

# INTRODUCTIONS

## NYSACHO

- Represents local health departments across New York State.
- Most local health departments oversee 4410 education & transportation programs for preschool special education program (Pre-K SEP)
- Contact: Sarah Ravenhall, Executive Director, [sravenhall@nysacho.org](mailto:sravenhall@nysacho.org)

## NYSAC

- Represents county governments across New York State.
- Represents County Executives Association.
- Contact: Ryan Gregoire, Legislative Director, [rgregoire@nysac.org](mailto:rgregoire@nysac.org)

# HIGHLIGHTING COUNTY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

*to Support Preschool Special Education Services  
in New York State*

**Heidi Bond, BSN, CPH**

*Public Health Director, Otsego County*

*Vice-President, the New York State Association of County Health Officials*

# THE REALITY

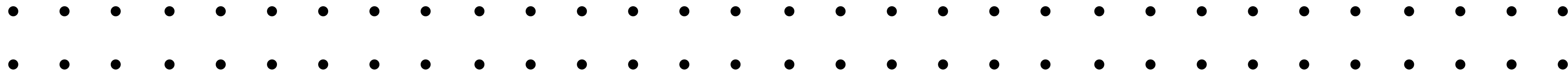
- Each county is unique in its county and school system dynamics.
- What works in one jurisdiction, may not work in another.
- Bussing and transportation and education services for preschoolers with disabilities are challenged post-covid.
- Partnerships take work, not always a simple solution.





# WHAT CAN COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS DO TOGETHER?

- Support preschool children with disabilities and prepare them for transition to kindergarten classrooms.
- Keep preschool special education children in their county of residence for school services.
- Ensure equitable transportation services for children in the preschool special education system.
- Schools may leverage county-funded transportation support by partnering to transport special education preschool children to services.





# WHAT IS THE COUNTY'S ROLE?

- Section 200.16(e)(5) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education requires the municipality in which a Preschool Special Education Program (Pre-K SEP) student resides to provide transportation to services. Which they provide by:
  - Contracting with a third-party bus vendor; or
  - Contracting with local school districts



