

Readers respond: Don't cancel preschool tax increase

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By [Letters to the editor | The Oregonian](#)

As Multnomah County Preschool for All gets ready to accept applications for its third year, this is an ideal time to look back on the program's accomplishments. PFA is serving 1,400 children this year. Participating families have overwhelmingly voiced their approval with 92% positive responses to a recent survey.

It is vital for a program with such a bold mission to take the time in its early years to lay the foundation for future expansion. The program has done this by collecting data on what families like most and where there's room for improvement, giving providers constructive feedback on how to grow. Focus groups have collected detailed information about families' experiences. Active steps are being taken to grow capacity so that all children have access to preschool by 2030. These steps include launching a fund this spring to help providers improve or expand their facilities. All signs point to a carefully planned implementation.

To show its commitment to this program – so overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2020 – Multnomah County should reject recent calls to cancel the scheduled 2026 0.8% tax increase. Denying PFA this revenue stream, which county economists have said is essential for funding in the long term, undermines the will of voters and threatens to disrupt the progress that has already been made. A technical advisory committee will be convened to make a recommendation regarding the tax; a determination should not be made until after that committee has met. Relying on state-level funding for early learning has left thousands of children without access to preschool. PFA benefits kids, parents, employers, providers, K-12 educators and the economy. The county should ensure Preschool for All has the resources it needs to succeed.

Carolyn Buppert, Portland

Paulina Leperi, Beaverton

Buppert is president and Leperi is a board member of League of Women Voters of Portland.