AN ABSTRACT OF THE CAPSTONE OF

Jeanette Hansen for the degree of Master of Public Policy presented on August 12, 2022.

Title: Starting Out Equal? The Impacts of Child Care Access on Kindergarten Readiness in Oregon

Abstract approved: _____
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Children enter kindergarten on unequal footing. Early childhood experiences shape initial disparities and predict academic achievement and life trajectories. One influence, child care, is not available to all children in Oregon as most counties qualify as child care deserts. This paper analyzes if child care access has an effect on kindergarten readiness scores. Underlying this research question is the Education Production Function (EPF) theory. Using school district level data on child care capacity and average kindergarten readiness scores, OLS regression is used to determine if the variables are correlated. The regression analysis reveals that child care capacity is positively correlated with kindergarten readiness scores, particularly upper letter recognition scores.

As an example of a policy that increases child care access, this paper also examines the universal preschool initiative that passed in Multnomah County, Oregon in November 2020. Using Multiple Streams Framework, an explorative study of this initiative gives insight into the process of creating the policy, campaigning for the policy, merging of two campaigns, and passing of the final policy. Themes include having a clear message or vision, the important role of community coalition members in creating policy, building a large tent to include multiple avenues of engagement and stakeholders from various fields, utilizing skilled facilitators, adapting and taking advantage of changing circumstances, and researching previous successful policy to emulate.

Starting Out Equal?
The Impacts of Child Care Access on
Kindergarten Readiness in Oregon

by
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A CAPSTONE

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Public Policy

Presented August 12, 2022
Commencement June 2023

Master of Public Policy capstone of <u>Jeanette Hansen</u> presented on <u>August 12, 2022</u>

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Jeanette Hansen, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

Children do not start the race of life on equal footing. Beginning with a child's youngest years, access to resources shapes their life trajectory and all children do not receive the same opportunities. Children from low-income families repeatedly score below the national average in reading and mathematics across the kindergarten year (Denton & West, 2002). In addition, low socioeconomic status is correlated with poor language skills, lower executive function, and other effects on learning capability (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000). These initial disparities tend to grow exponentially once children reach school age and predict disparities in academic achievement (Claessens, Duncan & Engel, 2009; Duncan et al., 2007), educational attainment (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005), crime, public assistance, and employment (Damon et al., 2015).

Inequalities in early childhood can be reduced or eliminated by increasing access to child care and improving affordability. Between the 1970s and 2000s, per-child spending on child care increased by a factor of 21, or approximately 2,000 percent (Kornrich & Furstenberg, 2013). Rates vary dramatically by state, but the national average price of child care is around $10,174, with child care in many states equaling the cost of college tuition (Child Care Aware, 2022). There is also a substantial shortage in supply of child care slots, partially due to the low wages for workers leading to high turnover rates (King & Dodson, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic made lack of child care a larger issue. By the spring of 2022, 39% of women with children younger than five had quit their jobs or reduced hours because of child care challenges (Rapid Survey Project, 2022).

To address these issues and reduce disparities in school readiness, policymakers are focusing on increased investments in pre-kindergarten. As of 2017, 60 state-funded pre-

kindergarten programs were being implemented in 43 states and Washington, D.C., with a 9% increase from the previous decade (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). Between 2010 and 2017, state preschool funding climbed by almost $4 billion, adjusting for inflation (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). Before 1995, there was no state with a universal pre-K program, and today, ten states, both large and small, "blue" and "red," have universal programs (Wilcher, 2018).

Oregon, in particular, suffers from a lack of child care availability as well as unaffordability. All Oregon counties have an inadequate supply of child care, including one child care slot for every 8 infants and toddlers, and one child care slot for every 3 preschool age children. Every county in Oregon is a child care desert for families with an infant or toddler (ages 0-2) and 25 of Oregon's 36 counties are a child care desert for families with a preschool-age child (ages 3-5). To address these issues, one Oregon county, Multnomah County, recently adopted a universal preschool initiative. Two campaigns, a county campaign and a grassroots campaign, aimed to ameliorate early childhood inequity through a universal preschool initiative, measure 26-214, "Preschool for All," which passed with 64% support of the vote. This measure establishes a tuition-free universal preschool program, funded by a personal income tax on the highest income households. This is particularly meaningful because of Oregon's ranking as one of the most expensive states in the nation for preschool, while public funds only provide preschool for less than 20% of the county's 3- and 4-year-olds.

This paper analyzes if child care access has an effect on kindergarten readiness scores. Underlying this research question is the Education Production Function (EPF) theory, which asserts that the combination of inputs, of which preschool environment is a key factor, results in a given set of school outputs. Using school district level data on child care capacity and average kindergarten readiness scores, OLS regression is used to determine if the variables are correlated.

The regression analysis reveals that child care capacity is positively correlated with kindergarten readiness scores, particularly upper letter recognition scores.

In addition to this quantitative analysis, I also examine the universal preschool initiative that passed in Multnomah County, Oregon in November 2020. While numerous studies (Gormley & Phillips, 2005; Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005) have proven the benefit of universal preschool, this is the first universal preschool policy in Oregon. An explorative study of this policy will give insight into the process and context of creating the policy, campaigning for the policy, merging of two campaigns, and passing of the final policy. By analyzing these processes, this project reveals the themes associated with the success of this ballot measure. These themes include having a clear message or vision, the important role of community coalition members in creating policy, building a large tent to include multiple avenues of engagement and stakeholders from various fields, utilizing skilled facilitators, adapting and taking advantage of changing circumstances, and researching previous successful policy to emulate. The situation of two parallel campaigns that finalize in a merge is an unusual circumstance that is unlikely to be repeated but provides insight into how competing policy options influence one another and can ultimately create a stronger, unified measure.

Literature Review

Childhood Disparities

In the United States, childhoods are unequal and children have disparate opportunities for success. Family income and class affect the ability to afford high quality preschool that is stable and has sufficient hours. Children from more advantaged backgrounds, such as those with higher incomes, are provided with goods and services, such as health care, nutrition, and

enriching activities, that lower income families often cannot afford. Children from more advantaged backgrounds have more strengths in school readiness scores than those from more disadvantaged backgrounds (Hair et al., 2006). Previous research concurs with these results, finding that children from low-income families repeatedly score below the national average in reading and mathematics across the kindergarten year (Denton & West, 2002). In addition, low socioeconomic status is correlated with poor language skills, lower executive function, and other effects on learning capability (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000). This may be due to the fact that between birth and age six, children from high-income families spend 1,300 more hours in nonroutine, "novel" contexts than children from low-income families (Phillips, 2011). Also, by kindergarten, high-income or white children have engaged in over 400 more hours in literacy activities than their low-income or African American peers (Phillips, 2011). Furthermore, disparities at the time of kindergarten entry tend to remain throughout academic life and kindergarten abilities predict early academic achievement (Claessens, Duncan & Engel, 2009; Duncan et al., 2007), educational attainment (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005), crime, public assistance, and employment (Damon et al., 2015).

Early Intervention

Because of these patterns and the potential for positive impact in children's early years, researchers and policymakers have emphasized the need for early intervention. Due to the crucial time period of early childhood in brain development, reducing difficulties and making progress in public services for early childhood could have a lasting influence on life trajectories. The first years of life offer the unique opportunity of laying the foundation for school readiness and later school success (Horm et al., 2016). Public funding for high quality child care can

decrease inequality in early learning access as it improves physical and cognitive outcomes for children (Donoghue & AAP Council on Early Childhood, 2017). The impacts of early childhood education have been noted since the evidence of the Perry Preschool and Abecedarian programs that began in the 1960s and 1970s, respectively (Muennig et al., 2009; Campbell et al., 2001). Multiple studies found that children in these preschool programs exhibited significant reduction in health behavioral risk factors and improvements in educational attainment, health insurance, income, and family environment. More recent analysis evaluating preschool programs concludes that, on average, children gain about a third of a year of additional learning in reading, language, and math skills (Yoshikawa et al., 2013), and have statistically significant reductions in special education and grade retention (McCoy et al., 2017). In addition, interventions such as Head Start have been evaluated to show long-term benefits such as higher high school graduation rates and earnings, and reduced crime and teen pregnancy (Bailey et al., 2020, Carneiro & Ginja, 2012). Remedial interventions for adolescents and adults are not as effective and generally have low rates of return (Heckman, 2008). This can be partially explained by the greater malleability of the brain in early years, making it a sensitive period for a child's socioemotional and cognitive development (Nelson, 2000).

In addition to the benefits to individuals, early childhood education yields positive societal impact. Decreases in special education placement and grade retention saves districts large sums of money (McCoy et al., 2017). Another benefit of early childhood education is reducing the number of youth who drop out of high school. Each dropout leads to an estimated $689,000 reduction in individual lifetime earnings and a cost to the broader economy of $262,000 (Levin et al., 2007). Moreover, economists indicate that the rate of return for funding high-quality preschool is between $7 and $10 for every dollar invested (Heckman, 2008).

Child Care Access

Inequalities in early childhood can be reduced or eliminated by increasing access to child care and improving affordability. Significant research indicates that Oregon suffers from an inadequate amount of child care. Child care deserts are defined as a community with more than three children for every regulated child care slot (Malik et al., 2018). According to this standard, families with infants and toddlers (ages 0-2) in each Oregon county live in a child care desert. More specifically, there are 8 infants and toddlers for a single child care slot in Oregon. In over half of Oregon's counties, there is, at most, one slot for every 10 infants and toddlers, making these counties extreme deserts. This predicament is only slightly improved for families with preschool-age children (ages 3-5), with families in 25 of 36 counties living in a child care desert. For a single preschool-age child care slot in Oregon, there are 3 children.