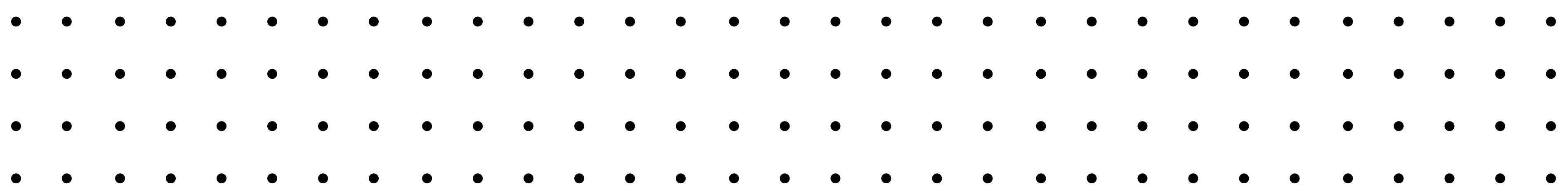


# CHALLENGES



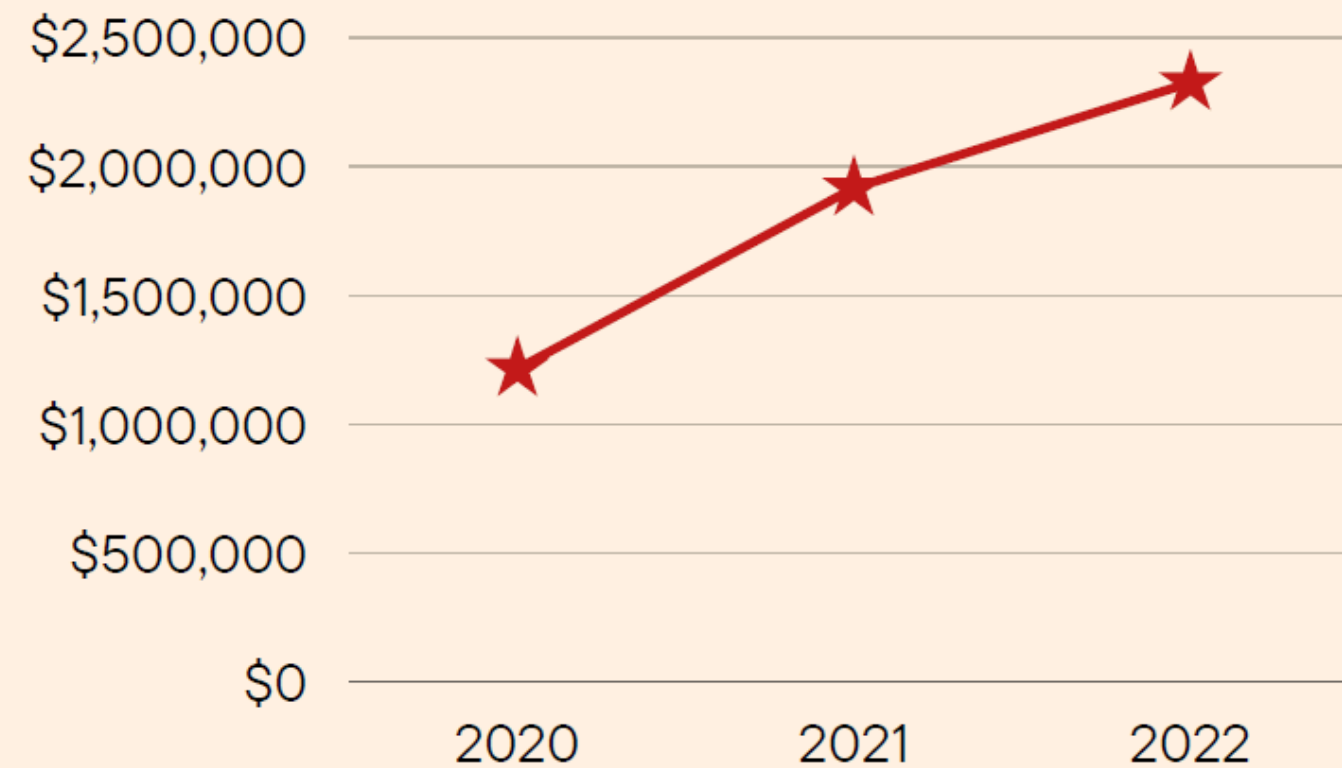
- Local health departments and counties do not hold expertise in coordination of services related to transporting children to school.
  - Schools operate and maintain their buses or contract with bus companies
  - Schools ensure that bus drivers are properly trained and qualified to transport

- Transporting Pre-K children with disabilities via a separate transportation system separates them from their peers.



