

City Of Seattle Selects First Classrooms For Preschool Program

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray recently announced the providers and locations for the first classrooms of the new Seattle Preschool Program. Beginning in September, the program will serve about 230 students in neighborhoods across the city.

Four providers will offer full-day, high-quality preschool for three- and four-year-olds in 12 classrooms:

- Causey's Early Learning Center, with classrooms in the Central District and Beacon Hill.
- Community Day School Association in Beacon Hill, Rainier Valley, Delridge and Leschi.
- Sound Childcare Solutions with classrooms Downtown and in Mt. Baker.
- Creative Kids in Greenwood.

"Seattle is teaming with quality educators to provide these children with a great start to classroom learning," said Murray. "Quality early childhood education will have a lasting impact on these kids, leading to success in school and in life."

In one study of Chicago students, children who attended a quality preschool program were 29 percent more likely to graduate from high school than their peers who did not.

"We have a strong group of high-quality preschool providers," said Seattle City Council President Tim Burgess. "This is a great start. Full day, affordable, high-quality preschool will become a reality for hundreds of Seattle families this September, then thousands more in the



Seattle Mayor Ed Murray

coming years. This is an investment to make certain Seattle children have a fair and strong start. It will change lives."

All Seattle Preschool Program classrooms will be staffed by well-qualified teachers with access to continuing professional development. The student to teacher ratio will be no more than 10 to 1. All providers are licensed by the State of Washington and rated three or higher by the State's Early Achievers program.

According to Murray, sites were selected based the preschool's proximity to low-performing public schools, its track record serving diverse communities, and plans to actively engage families in their students' success.

Seattle Public Schools continues to experience an opportunity gap for lower-income kids and children of color. Nearly 90 percent of Caucasian 3rd graders are meeting math and reading standards in this city, compared to approximately half of African-American students. About one-quarter of African American and

Latino students do not graduate on time, compared to 8 percent of Caucasian students.

"Our kids come from all different environments, but they can all learn by doing, so we use a curriculum that engages both a child's mind and their hands," said Ruth Brown of Causey's Learning Center. "I strongly believe in professional development, and this program will encourage continued skill-building for our teachers. We are very excited to be in this first group of providers."

All Seattle Preschool Program classes will meet six hours a day throughout the 180-day academic year. All classrooms will use approved age-appropriate curriculum geared for hands-on learning.

Tuition is based on family income and is free for families earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty rate, currently \$70,000 for a family of four. The highest-earning families will pay \$10,173 for the 180-day school year.

The average rate for unsubsidized center-based preschool programs in Seattle is \$1,228 per month.

In December, the Department of Education and Early Learning will accept applications from additional providers to join the program. For the 2016-2017 school year, an additional 25 classrooms will serve another 500 children. In its fourth year, the program will serve 2000 children across Seattle.

Last November, Seattle voters approved \$58 million over 4 years to launch the program.

New Spokane NAACP Head Wants To Repair Damage, Move Forward

SPOKANE (AP) - The new president of the Spokane NAACP says she wants to focus on repairing the damage from the recent Rachel Dolezal controversy.

Naima Quarles-Burnley last month replaced Dolezal, who resigned amid questions about her racial identity after her parents said she was a white woman

pretending to be black.

Quarles-Burnley tells The Spokesman-Review that the episode hurt the organization because people questioned the group's integrity. But the chapter's new leader says she's committed, to moving forward and showing that the actions of one don't reflect on all.

One of the first goals will be to fill positions within the chapter's executive committee. She also wants to work on raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in the African-American community and prepare for a regional NAACP conference this fall.

Updated throughout the week
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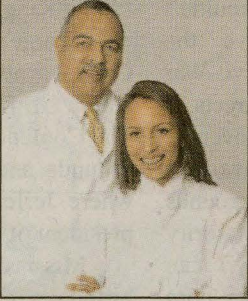
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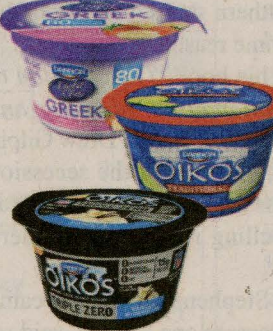
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