In addition to the problem of finding available slots, preschool is enormously unaffordable for most families. Oregon's child care supply is largely parent-funded (tuition and fees) with less than one fourth of slots throughout the state paid for by public funding (Pratt & Sektnan, 2021). Infant care averages $1,135 per month which is more than $13,000 per year. That makes it about 31% more per year than in-state tuition at a four-year public college. This cost is also 22.2% of a median family's income in Oregon, while the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services categorizes child care as affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income (The Economic Policy Institute, 2020; U.S. Department of HHS, 2016). Child care for a 4 year old costs slightly less but is still a steep cost for most families. It averages $838 per month which is more than $10,061 per year, making it about the same cost as a year of in-state tuition at a four-year public college. Public funding is a prominent contributor in the child

care supply, especially for preschoolers, with 24% of slots for preschool-age children being publicly funded. But three fourths of Oregon counties have fewer than 25% publicly funded regulated infant/toddler slots. Only 8% of state infant and toddler slots are publicly funded. Access to child care in Oregon is a crisis for families, both in finding available slots and in affording the care (Pratt & Sektnan, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had further negative impact on the child care system across the state. Systematic inequities have been highlighted and exacerbated with high quality, affordable child care being even less accessible to families in historically underrepresented or underserved communities (Pratt & Sektnan, 2021). Recent research indicates that BIPOC Oregon families had higher rates of disrupted child care compared to all participant families in the research (Pears et al., 2021). Providing child care is an important part of any economic recovery plan following the COVID-19 pandemic because of the more substantial economic impacts on communities of color (Novoa, 2020).

Universal Preschool

Universal preschool is regarded as a wise investment as well as a way to reduce childhood inequality by expanding preschool access to low and middle-income children (Barnett, 2010; Cascio, 2021; Karoly & Bigelow, 2005). Magnuson and Waldfogel (2005) found that providing universal preschool for three- and four-year old children in poverty and increasing the quality of care has the potential to close up to 20 percent of the Black-white school readiness gap and up to 36 percent of the Hispanic-white gap. In addition, for children who receive a reduced-price lunch, universal preschool in Tulsa, OK improved their language scores by 35%. And for children who receive a free lunch, there is a greater boost to scores with cognitive skills

increasing by 31%, language skills by 18%, and motor skills by 15% (Gormley & Phillips, 2005). The benefits of universal preschool also include improved kindergarten readiness, better public support than targeted programs, and better outcomes with mixed socioeconomic backgrounds, in comparison to targeted low-income programs such as Head Start (Cascio, 2021; Gormley, 2005; Gormley & Phillips, 2005; Henry & Rickman, 2007).

As state and federal resources are currently too limited to support all children, locally funded universal preschool would expand preschool access to low and middle-income children. Multnomah County's Preschool for All program seeks to create this equitable preschool that is accessible to all families, funded by local taxes on the wealthiest. This is particularly meaningful because of Oregon's ranking as one of the most expensive states in the nation for preschool, while public funds only provide preschool for less than 20% of the county's 3- and 4-year-olds. The Preschool for All plan reveals an inclusive program that consists of home-based, center-based, Head Start, and public school-based preschool providers. This mixed delivery program model is able to meet families' needs through a range of options, including full-day and part-day programming, year-round options, and before- and after-care options. (Multnomah County Preschool for All Plan, 2020).

Education Reform

Numerous studies indicate how such education reform comes to pass. First, studies on education reform indicate that incremental reforms are more successful than fundamental changes (Cuban 1992). Policies that enhance, and do not disturb existing structures, are more successful in getting supported. For instance, kindergarten was integrated into the formal education structure in the 1930s and was successful by being bound to existing elementary

programs. This arrangement makes it easier to monitor new programs or policies and creates constituencies that lobby for support (Cuban, 1992).

The field of research on universal preschool is young and continually emerging since the first universal program in the United States began in 1995 and most adoption has been in recent years. Nonetheless, studies that have analyzed successful education reform in creating universal preschool have found several positive correlations. First, Democratic control of state legislature is a common factor in universal preschool policy adoption (Curran, 2015; Wilcher, 2018). Another correlation is prolonged presence of a targeted preschool program (Curran, 2015; Wilcher, 2018). In addition, successful policy passage often correlates to deliberate and careful strategy, sometimes including decades of promotion (Curran, 2015; Wilcher, 2018). Gormley (2005) also found that public initiatives or public push toward elected officials sometimes results in universal preschool policies, as evidenced in Florida and Massachusetts. The case of Florida indicates that leveraging public will can make up for a lack of political will. Presently, 24 states have initiative processes through voters' petitions (Initiative & Referendum Institute), making the case in Florida potentially replicable.

Wilcher (2018) studied ten states to examine correlations to successful adoption of universal preschool. Several components of the Multiple Streams Framework were apparent, including policy actors or entrepreneurs, usually elected officials who framed preschool as a policy solution to various problems. In addition, framing strategies were utilized, highlighting universal preschool as a positive solution to problems in education and society as well as a wise financial and economic investment. Public opinion also played a prominent role as survey data indicates that most Americans support public funding of preschool and even increasing taxes to do so (Page & Jacobs, 2009).

One study applied the framework of Policymaking by Stealth to account for passage of universal preschool in Oklahoma and West Virginia, two of the country's most conservative and poorest states (Sugrue & Lightfoot, 2017). This theory asserts that policy entrepreneurs are key to passing sweeping policy changes as they use political maneuvering skills and keep their intentions quiet. In West Virginia, State Senator Lloyd Jackson added his proposal into an existing 51-page education bill. In Oklahoma, a policy entrepreneur with an interest in early childhood education, Bob Harbison, convinced State Representative Joe Eddins, to include universal preschool in an education spending reform bill which attached pre-K to the K-12 system. Both states followed additional tactics of policymaking by stealth by avoiding media attention and excluding advocacy groups (Sugrue & Lightfoot, 2017).

Part A: Quantitative Research

Theoretical Framework

This research project will utilize the theory of education production function (EPF), a common quantitative research framework on the effects of school resources, based in the economic theory of production. It is outlined as the combinations of inputs that produce any given set of school outputs (e.g. kindergarten readiness scores) (Monk, 1989). This theory provides understanding to mechanisms. For example, how do two similar school districts compare when one district has an adequate supply of child care and the other does not? The district with lower inputs is likely to have lower outputs. Conversely, access to good child care boosts the output of kindergarten skills and readiness. This allows the analysis of differential outcomes between a district that has sufficient child care and one that does not. In this case, access to good child care leads to boosting of social skills and letter recognition.

Methods

Description of Data

The kindergarten readiness scores come from the Oregon Department of Education public access scores by school district. I will be looking at the following variables: Approaches to Learning Total and English Uppercase Letter Names Recognition. There are 135 school districts in Oregon with complete data. Variables for each district are averages of individual student scores in the district. The scores are collected by kindergarten teacher assessments of students at the beginning of a kindergarten year.   Approaches to Learning Total (totalapproach) measures self-regulation and interpersonal skills and is a continuous variable with values from 1-5. English Uppercase Letter Names Recognition (litupper) indicates the number of uppercase letters a child identifies correctly. It is a continuous variable with values from 0-26.

The second main data set is the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership Provider data, housed at Oregon State University. The main variable of interest is total capacity which is a continuous variable indicating the number of child care slots at each child care center. The data also includes variables for infant/toddler slots (under 3) and preschool slots (children ages 3 to 5). There are 5,247 child care centers listed in the 2018 dataset. Using the collapse function in Stata, I created one record per school district with total capacity of child care slots, resulting in 135 district records.

I also include a number of independent variables as controls for the data. The American Community Survey five-year estimates for school districts gives population for children ages 0-5 in a school district as well as a breakdown of children ages 3-5and children under 3. These variables provide a control for school districts with varying populations. Another data set comes from the National Center for Education Statistics and is called the Elementary/Secondary

Information System (ELSi). This data set includes variables for spending per pupil, teacher

student ratio, student race and locale (city, suburb, town, or rural). Last, the Oregon Department

of Education district report cards provide information on free and reduced-price lunch

percentages. All data is analyzed on a school district level. The three largest school districts

were omitted as they are outliers to the data. The total child care slots in these districts were

25245, 11030, and 8020 while the next largest size is 5477 and the average is 1005. The

histogram below (Fig. 1) illustrates how 90% of school districts have less than 2402 child care

slots. Similarly, the number of preschool slots in 90% of the districts are below 876 with a few

far outliers for the largest three districts (3235, 4789, 8623), as indicated in Figure 2.
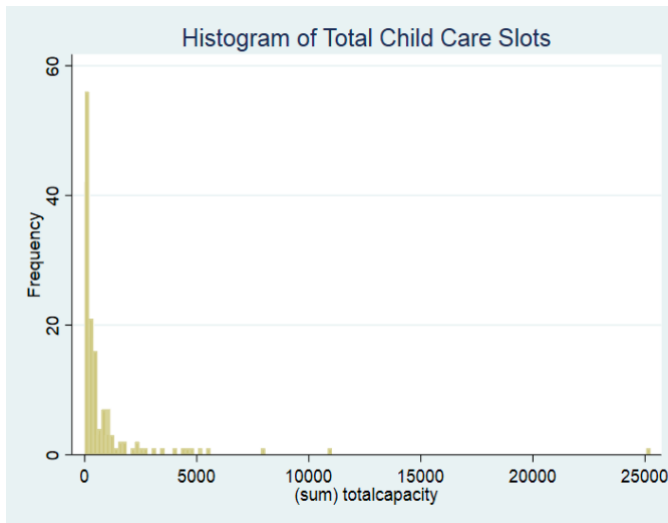
Figure 1
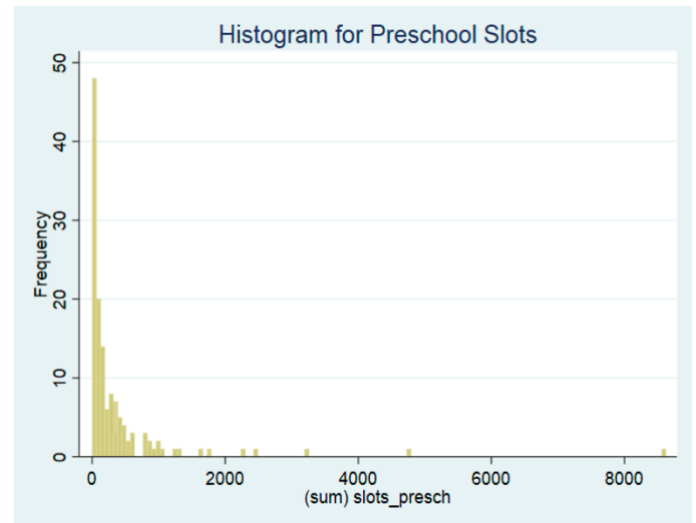
Figure 2