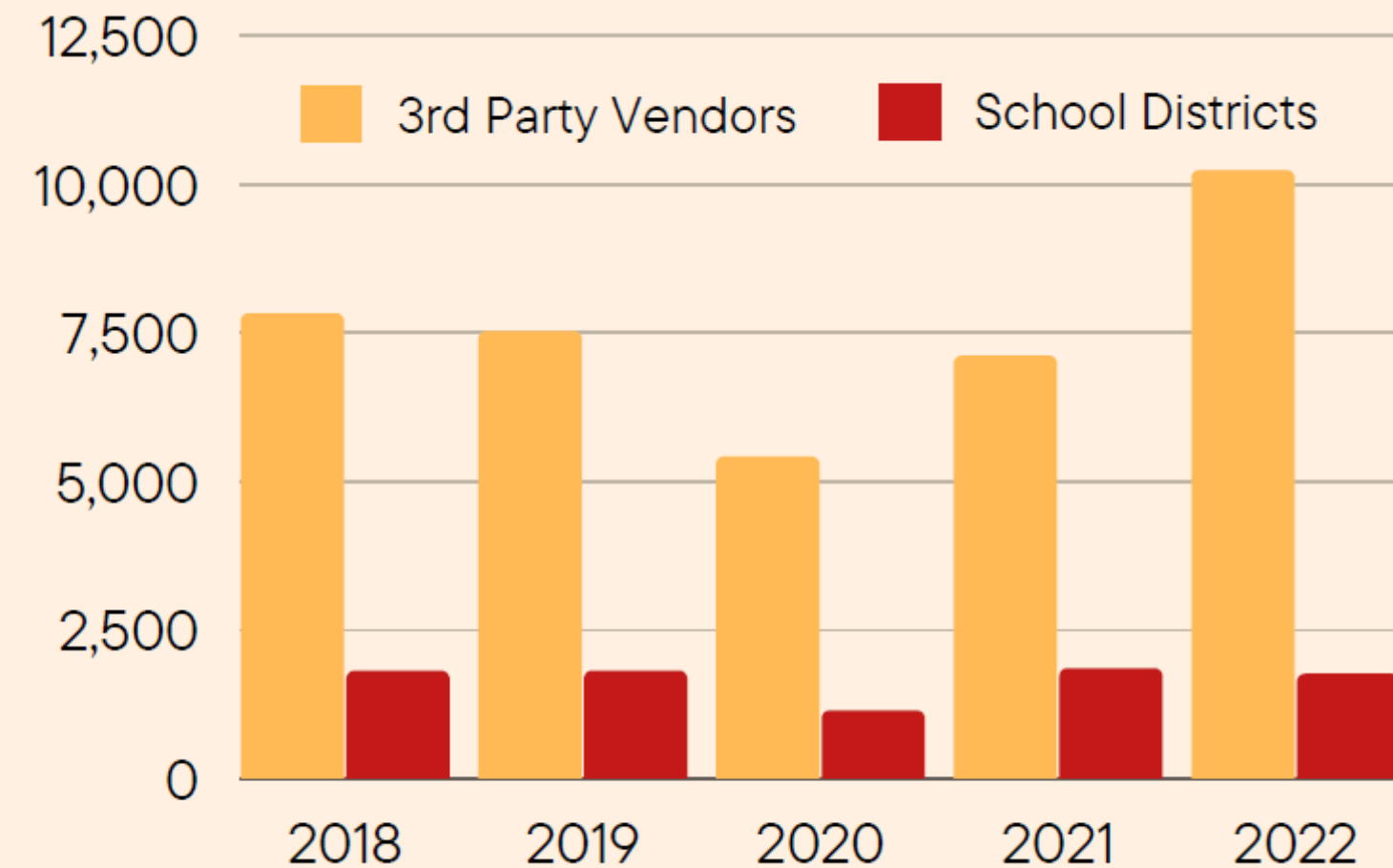
# THE COST OF 3RD PARTY VENDORS

**Average Annual Pre-K SEP Transportation Costs Per County**

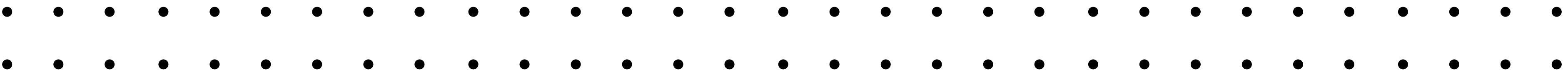


*Pre-K SEP transportation costs have doubled since 2020.*

**Average Annual Transportation Costs Per Child via 3rd Party Vendors vs School Districts**



Transportation Costs Grow Exponentially Where there are Contracted 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Vendors Providing Transportation Services



