

# The Connecticut General Assembly



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## LEGISLATORS APPLAUD GRANT FOR EAST HARTFORD PRE-SCHOOL

State Representatives Jason Rojas, Henry Genga and Jeff Currey on Tuesday applauded the governor's announcement of a \$300,000 state grant proposal for East Hartford that will help expand the availability of high-quality preschool for 30 children in town.

About \$150,000 of the funding is expected to be approved by the State Bond Commission and the rest is being awarded as a result of a multi-state federal tobacco lawsuit settlement. The state funding for East Hartford is part of a larger \$3.5 million grant being awarded to fourteen municipalities in Connecticut, allowing for an additional 416 preschool slots under the state's Smart Start initiative.

"I want to thank Governor Malloy again for helping to improve the quality of education in our school system, particularly our youngest students," Rep. Genga said. "This funding is going to go a long way to helping 30 youngsters progress during the most critical time of their learning."

"This is an excellent opportunity for East Hartford to increase the availability of quality early childhood opportunities for families and children," said Rep. Rojas (D-East Hartford). "Access to early childhood education opportunities are key to closing the opportunity and reading gaps that lead to the achievement gap. Preparation is a key to long-term educational success and that preparation begins early in life and is especially important for 3 and 4 years olds where we can tackle the important goals of building fluency in numeracy and literacy."

"Because of this state funding, East Hartford will be able to add 30 pre-school slots. That means 30 more children will be allowed the opportunity to get a jumpstart on their education. This is an important step toward achieving universal pre-kindergarten in Connecticut, and an important step in ensuring that our kids have the tools to succeed and fill modern, 21st century jobs," said Rep. Currey (D-East Hartford).

Funds for the expansion come under the state's Smart Start initiative. This is the first year of the ten-year initiative. A total of \$1,587,055 for capital improvements will be considered at an upcoming meeting of the State Bond Commission, in addition to \$2,088,350 for operational expenses from the Tobacco Settlement fund.

“We must ensure that children are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in life – regardless of income or zip code,” said Governor Malloy. “Expanding the availability of preschool options in our state will prepare them for college and careers in a global, 21st Century economy.”