Table 1 presents summary statistics for variables included in the model for the full

sample as well as non-rural and rural districts. Approaches to Learning Total (apptotal),

measures self-regulation and interpersonal skills, and is a continuous variable with values from

1-5. The values are averages for the school district. English Uppercase Letter Names

Recognition (litupper) indicates the number of uppercase letters a child identifies correctly. It is a continuous variable with values from 0-26. The values are averages for the school district. For both self-regulation/interpersonal skills and upper letter recognition scores, average scores for rural districts are higher than those for non-rural districts. As expected, districts in non-rural areas have a greater average number of child care slots in all categories as well as larger populations of children 5 and under. Average spending per pupil and percent of white student population is higher in districts in rural areas than non-rural areas. In addition, average student teacher ratio is lower in districts in rural areas than non-rural areas, and average percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch is lower in districts in rural areas than non-rural areas.

Table 1: Variable Summaries by Rurality

Variable	Description	T test	Full Sample			Non-Rural			Rural		
			Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.
apptotal	Measure of self-regulation and interpersonal skills	0.892	135	3.543	0.298	89	3.540	0.220	46	3.548	0.412
litupper	Number of uppercase letters a child identifies correctly	0.143	135	13.647	2.815	89	13.392	2.620	46	14.141	3.128
totalcapacity	Number of child care slots	0.004	135	1004.815	2607.832	89	1463.461	3115.838	46	117.435	211.793
slots_inftod	Number of infant/toddler child care slots	0.007	135	145.141	415.550	89	213.416	498.821	46	13.043	23.781
slots_presch	Number of preschool age slots	0.002	135	398.630	944.714	89	575.157	1123.456	46	57.087	92.366
agetotal_0_5	Population age 0-5	0.001	135	1981.630	3950.392	89	2812.056	4644.359	46	374.935	534.610
ageunder3	Population under 3	0.001	135	964.067	1942.041	89	1369.517	2285.089	46	179.609	255.730
age345	Population age 3-5	0.001	135	1017.563	2013.631	89	1442.539	2365.848	46	195.326	282.901
PerWhite	Percent white student population	0.000	135	0.701	0.166	89	0.648	0.170	46	0.803	0.098
PupilTeacher	Teacher student ratio	0.000	135	18.635	2.680	89	19.574	1.877	46	16.820	3.063
spend_per_pupil	Spending per pupil	0.081	135	15675.980	4683.171	89	15169.980	4245.369	46	16654.980	5345.790
frpl	Free and reduced lunch percentage	0.107	134	57.388	21.186	88	59.523	22.030	46	53.304	19.034

Table 2 presents summary statistics for variables included in the model according to district size. Scores for self-regulation/interpersonal skills are similar for all district sizes, with small districts having the lowest average scores, followed by medium-size districts and then large districts. For upper letter recognition scores, medium-size districts have the lowest average scores (13.062 out of 26) followed by small districts (13.967 out of 26), with large districts having the highest average scores (15.039 out of 26). As expected, large districts have the greatest average number of child care slots in all categories followed by medium-size districts and then small districts. In addition, large districts have the largest populations of children 5 and under followed by medium-size districts and then small districts. Average percent of white student population is substantially higher in small districts (79.4%), followed by medium-size districts (66.0%) and then large districts (60.8%). In addition, student teacher ratio is lowest in small districts (16.266) followed by medium-size districts (19.828) and then large districts (20.381). Average spending per pupil is lowest in medium-size districts ($14,498.81) followed by large districts ($16,627.00), and then small districts ($17,011.52). The average percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch is lowest in large districts (46.667%), followed by small districts (56.106%), and then medium-size districts (61.058%).

Table 2: Variable Summaries by School District Size

Variable	Description	F test	Small Districts (Students<1000)			Medium Districts (Students 1000-6999)			Large Districts (Students>7000)		
			Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.
apptotal	Measure of self-regulation and interpersonal skills	0.823	48	3.533	0.426	69	3.536	0.216	18	3.594	0.100
litupper	Number of uppercase letters a child identifies correctly	0.030	48	13.967	3.207	69	13.062	2.339	18	15.039	2.900
totalcapacity	Number of child care slots	0.000	48	89.438	153.733	69	576.783	536.659	18	5086.611	5624.789
slots_inftod	Number of infant/toddler child care slots	0.000	48	8.583	10.166	69	78.058	81.031	18	766.444	924.632
slots_presch	Number of preschool age slots	0.000	48	43.313	32.915	69	243.087	183.883	18	1942.389	1979.540
agetotal_0_5	Population age 0-5	0.000	48	229.042	150.856	69	1356.696	863.790	18	9050.778	7535.990
ageunder3	Population under 3	0.000	48	111.333	79.100	69	659.638	423.086	18	4405.000	3745.582
age345	Population age 3-5	0.000	48	117.708	80.993	69	697.058	459.275	18	4645.778	3802.269
PerWhite	Percent white student population	0.000	48	0.794	0.104	69	0.660	0.178	18	0.608	0.144
PupilTeacher	Teacher student ratio	0.000	48	16.266	2.451	69	19.828	1.879	18	20.381	1.006
spend_per_pupil	Spending per pupil	0.012	48	17011.520	5055.072	69	14498.810	4347.855	18	16627.000	3872.230
frpl	Free and reduced lunch percentage	0.042	47	56.106	19.130	69	61.058	22.113	18	46.667	19.605

Econometric (statistical) model

As noted in Tables 1 and 2, average kindergarten readiness scores differ between districts of various sizes and locales. For example, average upper letter recognition scores are almost 2 full points higher in large districts than in medium-size districts. However, other factors such as the percentage of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch also vary between district sizes and locales with medium-size districts at 61% and large districts at 47%. It is difficult to disentangle whether differences in kindergarten readiness scores are due to differences in child care capacity or other factors. Regression models assess the strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables and allow us to predict expected outcomes given that we observe certain characteristics. I use linear regression analysis to measure the impact of child care access on kindergarten readiness scores, while controlling for differences between school districts in population size and demographic factors. The additional variables are likely related to kindergarten readiness and are included in the model to omit bias. Therefore, I use the following econometric model:

$$Y_d = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{capacity}_d + \beta_2 \text{population}_d + \delta X_d + \varepsilon_d$$

where Y_d is the average kindergarten assessment score for a district for 1) self-regulation and interpersonal skills (apptotal) and 2) number of uppercase letters identified correctly (litupper); capacity_d is total number of child care slots in a district (totalcapacity) as well as disaggregated by age as number of infant/toddler slots (ages 0-2) and preschool slots (ages 3-5); population_d is district total population of ages 0-5 as well as disaggregated by age as population under 3 and population for ages 3-5; X_d is the vector of controls that includes percent white student population, student teacher ratio, spending per pupil, and percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch; and ε_d is an idiosyncratic error term. The Breusch-Pagan test was

used to test for heteroskedasticity. Because there is wide variation in population size and

heteroskedasticity is detected in some models, robust standard errors are utilized in all regression

models. Also, a variance inflation factor test in Stata indicates multicollinearity in each model as

multiple independent variables have VIFs over 5. I choose to retain all variables to avoid

omitted variable bias. It is not possible to increase sample size as I am currently using data for

all Oregon school districts.

Results

  Table 3 below shows results for impact of child care slots on kindergarten self-regulation

and interpersonal skills scores, which range from 0-5. Column one shows results for the full

model, column two for the non-rural model, column three for the rural model, column four for

the age-disaggregate model in which child care slots and population are disaggregated by age,

column five for the age-disaggregate model in non-rural areas, and column six for the age-

disaggregate model in rural areas. The OLS regression indicates that for every increase of 100

child care slots, self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores increase by 0.068 points in the full

model in cities, holding other factors constant. For the age-disaggregate model, every increase

of 100 preschool age slots increases self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores by 0.034

points which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Every increase in 100 preschool age slots

increases self-regulation and interpersonal skills in non-rural areas by 0.025 points and in rural

areas by 0.114 points, holding other factors constant. In addition, self-regulation and

interpersonal skills scores decrease by 0.011 points for every additional 100 infant/toddler age

slots, increase in non-rural areas by 0.002 points and in rural areas by 0.192 points, holding other

factors constant. However, none of these results are statistically significant except for the age-

disaggregate model noted above. Since sample sizes are small, it is not surprising that some

results are not statistically significant. Differences in scores between locale are generally not

statistically significant.