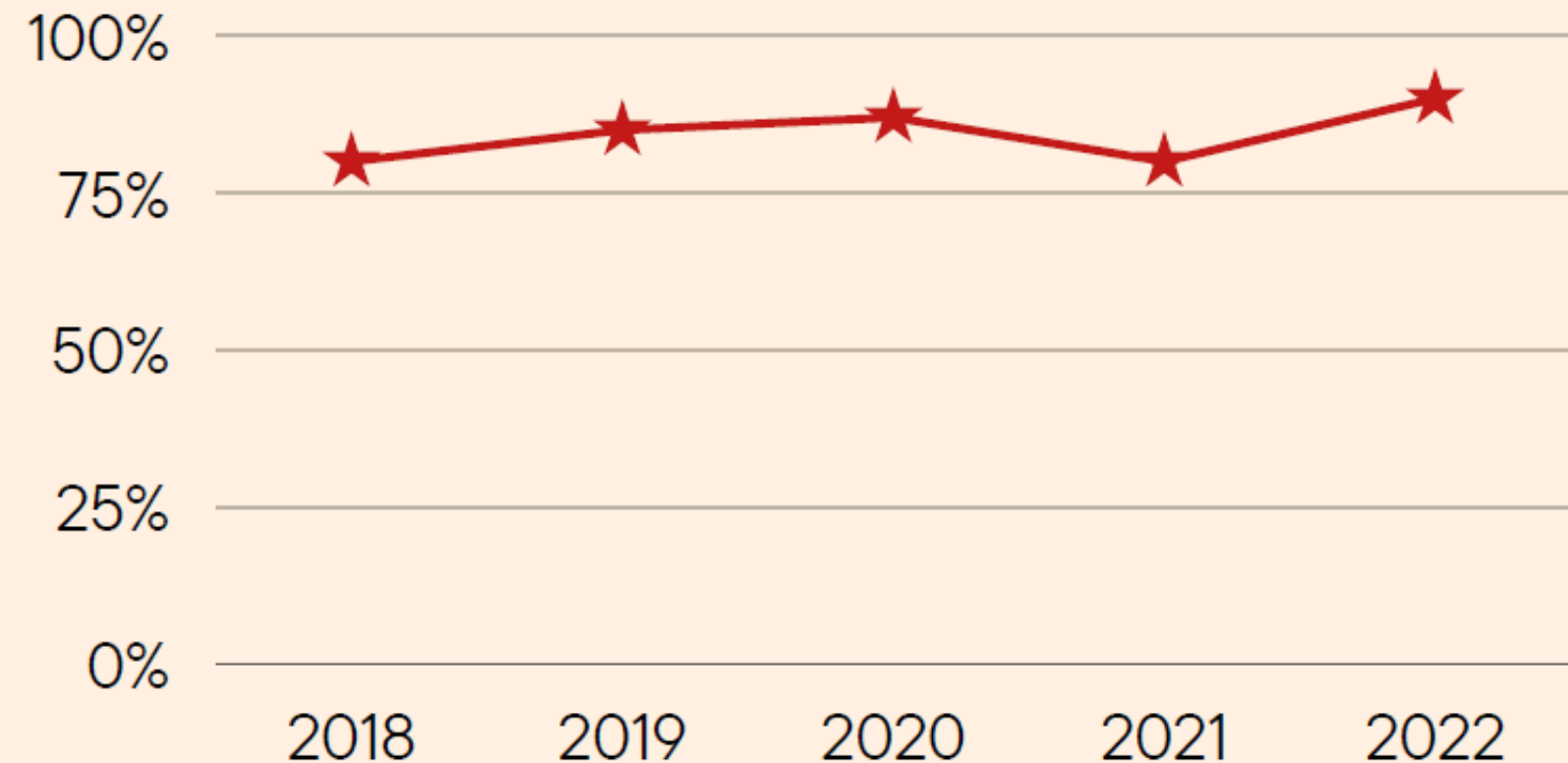


# COST SAVINGS

A Mutually Beneficial Fiscal Proposal. Revenue Increase to School Districts Could Bring Savings to Counties



## Annual Percent Cost Savings in Pre-K SEP Transportation Costs Per County Utilizing 3rd Party Vendors vs School Districts



**Overall county transportation costs are on average  
85% less from utilizing school district buses.**

*\*\*All data collected by NYSACHO*



# TACKLING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

- Transportation agreements between schools and counties with the county responsible for the cost of services.
- Funds from counties to provide transportation for this population could help offset challenges related to K-12 bussing systems.
- Innovative center-based programs are being established to aid in the transition from preschool special education programs to school settings.





