

## **Talking Points for Vartan Gregorian / Asa Messer Pre-Kindergarten Relocation and Expansion**

1. Unfortunately, neither Rhode Island nor Providence has universal pre-K for all students. We are legally obligated to provide pre-K to our students with identified special needs and also provide seats in these classrooms for typically developing peers, so that services are provided in an integrated setting. Typically developing peers are chosen through a district-wide lottery, irrespective of the neighborhood in which a child lives.
2. Our district need for pre-K services continues to grow at a substantial rate. We have almost doubled in size from approximately 180 students in the 2003-2004 school year to almost 340 students during the current year in 25 pre-K classrooms.
3. We are planning to expand our pre-K offerings next year to include an additional classroom for a total of 26 pre-K classrooms district-wide.
4. Vartan Gregorian, an elementary school on the East Side, currently has 3 pre-K classrooms, but only four students from the 02906 zip code that receive special education services in those classrooms.
5. By relocating the pre-K classrooms from Vartan to Asa Messer Elementary, we are able to add one additional K classroom at Vartan while better serving our pre-K students in the 02909 and 02907 zip codes. We currently have over 120 students enrolled in special education pre-K services in the 02909 and 02907 zip codes.
6. Removing the 3 pre-K classrooms from Vartan Gregorian allows us to add additional K space this year at Vartan, including some space for English Language Learners. We will have the ability to grow these grades through the building, keeping these students at Vartan for their elementary years.
7. Until now, neighborhood families who needed ELL services had to either a) waive those services to attend Vartan, or b) attend a school with ELL services and miss out the opportunity to attend their neighborhood school. We are averaging 5 neighborhood students per year waiving services, and another 3 to 4 not waiving services and being assigned elsewhere in the district. These students will now be able to stay in their neighborhood at Vartan and get the services they need.
8. We are now able to serve more members of the 02906 community in their neighborhood school and provide pre-K services to more families that need it in the neighborhoods in which they live.

9. We are also now able to add an additional self-contained special education class to Vartan Gregorian next year. This class will be for grades 3 through 5 and will serve moderate to low academic functioning special education students, most of whom qualify for special assessment. This is essentially identical in composition to the three special education rooms already at Vartan Gregorian. We are adding this room at Vartan to better serve the 42 Mount Hope and East Side students who need self-contained special education services.