Table 3: Impact of Child Care Slots on Self-Regulation and Interpersonal Skills Scores

VARIABLES	(1) Full model	(2) Non-Rural	(3) Rural	(4) Disagg. Age	(5) Non-Rural Disagg. Age	(6) Rural Disagg. Age
Total Child Care Slots by 1000s	0.068	0.072	-0.060			
	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.296)			
Population 0-5	-0.000*	-0.000*	-0.000			
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
Preschool Slots by 100s				0.034**	0.025	0.114
				(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.182)
Infant and Toddler Slots by 100s				-0.011	0.002	0.192
				(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.675)
Population Age 3-5				-0.000**	-0.000***	-0.000
				(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Population under 3				0.000	0.000*	-0.000
				(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Percent White Student Body	-0.203	-0.042	-0.878	-0.237	-0.057	-1.140
	(0.173)	(0.153)	(0.874)	(0.183)	(0.162)	(0.896)
Teacher Student Ratio	0.013	0.008	0.006	0.016	0.011	0.011
	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.016)
Spending per Pupil	-0.000	0.000	-0.000*	-0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Percent Students with Free or Reduced Price Lunch	0.005***	-0.004***	0.008**	-0.005***	-0.004***	-0.009**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)
Suburb	-0.086	-0.082		-0.094	-0.107*	
	(0.064)	(0.071)		(0.057)	(0.062)	
Town	0.014	0.008		-0.008	-0.021	
	(0.066)	(0.072)		(0.058)	(0.064)	
Rural	0.032			0.027		
	(0.087)			(0.078)		
Observations	131	85	46	131	85	46
R-squared	0.161	0.181	0.207	0.172	0.220	0.236

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4 below shows results for impact of child care slots on kindergarten upper letter

recognition scores, which range from 0-26. Column one shows results for the full model,

column two for the non-rural model, column three for the rural model, column four for the age-disaggregate model in which child care slots and population are disaggregated by age, column five for the age-disaggregate model in non-rural areas, and column six for the age-disaggregate model in rural areas. The OLS regression indicates that for every increase of 100 child care slots, upper letter recognition scores increase by 0.709 points in the full model in cities and 0.878 points in non-rural areas, but decrease by 3.223 points in rural areas, holding other factors constant. These results are not statistically significant. For the age-disaggregate model, every increase of 100 preschool age slots increases upper letter recognition scores by 0.751 points, in non-rural areas by 0.793 points and in rural areas by 0.563 points, holding other factors constant. Results for the age-disaggregate model and age-disaggregate non-rural areas are statistically significant at the 1% level. In addition, for the age-disaggregate model, every increase of 100 infant/toddler age slots decreases upper letter recognition scores by 0.457 points, in non-rural areas by 0.527 points and in rural areas by 1.883 points, holding other factors constant. However, these results are not statistically significant. Differences in scores between locale are also not statistically significant.

Table 4: Impact of Child Care Slots on Upper Letter Recognition Scores

VARIABLES	(1) Full model	(2) Non-Rural	(3) Rural	(4) Disagg. Age	(5) Non-Rural Disagg. Age	(6) Rural Disagg. Age
Total Child Care Slots by 1000s	0.709	0.878	-3.223			
	(0.615)	(0.617)	(2.014)			
Population 0-5	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000			
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)			
Preschool Slots by 100s				0.751***	0.793***	0.563
				(0.184)	(0.190)	(1.228)
Infant and Toddler Slots by 100s				-0.457	-0.527	-1.883
				(0.386)	(0.355)	(5.313)
Population Age 3-5				-0.001	-0.002**	0.003
				(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.008)
Population under 3				-0.001	-0.000	-0.005
				(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.006)

Percent White Student Body	3.696**	3.820**	0.784	2.899**	2.935**	-0.111
	(1.539)	(1.627)	(5.059)	(1.461)	(1.459)	(6.078)
Teacher Student Ratio	-0.132*	0.018	-0.259**	-0.093	0.087	-0.235**
	(0.077)	(0.108)	(0.112)	(0.076)	(0.114)	(0.115)
Spending per Pupil	-0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Percent Students with Free or Reduced Price Lunch	0.053***	-0.053***	-0.042	-0.048***	-0.045***	-0.045
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.029)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.030)
Suburb	0.033	0.105		0.514	0.479	
	(0.930)	(0.986)		(0.631)	(0.630)	
Town	-1.000	-0.706		-0.904	-0.717	
	(0.962)	(1.018)		(0.720)	(0.729)	
Rural	-0.888			-0.445		
	(1.103)			(0.839)		
Observations	131	85	46	131	85	46
R-squared	0.337	0.488	0.220	0.389	0.581	0.205

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5 below shows results for impact of child care slots on kindergarten self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores, according to district size. Column one shows results for small districts (less than 1000 students), column two for medium-size districts (1000-7000 students), and column three for large districts (greater than 7000 students). All models are disaggregated by age for child care slots. The OLS regression indicates that for every increase of 100 preschool age slots, self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores increase by 0.054 points in large districts in a city locale, holding other factors constant, and is statistically significant. For every increase of 100 preschool age slots, self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores increase by 0.064 points in small districts and 0.025 in medium-size districts, but these results are not statistically significant. In addition, for every increase of 100 infant/toddler slots, self-regulation and interpersonal skills scores increase by 0.179 points in small districts and 0.059 in medium-size districts, but decrease by 0.033 points in large districts. These results are not statistically significant.

Table 5: Impact of Child Care Slots on Self-Regulation and Interpersonal Skills Scores by District Size

VARIABLES	(1) Small (Students<1000)	(2) Medium (Students 1000-7000)	(3) Large (Students >7000)
Preschool Slots by 100s	0.064	0.025	0.054*
	(0.169)	(0.026)	(0.022)
Infant and Toddler Slots by 100s	0.179	0.059	-0.033
	(0.646)	(0.063)	(0.034)
Population Age 3-5	-0.001	-0.000**	-0.000**
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Population under 3	-0.001	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Percent White Student Body	-1.311*	0.144	-0.590**
	(0.694)	(0.189)	(0.206)
Teacher Student Ratio	0.053**	0.005	0.161**
	(0.025)	(0.012)	(0.054)
Spending per Pupil	-0.000	0.000*	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Percent Students with Free or Reduced Price Lunch	-0.007**	-0.004***	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Town	-0.135	-0.008	-0.066
	(0.126)	(0.110)	(0.087)
Suburb		-0.102	-0.050
		(0.114)	(0.043)
Rural		0.007	
		(0.120)	
Observations	47	69	15
R-squared	0.275	0.341	0.914

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1

Table 6 below shows results for impact of child care slots on kindergarten upper letter recognition scores by district size. Column one shows results for small districts (less than 100 students), column two for medium-size districts (1000-7000 students), and column three for large districts (greater than 7000 students). All models are disaggregated by age for child care slots. The OLS regression indicates that for every 100 preschool age child care slots, upper letter recognition scores increase by 0.961 points in small districts in cities, holding other factors constant, but these results are not statistically significant. For every increase of 100 preschool

age child care slots, upper letter recognition scores increase by 0.680 points in medium-size districts in cities, holding other factors constant, and increase in large districts in cities by 1.093 points, holding other factors constant. These results are statistically significant at the 5% level. The coefficient for small districts may not be statistically significant because of small sample size. In addition, in large districts in suburbs, an increase of 100 preschool age child care slots results in a 1.392 point increase in upper letter recognition scores, holding other factors constant, which is statistically significant at the 10% level. Small and medium-size districts in towns see a decrease of 1.707 and 1.6565 points, respectively, with every 100 preschool slot increase. These results are statistically significant at the 10% level. Similarly, large districts in towns show a decrease of 3.321 points with every increase of 100 preschool slots and this result is statistically significant at the 1% level. However, this result should be discarded as there is only one district that fits the criteria of being a large district in a town. An increase of 100 infant/toddler slots in large districts in cities results in a decrease of 0.928, holding other factors constant. This result is statistically significant at the 10% level. In small and medium-size districts in cities, an increase of 100 infants/toddler slots results in a decrease in upper letter recognition scores by 2.196 and 0.45 points, respectively. However, these results are not statistically significant.

Table 6: Impact of Child Care Slots on Upper Letter Recognition Scores by District Size

VARIABLES	(1) Small (Students<1000)	(2) Medium (Students 1000-7000)	(3) Large (Students >7000)
Preschool Slots by 100s	0.961	0.680***	1.093***
	-1.146	-0.232	-0.188
Infant and Toddler Slots by 100s	-2.196	-0.45	-0.928**
	-5.782	-0.587	-0.332
Population Age 3-5	-0.004	-0.001	-0.003*
	-0.009	-0.001	-0.001
Population under 3	-0.004	-0.002	-0.001
	-0.008	-0.001	-0.001

Percent White Student Body	-3.517	4.273**	-5.426*
	-3.839	-1.744	-2.107
Teacher Student Ratio	-0.271	0.144	1.267
	-0.184	-0.142	-0.598
Spending per Pupil	0	0	0
	0	0	0
Percent Students with Free or Reduced Price Lunch	-0.041	-0.038**	-0.084***
	-0.026	-0.014	-0.017
Town	-1.707*	-1.656*	-3.321**
	-0.884	-0.961	-0.744
Suburb		-1.2	1.392*
		-0.905	-0.56
Rural		-1.606	
		-1.07	
Observations	47	69	15
R-squared	0.231	0.54	0.99

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Discussion and Policy Implications

In general, increases in child care slots results in higher kindergarten readiness scores. The most significant results are improvements in upper letter recognition scores accompanying increases in preschool slots. For example, we would expect an increase of 100 preschool age slots in a medium-size district and large district to result in a statistically significant increase of upper letter recognition scores by 0.680 and 1.093 points, respectively, holding other factors constant. Small districts see an increase of 0.961 points per 100 preschool age slot increase. The small district result is not statistically significant, but this may be due to small sample size. Similarly, an increase of 100 preschool slots in a non-rural locale and in the full model, disaggregated by age, results in a statistically significant increase of upper letter recognition scores by 0.793 and 0.751 points, respectively, holding other factors constant.

