

Orleans Town Meeting – October 2021 – Universal Pre-K Opportunities

Article – Universal Pre-School Support - To see if the Town of Orleans will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum of \$495,000.00 for the purpose of funding universal Pre-school educational opportunities for the 3 and 4 year old population within the Town of Orleans, contingent on the passage of a Proposition 2 1/2 override vote; or to take any other action thereon.

By Board of Selectmen:

Summary:

This program is intended to support our younger families as they experience certain economic hardships that we recognize exist while living as a full time resident on Cape Cod. The high cost of housing, childcare, transportation and other basic services increase challenges to our resident families.

The proposed article supports essential learning opportunities for our youngest residents that will help better prepare them for improved learning experiences. Several Cape towns have adopted childcare subsidy or free pre-school programs for residents. Wellfleet, Provincetown, Truro, Chatham, Eastham, and Mashpee are a few of our local communities who have adopted similar protocols.

Widespread statistics illustrate that children achieve better educational results when they have access to pre-school programs that establish a strong foundational basis. This funding will support our young families and their family support systems in terms of child care, while at the same time encouraging and supporting great educational opportunities for all of our children. This will serve to also provide support to our local Pre-K providers.

We believe that this will bring about a greater sense of equity to our Orleans community providing opportunities for all. It will decrease current disparities and bring about a stronger start for all young children in the Orleans Public Schools as they begin their Kindergarten journey.

This article will fund the following new services annually:

- *Pre-school* - Parents can choose any Pre-K licensed provider, and once deemed eligible via confirmed residency, payment will be made directly to the service provider up to a maximum amount of \$10,000 per year for 4 year olds, and \$5,000 per year for 3 year olds.

Board of Selectmen Recommendation:

Finance Committee Recommendation: