



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Jeannine Durkin, Acting Superintendent
From: Lisa Van Thiel, Early Childhood Coordinator
Date: March 29, 2019
Re: Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments Grant

The Department of Early Education and Care awarded Lowell Public Schools the Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments Grant (IPLE). This is the final year of this grant funding. The grant currently provides us with \$112,817.00. Funds will be used in FY20 to pay salaries and fringe of three preschool paraprofessional salaries.

The IPLE grant has provided funding to the district to promote access to high-quality, inclusive preschool-aged learning environments for children with and without disabilities. The grant premise is to support preschool learning environments that are responsive to the needs of children and families; and increase the number of preschool-aged children with disabilities and “high needs” that are participating in high quality, inclusive preschool learning environments for the past three years to support the district in meeting federal guidelines for Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments.

Federal guidelines dictate staffing and qualification for inclusive preschool classrooms with a mandate to maintain the following class size and teacher ratio:

1. The maximum class size for IPLE sessions must not exceed twenty children.
 - a. When the IPLE-funded session has up to five children with the disabilities, the total class size shall not exceed (20) children with a minimum of one Preschool Teacher and one Paraprofessional.
 - b. When the IPLE-funded session has six or seven children with disabilities, the total class size may not exceed fifteen children with one Preschool Teacher and one Paraprofessional.

This is the final year of the Inclusive Preschool Learning Environment Grant, and we will need to make plans for including the salaries of three additional paraprofessionals in the school’s budget in FY21.