On the other hand, increases in infant and toddler age slots give inconsistent findings, sometimes resulting in improved kindergarten scores, but often decreasing them. Most of these

results are not statistically significant but it is useful to explore why this may be the case. There are several possible explanations. First, increasing infant/toddler slots may remove preschool slots that are available as workforce is allocated to the lower age group. Also, not changing preschool slots but holding them fixed may shift the focus of some child care centers towards infant/toddler-based care. Second, child care in infant and toddler years may be detrimental to child development or at least less beneficial than child care at the preschool age or with preschool elements. Determining if infant/toddler child care is beneficial or harmful is a complicated issue that depends on quality of care in the child care center as well as the home environment. For example, child care may offer compensatory care for a high-risk home environment; in other cases, both places may add risk and create a double jeopardy situation (Phillips, 2006). The scenarios are highly individualistic. However, children who are in poverty seem to be the most vulnerable to differences in the quality of early childhood education settings (Phillips & Lowenstein, 2011).

Some studies report that child care has negative behavioral effects and that these are greater for children in child care at younger ages (Loeb et al., 2005). However, high quality child care is also shown to improve cognitive skills and language development, with the greatest academic benefit being for children who start at ages 2–3 and for those from more disadvantaged circumstances (Loeb at al., 2005). In this study, that age range would encompass both toddler and preschool age slots.

The results from this study indicate that public funding should be allocated to preschool age slots as this shows the greatest impact on improving kindergarten readiness scores. This is a logical notion as preschool likely prepares children for kindergarten with skills such as sitting in a group, following directions, problem-solving with peers, and letter recognition. However,

broader impact should also be considered as parents of infants and toddlers face greater challenges in finding child care than those of preschoolers because of the greater expense and larger deficit in slots available (Jessen-Howard et al., 2020; Pratt et al., 2021). In addition, all child care access is especially influential on women's ability to enter the workforce and thus child development should be balanced with the effect on labor market and maternal well-being (Saraceno, 2011). One viable option to increasing preschool slots is to implement universal preschool as evidenced through the Multnomah County Preschool for All measure which will be discussed in Part B of this paper. This measure allots funds to maintain infant and toddler slots to prevent draining the child care workforce for younger ages as it funds preschool for 3-5 year-olds (Multnomah County, 2020).

Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is that data could only be accessed at the district level. While this data may have shown statistically significant findings, it is more likely that differences will be visible between zip codes or individual students. This is because one district is likely to have a large mix of student population demographics, including free and reduced-price lunch recipients and student race, and may also have a range of child care availability. Future research that uses zip code or individual student data would be valuable.

Another limitation is that the data available was cross-section data which limits the ability to track individual changes. Panel data would be useful in providing information on the same child over multiple years, such as which children access the child care slots, the number of years in child care, the type of care for which they are enrolled, and individual student

kindergarten readiness scores. This would give more complete information than the number of slots in an area and lead to better informed policy recommendations.

Part B: Qualitative Research

Theoretical Framework

This study will apply the Multiple Streams Framework to gain insight into the policy process for the Multnomah County Preschool for All measure. Using the theoretical lens of the Multiple Streams Framework allows us to better understand its development and success. The Multiple Streams Framework explains the agenda-setting process and how significant policy change takes place. The framework asserts that policies are put on the agenda or adopted by policy makers when the problem, policy, and politics streams converge (coupling) during a policy window. The problem stream examines how policy actors recognize a problem, such as focusing events (natural disasters, airplane crashes, terrorist attacks), indicators (regularly occurring surveys or reports), and feedback (policymakers or the public recognize existing programs that are not meeting goals, have high costs or unwanted side effects).

The second stream, policy, is where policy alternatives (solutions) are generated. Participants may be both visible (legislators, President) and hidden (policy experts, interest groups, researchers). Various ideas are floating around in a policy "primeval soup" waiting to be scooped up and paired with a problem (Kingdon, 2011). Policy alternatives are only deemed acceptable if they have technical feasibility, value acceptability, public acquiescence, and financial viability (Herweg et al., 2018). The principal actor in the policy stream is the policy entrepreneur, who uses "causal stories to procure political support and public funds" (Stone, 2012, p. 227). To be successful, the policy entrepreneur must couple their solution to the two

other streams and push their proposal through the agenda window. Policy entrepreneurs have greater success with strong resources (time, money, and energy), and use various instruments for their proposals, such as framing, affect priming, "salami tactics," and the use of symbols (Zahariadis, 2003). Keeping alternatives off the table is as much a form of power as getting them on (Stone, 2012).

The political stream is significantly variable and identified by three main elements: national mood (empirically elusive), interest group campaigns (which may educate people to see interests they don't know they have), and government (especially turnover) (Herweg et al., 2018; Smith and Larimer, 2012; Stone, 2012). It is important to note that the streams do not necessarily converge in a linear pattern, but often solutions look for problems as a policy entrepreneur couples a pet project to a newly surfaced problem, especially a focusing event (Herweg et al., 2018). Causal stories are used to link a desired program to a problem that has become high on the policy agenda (Stone, 2012).

Methods

Data Collection

The Universal Preschool NOW (UP NOW or UPN) coalition started as a grassroots campaign with origins in the Democratic Socialists of America Portland chapter. Members of this organization joined with other left-leaning community organizations to design a citizen's initiative to create universal preschool in Multnomah County by taxing the rich (UPNOW2020.org). The Multnomah County Preschool for All initiative was a culmination of work between Social Venture Partners Portland and Early Learning Multnomah, particularly the Parent Accountability Council, to create a measure that would be referred to the ballot by the Multnomah County Board of

Commissioners. To identify themes in the successful universal preschool campaign, I collected documents from websites and publications relevant to the policy process from Universal Preschool NOW and Preschool for All.   These documents and websites were used to gain insight into the history and timeline of the campaign. Fifty-one websites, videos, and documents were analyzed from the Universal Preschool NOW official website, the Multnomah County website, news articles, journal articles, and social media.   These were found through Google searches or by recommendation from interview participants.   Documents and websites as well as snowball sampling were used to identify potential interviewees who would give insight into the campaign process and provide a "panel of informants" representing different participants in the campaigns (Weiss, 1995).   Documents and websites were also utilized to provide knowledge for well-informed interview questions. Interviews are particularly well-suited for this project because they are an adaptable and flexible way to obtain rich and illuminating data about settings and events in which one was not present (Weiss, 1995).   Interviews also aid in understanding perspectives and goals of participants. Semi-structured interviews, in particular, are useful in gaining contextual understanding and revealing the processes that led to specific outcomes (Maxwell, 2013).

Thirteen potential interviewees in the Universal Preschool NOW campaign and eight in the Preschool for All county campaign were identified through documents and websites as well as snowball sampling as interview participants recommended additional informants.   This project incorporates data from those who replied to correspondence and were available for meeting and includes nine interviews with Universal Preschool NOW volunteers and six interviews with those involved with Preschool for All.   To better understand the UP NOW campaign, I interviewed the two campaign coordinators who are members of DSA, one of the three chief petitioners, two volunteers who participated in research, two communications volunteers, and two child care

workers. To gain insight into the Preschool for All campaign, I interviewed the County Commissioner who championed the project, the former CEO of Social Venture Partners Portland, the director of the Early Leaning Multnomah hub, two consultants or facilitators for the campaign, and one parent leader from the Parent Accountability Council and Preschool for All Task Force. Interviewees were initially contacted via email to introduce the research project and purpose, and to request and schedule the interviews. The interviews were conducted over Zoom, lasted 32-87 minutes, with an average length of 65 minutes, and utilized a semi-structured interview guide covering questions regarding the creation of the campaign, strategies in garnering support, the merging process, outcome predictions, and lessons learned. The interview protocol, and codebook with themes, definitions, and examples can be found in the Appendix.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed using "open" coding to identify initial categories of information. Next, interviews were analyzed using "focused" coding to connect interview content to the theoretical concepts discussed previously in the Multiple Streams Framework (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The documents and website content were used to check validity of themes from the interviews (Maxwell, 2013).

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Results

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Timeline

Universal Preschool NOW

The creation of the Universal Preschool NOW campaign began as a thought exercise with the Portland chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Democratic Socialists of

America originated in the 1970s and currently has 90,000 members, making it the largest

socialist organization in the United States (Schwartz, 2020). There are 240 chapters or

organizing committees in the United States, including six in Oregon, with the Portland chapter

having over 2,000 members ("Who we are," n.d.). DSA is involved in labor organizing,

education events, rallies, and mutual aid. Universal Preschool NOW was the most significant

electoral work in which they have participated (interview 4). Members of DSA had attended

Portland City Budget meetings and were tired of begging for programs to not be cut, including

funding for community centers and public parks (Stenvik, 2020). John Bethencourt, one of the

campaign coordinators for Universal Preschool Now said,

> We kind of gave up on lobbying elected officials and decided to just kind of sit down and develop our own policies for something that we think should happen…This ballot initiative process is almost the only way everyday people can …make their interests known, or matter to the people in power (interview 4).

