



Press Release

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PRE4CLE HELPS MORE STUDENTS ATTEND HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL IN THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR AT PUBLIC, PRIVATE PROGRAMS

CMUSD's preschool programs are full and have waiting lists

CLEVELAND, OHIO – Hundreds more of Cleveland's four year olds started their school careers this year in a high-quality preschool environment because of PRE4CLE's efforts to expand the number of preschool openings at public and private programs and to help preschool providers improve quality at their programs.

Speaking today at Tremont Montessori Elementary School on the first day of preschool in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, CEO Eric Gordon announced the district was able to add 260 new high-quality preschool openings for children this school year. This year, CMUSD's preschool programs are full and having waiting lists. Another 75 new high-quality preschool openings were created at private providers in the city.

"The first day of preschool is an important day for Cleveland's children. Studies show children who are present on the first day of school are more likely to have high attendance, be reading at grade level by third grade, and stay in school through high school graduation," Gordon said. "PRE4CLE plays an important role in children's academic careers by connecting families to preschool programs that will expose children to high-quality learning and creative and imaginative play, which leads to success later in life."

The new openings are the result of several important steps PRE4CLE has taken since the plan was announced in March 2014:

- Training teachers and aides for early childhood certifications
- Helping private preschool programs meet the goals of the state's Step Up to Quality Ratings
- Adding certified teachers aides to the classrooms at CMUSD

PRE4CLE is on pace to create new opportunities for 1,181 children to attend a high-quality preschool in the 2014-2015 school year," said Katie Kelly, PRE4CLE Director. During the remainder of the school year, PRE4CLE will continue to expand the number of high-quality spaces available in CMUSD and high-quality child care centers by leveraging previously unused spaces in quality preschool classrooms throughout the

community. These classrooms are highly rated by Step Up To Quality, Ohio's quality rating improvement system.

Kelly said PRE4CLE will also continue working with parents and families to raise awareness about the importance of quality and how to access high-quality early opportunities for their children

"It's important that parents and caregivers choose a high-quality program for their preschool students. Ninety percent of a child's brain forms in the first five years of life," Kelly said. "We want all parents who are interested in a high-quality preschool program for their children to contact us so we can connect them with a program in their neighborhood that meets stringent quality standards."

Pierre Sain and Javin Polk, parents of a CMSD preschooler at Tremont Montessori, commented that high-quality preschool programs have allowed their three children to start Kindergarten better prepared, which has helped them excel as students.

"My wife and I love this school and really believe that having our children in high-quality preschool environments make a big difference," Mr. Sain said. "High-quality preschool has improved their social skills, and their ability and desire to get along with others. Each child enters preschool with different levels of learning – and teachers at high-quality preschool programs work with each child to get them ready for the first day of kindergarten, and make sure they have the foundation they need to build successful and happy."

About PRE4CLE: PRE4CLE is a plan to expand access to high-quality preschool programs to children in the City of Cleveland and is a major next step in implementing Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools. Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, PRE4CLE will increase the number of high-quality preschool spaces available for four year olds in the City of Cleveland whose families want them to attend high-quality preschool. The plan will be rolled out to three year olds at a later date. For more information, please visit: www.pre4cle.org.

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