

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



March 18, 2025

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor, District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW #406  
Washington, DC 20004

Chairman Phil Mendelson and the Council of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW #504  
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Importance of Maintaining PKEEP Funding in the District's FY2026 Budget

Dear Mayor Bowser, Chair Mendelson and Councilmembers:

We write to strongly advocate for maintaining funding for the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) in the fiscal year 2026 District of Columbia budget. We support PKEEP for the following reasons.

1. Pre-k education provides important early childhood development and educational preparation. Research has shown that children participating in pre-K programs have improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, and led to higher high school graduation rates.
2. In 2023, the District of Columbia had the highest average cost for childcare in the country at \$24,396 per child. Without access to free and high-quality pre-K, many families will be unable to provide their children with this essential educational foundation.
3. District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and Charter Schools do not have sufficient capacity to provide pre-K education for every District child.
4. PKEEP steps in to fill that void, ensuring that eligible children can get free access to high-quality pre-K education via programs offered by community-based organizations. A total of 1,000 seats are currently provided through PKEEP programs across the District.
5. PKEEP is particularly important in Ward 3, where there is no public pre-K 3 education available either at DCPS or charter schools. Notably, a majority of PKEEP seats in Ward 3 are in or adjacent to ANC 3A, including a CommuniKids early child education center and the pre-K program at St. Albans.

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**Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (January 1, 2025-December 31, 2026)** Website: [www.anc3a.org](http://www.anc3a.org)

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6. If the District does not preserve funding for PKEEP, hundreds of families who are simply unlucky in the DCPS lottery will be forced to choose between paying some of the highest costs for childcare in the nation, foregoing important early childhood development and educational preparation for their children, or relocating outside of the District to access affordable pre-K programs.

Not surprisingly, we have already heard from many parents in ANC 3A who strongly oppose reducing PKEEP funding in the FY2026 budget. We understand that you must make difficult decision that balance the public interest across the full range of the District's agencies and government functions. But – given its fundamental importance to families and children in ANC 3A and across the District – we strongly urge you to maintain universal access to free pre-kindergarten education by fully funding PKEEP in the FY2026 budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



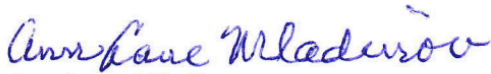
Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis  
Chair



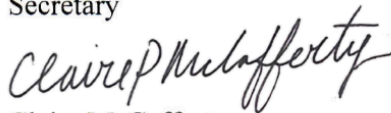
Isaac Bowers  
Vice Chair



Gracemary Allen  
Treasurer



Ann Lane Mladinov  
Secretary



Claire McCafferty

This resolution was approved by the Commission by a vote of 5 - 0 at its duly-noticed public meeting on March 18, 2025, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)