DSA members met with community organizations to determine what the highest

community needs were and what could be accomplished with a "tax the rich" funding

mechanism (interview 1). Issues such as housing, education and healthcare were discussed. Von

W. Gilbert remembered, "a second thing was after housing was always child care, and people

would talk about it in the terms of…this costs as much as housing so people were expressing

that…their household budget was being stretched thin by these two things." Housing was too

large and complicated of an issue to address with the funds (interviews 1, 2, 4), and child care

was chosen as the target program because it was a high need, with strong public support and

financially feasible (interviews 1, 2, 4). With continued involvement of coalition partners,

including educators, unions, child care workers, parents, and economists, by the end of 2018, the

DSA determined the important priorities to the coalitions, namely redistributing wealth, equity

and livable wages (interviews 1, 4).

The original idea was to emulate the NYC model and cover all 4-year-olds with an initial campaign and launch a second campaign to expand to all 3-year-olds. This is because original cost modeling estimates suggested that the funding mechanism would not be able to cover both years. However, in the early stages, child care workers and administrators indicated the logistic challenges of this idea and updated estimates from the state's Legislative Revenue Office signified that there would be enough funds to cover both years (personal correspondence, July 28, 2022).

Ultimately, the Universal Preschool NOW (UP NOW) campaign was created in 2019 with the following tenets: a "tax the rich" funding mechanism (3.9% tax on taxable income over $165,000 (single) and $190,000 (joint)), livable wages for child care workers (at least 145% of minimum wage for preschool educators and staff), union neutrality (county remains neutral to union organizing and representation), and a universal (not means-tested) year-round preschool policy for all 3- and 4-year-olds in Multnomah County that would be fully implemented by 2027 (Universal Preschool NOW! Ballot Initiative, 2020). Means-testing refers to eligibility qualifications, such as income below a certain threshold. Many social service programs are means-tested, such as SNAP and Medicaid. Frequently, public funds that support early childhood, such as Head Start and Preschool Promise, are means-tested. These programs may also be referred to as "targeted programs" as they target certain populations, such as low-income families.

After "thousands" of conversations with community organizations and advocacy groups (including the national nonprofit Children's Funding Project) (interview 1), the UP NOW campaign became a coalition of over 40 organizations. The UP NOW campaign had two coordinators, Emily von W. Gilbert and John Bethencourt, members of the DSA who "had time

to keep everything moving" (interview 1), and three ballot measure chief petitioners: Portland

Association of Teachers president Suzanne Cohen, Portland Jobs with Justice executive director

Will Layng, and Sahar Muranovic, executive director of the Oregon chapter of the National

Organization for Women. In addition, there were over 40 coalition partners and hundreds of

volunteers who spread the word and helped build an email list of supporters. One of the only

paid individuals, an elections attorney, drafted the final measure which was submitted to the

elections office in February 2020.

UP NOW was an initiative petition which means that 22,686 signatures were needed to

qualify for the November 2020 ballot. Signature gathering was delayed by two legal challenges

brought forward by Portland Business Alliance, undoubtedly filed to delay signature gathering

(interview 2). One lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of the initiative and one challenged

the language of the title, including the use of the word "universal" in the title because the term is

politically popular (interviews 1, 3). The first legal challenge was dismissed, and the second

legal challenge resulted in the petitioner and respondent agreeing to an addition to the question in

the ballot, specifying that the new tax would be a "3.9% new tax on residents' income above

certain thresholds" (Isaacs v. Scott, 2020 & Simons v. Madkour, 2020). Ultimately, the initiative

was approved on June 4, 2020, leaving a five-week timeline to gather signatures instead of the

planned six months. Between June 4 and July 6, 2020, over 600 volunteers collected voter

signatures, the campaign mailed over 1000 signature gathering packets, and volunteers engaged

in phone- and text-banking as well as active social media presence (147 Instagram posts over the

full campaign). Fundraising for the campaign was done on a grassroots level, asking for small

donations through a plethora of people rather than relying on, and being beholden to, large

entities (interviews 5, 10). On July 6, 2020, 32,356 signatures were submitted to the Multnomah

County Elections Office. With 24,826 signatures verified, on July 22, 2020, UP NOW was officially certified to be on the November 2020 ballot (McIntosh, 2020). The Portland Business Alliance also threatened a third lawsuit if the County certified the initiative for the ballot, citing the impossibility of gaining the requisite signatures in such a short time (McIntosh, 2020), but seemed to change their mind as no legal challenge was filed and the assistant County attorney verified she is not aware of one (K. Thomas, personal correspondence, July 23, 2020).

Preschool for All

The Preschool for All measure was a result of a decade of effort by early childhood advocates, nonprofits, and community groups. In 2012, the nonprofit foundation Social Venture Partners Portland (SVP) collaborated with the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families and Community to establish the Ready for Kindergarten program under the All Hands Raised platform, and included community leaders, child care providers, and parents (interview 15). This group recognized that children in the community differed in kindergarten readiness and sought to address economic barriers and racial disparities to increase learning foundations. As part of this effort, the group commissioned Portland State University to map existing preschool programs and report on service gaps (interview 15). The April 2012 analysis provided clear data which identified the populations with the greatest need, specifically children of color, children living in poverty, and children whose home language is not English. These populations often participated in services and were affected by policy but did not currently have a voice (interview 15). To rectify this issue, six culturally specific group agencies were identified and asked to send parents to meetings to discuss how to improve kindergarten readiness. These

groups were African American, African immigrant, Asian, Latino, Native American, and Slavic (Early Learning Multnomah).

Meanwhile, 16 Early Learning hubs were established throughout Oregon as a statewide effort to coordinate the early learning system. In 2014, Early Learning Multnomah (ELM) at the United Way of Columbia-Willamette became the hub for Multnomah County. The directors of the hub chose to appoint the parent leaders of the six specific groups as one of their two governance councils (interview 11). This group became known as the Parent Accountability Council (PAC) and its purpose was to center the voice of communities of color and to ensure that their needs and values were being prioritized, including receiving support through staff and stipends (Early Learning Multnomah; interviews 11, 15). Early Learning Multnomah's second governance council, the oversight council, includes three PAC members on its five-member council, and ensures that ELM meets state-funded requirements, chooses how to allocate funds, and reviews ELM investments (Early Learning Multnomah). In 2015, Oregon devoted funds to Preschool Promise, a new publicly funded program, and charged each hub with creating a preschool vision statement (interview 11). This convened an 18-month process between PAC and early childhood professionals which culminated in 2016 with a published vision for a coordinated preschool system that was "affordable, accessible, culturally relevant, inclusive, trauma-informed, high-quality and that created joyful learning environments" (Preschool Vision, 2016).

The early childhood advocacy work continued as ELM, SVP, Portland State University (PSU), and community-based organizations engaged in Preschool Success Project design sessions (interview 15). This collaboration focused on research, including a report and event at PSU in October 2017, presenting findings from universal preschool policies in eight cities or

counties across the country and bringing community awareness to the need for preschool. More than 250 leaders and practitioners pledged to be "counted in" for their support. This research event highlighted strengths and dilemmas in universal preschool programs in other municipalities. In particular, attendees learned the need for a mixed delivery model so that home-based care is not excluded, and that provisions need to be made for infant and toddler slots to avoid decreasing their supply. The research also made it clear that a political champion would be essential for policy success (Early Learning Multnomah, 2017; interviews 11, 15).

After discussions with SVP, ELM, and PAC, Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson was secured as political champion (interviews 11, 15). In the Fall of 2018, the Preschool for All Task Force was established with Vega Pederson as chair and Mark Holloway of SVP as co-chair, bringing a public and private partnership together (Holloway, 2018). This began a deliberate two-year process of getting a preschool measure on the November 2020 ballot (interview 12). The Task Force included two members of the Parent Accountability Council as well as leaders in early childhood education, social service, health care, and government. They were charged with addressing the following key challenges in the preschool system (Multnomah County, 2019):

1. Limited access to preschool, particularly for families of color, families who speak English as a second language, those experiencing poverty, and those who don't qualify for public supports but still can't afford preschool;
2. Shortage of early childhood educators and a poorly paid and undervalued existing workforce;
3. Shortage of preschool classrooms and facilities; and
4. Lack of a connected system to support and ensure quality

As part of this work, the Task Force established four Work Groups which included technical experts to study and make recommendations on: Policy & Program, Workforce, Infrastructure, and Finance Strategy and Administration. During this time, ECONorthwest, a

respected economic consulting firm, provided population and workforce data and cost models. In July 2019, after nine months of work, the Task Force released the Preschool for All Report which includes 50 recommendations for creating an equitable preschool system. These included free preschool for those below the Self-Sufficiency Standard (about 350% FPL), with sliding scale tuition for those with income above the Standard, a mixed delivery model, preschool teacher salary to be on par with kindergarten teacher salary, and program assistant salaries to be no less than $15 per hour (Multnomah County, 2019).

The Task Force recommendations were utilized as final policy decisions were made in the pre-referral steering committee (co-chaired by Vega Pederson and Holloway) and technical advisory committee. The final Preschool for All Plan was published in July 2020, with the goal to be referred by the Board of County Commissioners to the November 2020 ballot, securing countywide universal preschool through a new income tax (interview 12; Multnomah County, 2020). The plan also detailed a mixed-delivery program model with culturally specific options, prohibits suspensions and expulsions, prioritizes children who currently have the least access to preschool today, pays a living wage to providers[1], and rolls out implementation over 10 years, reaching full capacity in 2030 (Multnomah County, 2020). On August 6, 2020, all five board members voted to refer the Preschool for All measure to the November 2020 ballot (Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, 2020).

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[1] Lead preschool teachers are paid on par with kindergarten teachers. Assistant preschool teachers are paid a minimum of $18 per hour in 2020 dollars, with cost of living adjustments (COLA) based on the County's union-negotiated COLA rate OR to bring wage to 135% of Portland metro minimum wage, whichever is greater. In 2022, when assistant teachers are paid under the Preschool for All Plan, this wage will be $19.91.

