

**WILLINGBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
WILLINGBORO, NEW JERSEY 08046-2847

DR. RONALD G. TAYLOR
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

**WILLINGBORO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AWARDED
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION EXPANSION AID (PEEA) GRANT**

WILLINGBORO, September 29, 2017 – Willingboro Public School District has been awarded the Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) Grant in the amount of \$1,472,421.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Division of Early Childhood and Family Engagement invited school districts to a meeting on August 8, 2017 to discuss the Notification of Funding Opportunity (NFO) and specific details about the grant. According to information in the NFO, “the appropriation of \$25,000,000 was available to increase access to high quality preschool for three and four-year-old children.” The NFO further maintained that districts could apply for the grant to increase the number of students served, lengthen the school day for preschool children, and enhance the quality of preschool classrooms in the district.

Willingboro Public School District will utilize these funds to both expand and improve the current preschool program. This competitive grant will allow the district to open two new full-day classes for 3-year-old learners. Both classes will be staffed with a highly qualified teacher and paraprofessional. In addition, the enrollment of all 3 and 4-year-old classes will now be capped at fifteen students (reduced from eighteen previously), to ensure that children benefit from small learning communities supported by a well-researched curriculum.

The district is also planning to increase the number of students with special needs in general education preschool classes on a full-time basis (inclusion). The additional funding will help the district increase parental involvement and upgrade technology in the preschool classrooms. Two new Master Teachers will be hired and will be instrumental in coaching teachers and providing classroom support. A Preschool Intervention and Referral Team will also be established to provide additional support for children and their families.

Dr. Ronald G. Taylor, Superintendent, states, “Our district is committed to providing a high-quality preschool education for young children. We are extremely excited and proud to be the recipients of the PEEA Grant that will help us to improve our preschool program. This opportunity to improve our service to our community firmly supports our mission to prepare our children to be college and career ready! We know that a high quality early childhood program will give our students a strong start to their academic careers.” The district will welcome the new 3-year-old students and their families on October 12, 2017 at Garfield East Elementary School. Willingboro residents may apply for the new PK-3 program by contacting the Office of Special Projects at 609-835-8600 x. 1038.

Additional information about the Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) Grant can be found on the New Jersey Department of Education’s website at www.nj.gov/education/ece/peea.