning at [uel@nysed.gov](mailto:uel@nysed.gov) or by telephone at (518) 474-5807.