Merge

Conversations between UP NOW and Preschool for All began in the Fall of 2019 and continued throughout both campaigns, although with some pausing with the COVID-pandemic because of the county's need to focus on public health (interviews 1, 13). While both campaigns were interested in coming to unification, their differing timelines made early negotiations unprofitable (interviews 3, 4, 14). UP NOW had a solidified platform with the final measure for an initiative petition requiring submission much earlier than the Preschool for All measure that would be referred to the County Commission. In addition, the Preschool for All measure campaign had not finalized their measure and were still in their established decision-making process, which included several layers of approval, including sign off by the PAC (interviews 11, 15). While negotiation meetings were taking place, UP NOW continued with their signature-gathering campaign as there was no guarantee at the time that their required tenets would be adopted by Preschool for All and they did not want to be "locked into only one approach" (interviews 12). Bethencourt said, "We were interested in merging the campaigns…from the beginning, but we… had…several hard lines that were our core values that we didn't want to compromise on" (interview 4). These were a "universal program without means-testing...funded by a tax impacting the wealthiest in the community because…redistributing wealth is a really important equity issue. And we wanted to raise the wages of childcare workers" (interview 4).

After UP NOW secured a place on the November 2020 ballot, merge negotiations became more deliberate and imperative (interviews 2, 11, 13, 15). Both groups recognized that two very similar but separate measures on the ballot would be confusing to voters and could result in both measures being defeated (interviews 2, 11, 13, 15). Ultimately, the two campaigns merged and presented a single proposal to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners in

August 2020. This involved a somewhat complicated process of having the Board immediately adopt and then repeal the UP NOW policy on September 3, 2020, with the support of the UP NOW campaign and chief-petitioners who testified at the August 6 and 27, 2020 board meetings (Multnomah County Board meeting minutes, 2020). There were three board members who approved of the ordinance to be enacted and repealed, which secured its passage.

 At this point, all hands were on deck as members of both campaigns actively campaigned for the now unified Preschool for All measure (interviews 5, 12, 13). A coalition was formed, with each campaign inviting five organizations to attend weekly Get Out the Vote meetings to stay updated and coordinated throughout the campaign (personal correspondence, July 28, 2022). These lasted for about 3 months, until election day. On November 3, 2020, the measure passed with a 2:1 margin with 64% of Multnomah County voters approving measure 26-214 (Multnomah County Elections Results, 2020).

Figure 3 – Timeline of Campaigns
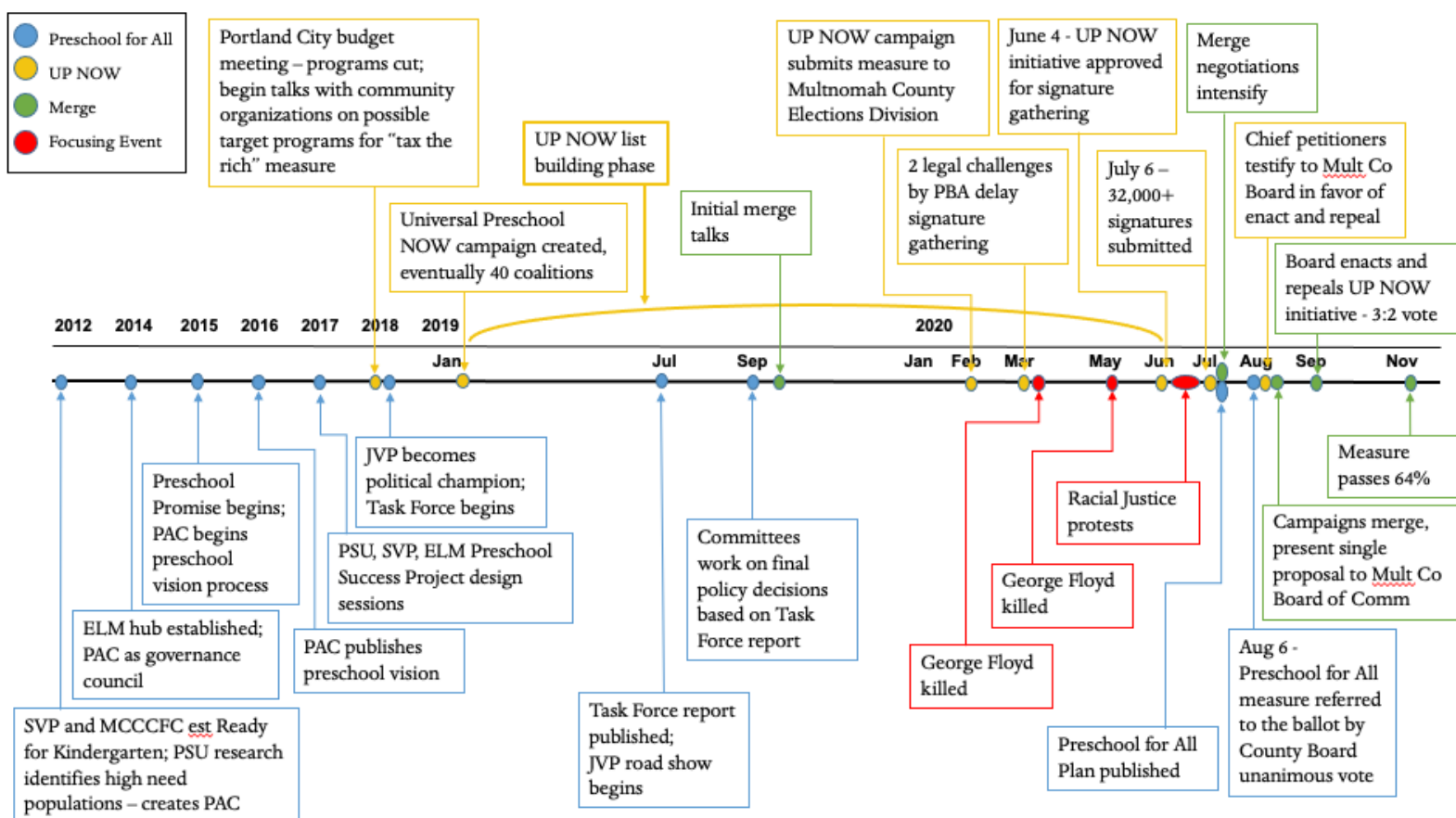
Discussion

The Multiple Streams Framework explains the agenda-setting process and how significant policy change takes place and provides insight into the Universal Preschool NOW (UP NOW) and Preschool for All (PFA) campaigns. Thus, application of the theoretical lens of the Multiple Streams Framework allows us to better understand the creation of the measures and their adoption. According to the MSF, policies are put on the agenda or adopted by policy makers when the problem, policy, and politics streams converge (coupling) during a policy

window. The problem stream examines how policy actors recognize a problem through feedback and focusing events. The problem stream often includes problem brokers who frame situations as a public problem as they "deviate from policymakers' or citizens' ideal states" (Herweg et al., 2018, p. 21).

Problem

In the UP NOW campaign, wealth inequity was the primary problem and policy actors searched the policy stream through conversations with community organizations to identify the community's biggest needs that wealth redistribution could solve. In this way, "interest groups search[ed] the problem stream for issues to attach to their pet policies" (Rozbicka, 2015, p.4). The largest needs identified were housing and child care. Von W. Gilbert explained, "after housing was always child care, and people would talk about [how]…this costs as much as housing so people were expressing that…their household budget was being stretched thin by these two things" (interview 1). Matesanz, a child care worker with the campaign, questioned "Why is school a market? It shouldn't be" (interview 10). The U.S. Department of the Treasury recently released a report indicating that the child care system is a market failure as it overburdens families and has inadequate supply (2021). Matesanz elaborates that the preschool working model has high turnover and workers cannot afford preschool for their own children. There is a large disparity between preschool and kindergarten teacher wages, benefits, and sick days for workers. Matesanz asserts that children are not a private problem and to have success, it should not be about being lucky or rich (interview 10). Goldberg also emphasized the problem of worker's rights.

> A huge part of our organizing was centered on making sure that workers were
> included because there is so much turnover in child care, in preschool. There is so

much turnover in early childhood education….Before Preschool for All was passed, I think the average wage [for child care workers] in Multnomah County…was $12 an hour. It's not something that people can live off long term…So we were very, very centered on organizing with workers and making sure that workers were excited about this program and wanted to participate in it (interview 3).

Conversely, The Preschool for All initiative has its roots in nonprofit groups, Social Venture Partners Portland and the Early Learning Multnomah hub, identifying disparities in the readiness for school success for children in Multnomah County as the problem to be addressed. Holloway recalls the vision throughout their nine-year effort - "What is best for ALL of our kids, especially those furthest from opportunity now?" The data showed that it was "kids of color, those whose home language was not English and/or kids experiencing poverty that should be our priority" (Holloway, 2021). This research as well as conversations with parent leaders from PAC served as indicators to the Preschool for All campaign. The campaign also identified three main obstacles: preschool is unaffordable for families, there is not enough infrastructure, and providers do not receive fair wages which limit the workforce (interview 13).

Another aspect of the MSF problem stream is *feedback*. Thought leaders with Preschool for All conducted research on the benefits of preschool and universal preschool in particular (interview 15), and both campaigns had feedback from research on successful universal policies, including neighboring Seattle and San Francisco (Early Learning Multnomah). This research gave evidence of universal programs reaching their goals and being successful in implementation as well as identifying problems in current policies that should be avoided (Early Learning Multnomah).

Problem brokers are an essential part of the problem stream as they "*frame* conditions as public problems and work to make policymakers accept these frames" (Herweg et al., 2018, p.22, italics added). In the UP NOW campaign, these included co-coordinators Emily von W.