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# Pre-K Transportation Costs

Diane M. Devlin RN, MS, BSN  
Director of Public Health



# Pre-K Transportation

## In-County Transportation

### Contract with Wayne – Finger Lakes BOCES

- School Districts transport children to services within the County
  - Four (4) sites (one 4410 program, three school classrooms)
  - 51 children
- School Districts and BOCES set the rate needed to cover costs
- SY 24/25 Costs
  - \$49 / child / day (round trip)
  - \$147 / day (round trip) for transporting fewer than 3 children on any route



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Wayne County, NY

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# Pre-K Transportation

## Out-of-County Transportation

- Contract with private busing service
  - Transport children to out-of-county services
    - 10 – children transported round trip
    - 4 – children transported one way
  - SY 24/25 Costs
    - Average round trip route – \$334 / day
    - Average one way trip – \$225 / day
    - ~ 6.8X the cost of in-county transportation (BOCES) /child/day

# Transportation Costs – SY 24/25

Current Transportation Costs – SY 24/25				
Transportation Type	# of Children	Cost/Day	# of School Days	Total
Private Service Round Trip \$334 / child / day	10	\$3340	180	\$601,200
Private Service One Way \$225 / child/ day	4	\$900	180	\$162,000
School Districts \$49 / child / day	51	\$2,499	180	\$449,820
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,213,020</b>
Summer School is not included				



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# Transportation Costs - SY 24/25

Transportation Costs <b>w/out</b> Schools Districts – SY 24/25				
Transportation Type	# of Children	Cost/Day	# of School Days	Total
Private Service Round Trip \$334 / child / day	61	\$20,374	180	\$3,667,320
Private Service One Way \$225 / child / day	4	\$900	180	\$162,000
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,829,320</b>
Summer School not included				

W/out School Districts \$3,829,320

With School Districts – \$1,213,020

Projected Cost Savings \$2,616,300





# Preschool Programs

TICONDEROGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



# Timeline

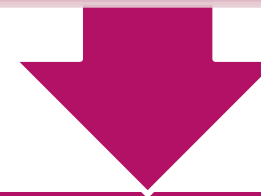
2017

Contracted with Essex County to provide Related Services



2022

Applied to NYSED to provide SEIT Services



2023

Contracted with Warren County to Provide Related Services Applied to NYSED to start an 8:1:1 self contained classroom



# Highlights of the programs





# Lessons Learned

- Have all your documentation ahead of time and double check your check list before submitting the application
- Reach out to those that have done the process
- Check your teacher contracts to make sure they can be paid extra from their normal salary and/or make it clear that these services are a part of their job description now.
- Make sure there is are funds available for start up purposes
- Have a clear way to select students for the program
- Develop a wait-list (share with the county)
- I am sure there are more lessons to be learned as we move forward...

# GO Health

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# Pre-School Program

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Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health)  
Paul Pettit, Public Health Director  
December 10, 2024





# Outline

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- Preschool Special Education Program- Prior to August 2020
- Genesee County Journey
- Orleans County Journey
- Transportation
- Fiscal Realities
- Lessons Learned



# Preschool Special Education Programming- Prior to August 2020

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- Rainbow Preschool- Served both Genesee and Orleans Counties.
  - Closed August 2020
- In addition, we sent a smaller number of children to out of county center based locations.
- Rarely did we have a waitlist for children needing a center based program.
- Had both in county and out of county transportation costs.



# Genesee County Journey – Batavia City School

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- In September of 2020, waitlist grew for center based programming due to no in county program. Also grew due to an increase in the number of children needing programming.
- Limited spots in out of county center based programs grew wait lists.
- In September of 2023, Batavia City School had the largest student enrollment in the area. Due to the growing waitlists, they opened their own center based program.
  - Had availability of space and equipment/furniture located in a school within the district that had closed but retained.
  - Preparation and buy in with the school district officials and Board of Education.
  - Application to New York State Department of Education, rate setting process.
  - Long process, but proactive school decision to meet students needs.
- Once opened in 2023, the waitlist for Batavia and Genesee County center based programming declined significantly.





