

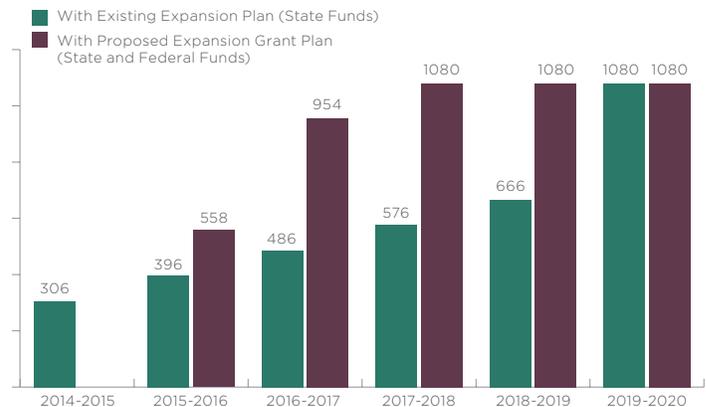


## RHODE ISLAND AWARDED 2014 FEDERAL PRESCHOOL EXPANSION GRANT December 2014

In response to President Obama's call to expand access to high-quality preschool to every child in America, Congress appropriated \$250 million for the Preschool Development/Expansion Grant Program in fiscal year 2014. In October of 2014, along with 34 other states, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) submitted what is now recognized as a winning application. RIDE will receive \$19 million dollars over four years to expand its high quality State Pre-Kindergarten Program (Pre-K). As one of only four state preschool programs in the country that meets or exceeds the nation's highest quality benchmarks as measured by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), the Rhode Island State Pre-K is recognized as a national leader in the development of high-quality preschool programs. These federal resources, combined with continued state investment, will significantly increase access to this high-quality program.

The state's long-standing efforts to create a coordinated early childhood system have positioned Rhode Island to use the federal Preschool Expansion Grant resources to significantly increase enrollment of four-year-olds in Pre-K in high-need communities and to build and enhance the state Pre-K Program infrastructure. Rhode Island's Pre-K Program uses a mixed delivery system that includes public schools, Head Start programs and community-based child care programs. The state is recognized as a national leader because it requires and supports all state Pre-K funded classrooms to achieve the same high-quality standards, regardless of setting. Rhode Island's plan is elegantly simple. The RI Department of Education (RIDE) will use federal Preschool Expansion Grant dollars to:

### Projected Rhode Island Pre-K slots 2014-2015 through 2019-2020



- **Expand access to the high quality Rhode Island State Pre-K Program** by both accelerating the existing state expansion plan and leveraging the federal dollars to achieve increased access in seven high-need communities that have more than 50% of children enrolled in Free and Reduced Price Lunch: Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, West Warwick, Newport, Central Falls and East Providence
- **Improve upon the state processes and supports** that ensure the quality implementation of the program, including monitoring, technical assistance and the implementation of a rigorous program evaluation.

Under RIDE's plan the state will expand access to the high quality Rhode Island State Pre-K Program from the existing 17 classrooms (306 children) in school year 2014-15 to 60 classrooms (1080 children) in school year 2019-20. Over four years, the federal expansion grant plan will enable 1,548 more four-year-olds to be enrolled in new State Pre-K slots than would have been possible without the federal grant.