



# MEMO OF S U P P O R T

18 June 2012

## **Res. 1330: Mandatory Kindergarten**

The United Federation of Teachers supports Res. 1330 calling on the New York State legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.9861(Nolan)/S.7015(Flanagan) which would amend the State Education Law enabling New York City to require that all 5 year old children in the City attend Kindergarten. As a union of educators, we know first hand the importance of kindergarten education; It can have a lasting impact on children's academic success. The UFT thanks Speaker Quinn for her leadership on this issue, as well as Council Members Levin, Brewer and the other sponsors for introducing this resolution.

Research has shown that early childhood is a critical time in a child's development. What's more, early childhood education has been shown to reduce the need for remediation and special education, as well as grade repetition and dropouts. Early childhood education also makes economic sense, as every dollar invested in quality early care and education saves taxpayers in future costs.

While kindergarten has been shown to provide positive benefits, sadly not every child has the opportunity to access those benefits. Currently, in New York State, kindergarten is not mandatory. Instead, State Education Law simply mandates that a child begin his or her education at six years of age. It's worth noting that the law *does* have exceptions. For example, the City of Syracuse is permitted to require full day kindergarten at age five for its residents. The City of New York has no such authorization.

As a result, in the past five years, according to the New York City Council, there are, on average, 7% more children who attend first grade than kindergarten at New York City public schools, meaning that annually thousands of children are not attending kindergarten and getting an early start on their education. According to the New York City Council, Districts with the largest difference in kindergarten enrollment tend to be mostly Black and Latino with high percentages of English language learners.

A.9861, introduced by Assembly Education Committee Chair Cathy Nolan, and S.7015, introduced by Senate Education Committee Chair John Flanagan would authorize the school district of the City of New York to require children five years of age to attend kindergarten. The UFT supports this legislation and Res. 1330 that calls upon the State Legislature and Governor to sign A.9861/S.7015.

For more information please contact Jeremy A. Hoffman, Senior Legislative Representative at 212-510-6346.

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