# Orleans County Journey (1 of 2)

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- With the loss of Rainbow Preschool, the only option for center based programming was out of county with very limited openings.
- Resulted in a large amount of children waiting for a center based program.
- Since all children were being transported out of county, there was a significant increase in transportation costs.
- Orleans County Health Department along with the Orleans County Legislature have had multiple meetings throughout 2023-2024 with school district superintendents to brainstorm ways to have students in the county receive the services they need.
  - Primary goal was to explore a Batavia school model in Orleans County.
  - Batavia City School District attended one meeting to share their model.
- To date, Although constructive meetings, with general agreements on the issues and need for local services, these discussions haven't led to any progress in opening a program in Orleans County schools
  - Primary barrier is space within the districts.



# Orleans County Journey (2 of 2)

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- County has continued to explore options - Within the last six months, Orleans County and Niagara County have met to discuss options for the preschool program.
- Organized a Committee to explore developing a shared center based program:
  - Health Department Directors
  - Children's Programs Directors
  - Legislative members
- Discussions revealed similar barriers learned from Orleans discussions.
- Identified local school on border of counties - Roy-Hart School District would have space available in 2026 and would be interested in having an outside agency use the space for programming
- District currently isn't interested in running program.
- Exploring Community providers to run programming at Roy-Hart CSD.
- Have one identified that is interested and is scheduled to tour the space at Roy-Hart in January 2025.



# Transportation

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- Rising costs in Transportation after local CB programming closed.
- Lack of contract providers limit options, drive higher costs.
- Working with the Batavia School District to now transport some of their preschoolers to the center-based program, which is at a lower cost than using our contracted pre-school transportation providers.
- Many GO Health school districts use contract services for their busing, with scale of districts – seeing lower rates than county contracts with similar providers.
- Schools providing busing help to ensure service delivery verse only relying on county transportation providers.
- Limitation - Districts have reported staffing shortages with their contractors.
- Continuing dialogue with Batavia and other county schools to transport students.





# Fiscal Realities

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- Must plan for increased program and county costs.
- Addressing the program and capacity issue for services drives costs.
  - Center Based and Transportation Costs
  - Genesee – Batavia CB site:
    - County CB budget preopening in 2022 was \$785,000, budgeted for 2025 - \$1.9M
    - Transportation 2023 – \$550,000, budgeted for 2025 – \$1.1M
    - Orleans – estimated additional 1 million in cost
- School districts transporting students even if under their contracts is a more cost- effective approach than county contract rates.
  - Batavia school bussing some of our students is projected to save \$167,000 in 2025
- Research shows that children who receive services before Kindergarten will lead to a cost savings in Education costs down the road.



# Lessons Learned

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- No Easy answers - creativity and flexibility is needed.
- Long process that takes time.
- School districts are more willing to engage in discussions to address issue as they are experiencing increased costs at the school-aged level.
- Under current state structure of this program, ultimately children who have an IEP stating that they need center-based programming, need to receive those services. It is up to the counties and local school districts to work together to make that happen.
- Collaboration and partnerships with schools are essential to address this crisis.



# Have questions or need more information?

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- Contact:
  - Paul Pettit, Public Health Director, [Paul.Pettit@orleanscountyny.gov](mailto:Paul.Pettit@orleanscountyny.gov)
- Where are we located?
  - 3837 West Main Street Road, Batavia, NY 14020
  - 14016 State Route 31, Suite 101, Albion, NY 14411
- How can you reach us?
  - 585-343-2580 x5512
  - 585-589-3250
  - [GOHealthNY.org](http://GOHealthNY.org)
  - Check us out on Facebook, Instagram or X





# THANK YOU & NEXT STEPS

- **Please Complete the Evaluation**
  - We want to find out if you found today's webinar beneficial and where we might take the next steps or collaborate.
- **We are interested in connecting you with your county to begin conversations about where partnerships might be possible.**
  - If you need contact information reach out to Sarah Ravenhall at [sravenhall@nysacho.org](mailto:sravenhall@nysacho.org)
- **Let's keep connected and continue the conversation to better serve children in the preschool special education program!**