Gilbert and John Bethencourt from DSA, PSU emerita professor of economics Mary King, child

care workers (supported by Jobs with Justice), teachers (Portland Association of Teachers), and

women's rights advocates (Portland chapter of National Organization of Women). In the

Preschool for All campaign, problem brokers included parent leaders in the Parent

Accountability Council, Mark Holloway with SVP and Molly Day with ELM.

In both campaigns *framing of the problem* was used to gain support for worker's rights,

women's rights, children, parents, providers, and equity. In addition, UP NOW emphasized

wealth redistribution in the framing of the funding mechanism. And both campaigns benefitted

from framing that was supported by public opinion - that only the wealthiest pay and the tax will

not affect most. In fact, polling was done on the language for the funding mechanism and in the

final measure, the total for the highest earners is divided into two sections. King remarked that

"the usual wisdom is: be clear with your tax mechanism so people can understand it. If it's too

complex, they're just gonna go, forget it…but in this case, complexity…worked; they just read

the first line and then moved on" (interview 2). Von W. Gilbert recalled, "most journalists didn't

report the full revenue mechanism either, just…that top line…which is half of it" (interview 1).

In addition, both campaigns framed the policy by touting the high return on investment for

preschool, using economic data as evidence (interviews 2, 13).

Focusing events are part of the problem stream and increase the probability of change.

Two major focusing events affected the campaigns, the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial

justice protests of 2020. Although these took place late in the policy creation process, they were

instrumental in raising awareness of the child care crisis and equity issues. The COVID-19

pandemic also created challenges for the campaigns. It put a halt to some of the Preschool for

All work as the county had to focus on public health. For UP NOW, it created a difficult

obstacle to gathering signatures on paper. The campaign launched a mail-in ballot campaign

which subsequently brought in 2000 signatures (personal correspondence, July 28, 2022). In the

end, UP NOW campaign members voted and decided to allow people to gather signatures, with

the expectation that it likely would not be possible to secure the needed amount (interview 1).

One positive aspect of the pandemic was that it brought awareness to the essential need of child

care workers, about unacceptable wages, and how child care impacts all of society. Nat Glitsch,

a child care worker helping with the UP NOW campaign said,

> It was just interesting investing in this political idea of…early childhood educators needing higher wages…and just how little people cared about it. However, then in 2020, with lots of protests happening, and kind of a shifting in public consciousness around…essential workers for sure, but also around racialized labor and class, and gendered-labor,…talking about child care workers became a…hot button topic. But I heard a lot of people talk about it who couldn't have been bothered to talk about it a year previously…It just became a lot more relevant…so that conversation feels really different now than it did in 2019 (interview 7).

Chilton-Timmons, management analyst of PFA reflected,

> I think it just became clear that child care is part of our community infrastructure too, and that it really does impact all aspects of our life. And it can't just be siloed into this thing over here…It was something positive, and at a time when people were just really struggling,…many people were excited to be able to make that difference and vote (interview 9).

Holloway of PFA asserts that the pandemic noted that "childcare and preschool became

the sort of glaring need by the community" as child care businesses closed one after another.

"We got more votes to the ballot box because of COVID-19 in that sense," said Holloway

(interview 15).

> Lydia Kiesling of UP NOW voiced that the pandemic highlighted a broken system:

> People are asked to do things that…are not really possible,…grinding along,… often managing in…hidden and unpleasant ways. And I think the COVID situation really…made the children more visible and the workers more visible, who were subsisting on incomes that were not sustainable (interview 6).

In addition, Kiesling highlighted the sense of purpose that the campaign brought to people during the pandemic. "I think it probably helped in many ways…It obviously didn't help…anyone's…daily life, but I think people were feeling a sense of urgency and desperation to…make a change" (interview 6).

Another focusing event was the attention on racial justice in the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd. UP NOW volunteers contacted racial justice protest organizers to ask if they could gather signatures for the UP NOW campaign at these protests and were met with support and often a stage platform to make an announcement or give a speech (interviews 4, 10). As organizers of both organizations recognized, the two platforms went hand in hand, as universal preschool is a means of addressing racial injustices (interviews 4, 6). Opportunity for preschool for racial minorities is often limited by slot access and prohibitive cost. In addition, child care workers are often women of color and do not receive a livable wage. Eric Gold, a communications director for UP NOW said:

> People who are concerned about racial justice many times also realized that there's a racial justice component to preschool not being free. Not only are the teachers of preschool nationally, disproportionately…people of color, they're overwhelmingly women…And then, of course,…I'm sure if you broke it down….[by] who actually can afford preschool - it's gonna be a lot more white people and a lot fewer people of color (interview 5).

Gold also recalled that there were bigger crowds at the racial justice protests than at the end of Timbers games, and that their values aligned with the UP NOW volunteers who could easily gather signatures in their recognizable yellow shirts and hats (interview 5). Many UP NOW participants expressed doubt that they would have gathered enough signatures during the pandemic along with their shortened time line without the racial justice protests (interviews 3, 4, 10). Bethencourt noted, "In the end what kind of saved us in terms of gathering signatures under those conditions was the Black Lives Matter movement which everyone rightly decided was

important enough to support despite the pandemic" (interview 4). Goldberg, an UP NOW volunteer acknowledged, "I don't know that we would have gotten it here without that" (interview 3).

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic also likely contributed to the high amount of protesters as people were stuck at home and often had a desire to do something to make a difference. Sahar Muranovic, executive director of the Oregon chapter of the National Organization for Women and one of the chief petitioners of the UP NOW campaign observed, "If the pandemic had not happened in the way that it did, with folks at their 9-to-5 jobs, people wouldn't be as able to protest and go to actions" (Silverman, 2020). This also served as a benefit for the UP NOW campaign, as gathering signatures was a way for people to contribute to a cause and attempt to make a difference. Kiesling remarked:

> It was a thing where the people who were going out there were the people who would be at those protests anyway, so it felt like an authentic and …organic way to…get signatures…and there was a lot of overlap with people who were out protesting, who are like, yes, this is part of the broader suite of changes that need to happen. So that also played a huge part in how many signatures they were able to get in a short period of time is that there was…a broader mass mobilization around racial justice that…aligned ideologically with…a hope to get universal programs (interview 6).

The COVID-19 pandemic also brought increased media coverage of the essential need of child care. Glitsch of UP NOW recalls more public attention to the matter, including at the child care center where she worked. "Families at our school…were completely shocked to hear what we were being paid and were shocked to know that that was normal to be so severely underpaid even when these parents were paying really high tuition" (interview 7).

The racial justice protests in the summer of 2020 also increased awareness and support for the Preschool for All campaign. Chilton-Timmons said the protests helped people see "alignment with the work that we're doing and prioritizing black and brown families and families

who didn't have necessarily the same access as white families…That's always been part of our work" (interview 9). Since racial equity was at the heart of the policy creation, Holloway suggested that the protests "underscored and bold faced that part of our platform" (interview 15). Day declared, "this was a measure that was designed by and for Black people. So if you really want to put your money where your mouth is," vote for this measure (interview 11). Chilton-Timmons also voiced, "here's a chance to live out…what I'm feeling…the frustration I have with the systems and the disparities I see in society…This can create some change" (interview 9).

Policy

The Multiple Streams Framework asserts that the following are criteria for policy survival: *financial viability, value acceptability, public acquiescence, and technical feasibility* (Herweg et al., 2018). As opposed to traditional policy creation, the UP NOW campaign began with their funding mechanism, thus ensuring *financial viability*, and then determined the problem to be solved. Von W. Gilbert remembered, "we actually started from the opposite direction of almost any big social program, which is that we found a revenue mechanism first…that would target only the wealthiest in the community" (interview 1). In conversations with community organizations and unions, they determined what the community ranked as their highest needs, thus securing *public acquiescence*. Von W. Gilbert said, we "collectively identified what would have enough support in community to actually be able for us to take to the ballot" (interview 1). Von W. Gilbert recalled a concern that child care might exclude too many people and not make the community difference for which they were hoping, but by including the workforce issues, child care is something that affects the whole community and "we're solving two things here" (interview 1). Bethencourt recalled that they "settled on free universal preschool as the most

compelling use for these funds. And not just universal preschool, but universal preschool that pays a living wage to the workers, which is an aspect of it that's often been overlooked in other programs" (interview 4). In addition, the funding mechanism was deemed financially viable as it would attract less opposition than a business tax. King explained, "One of the reasons that we picked a high-end income tax, rather than a corporate tax, is that the affluent aren't organized the way businesses are organized" (interview 2).

The UP NOW campaign also had several volunteers who researched universal preschool policies in the United States and internationally to inform the ballot measure and imitate successful policy (interviews 1, 2, 3, 4). This helped inform a measure that was hoped to be *technically feasible*, in other words, it would work if implemented (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016).

Finally, the UP NOW campaign had *policy entrepreneurs* who were skilled at garnering support among members of the community with the use of their time, energy, and reputation. These included von W. Gilbert, Bethencourt, King, leaders of coalitions, and other volunteers who mobilized their communities, such as child care workers. One of the coordinators, von W. Gilbert, is remembered by UP NOW volunteers as being a skilled facilitator, with the ability to be gracious, incorporate all volunteers, and communicate effectively, while also staying true to the campaign's convictions (interviews 5, 6).

The Preschool for All initiative established *technical feasibility* and *financial viability* through substantial research on possible revenue mechanisms and successful outcomes of universal preschool policy in other municipalities. They also engaged political consultants, and established workgroups which combined individuals who were experts in policy, preschool programs, workforce, infrastructure, finance, and administration as well as those with lived experience to create innovative solutions (Multnomah County, 2019). The PFA campaign also

reached *value acceptability* by engaging experts from various sectors, including providers and early childhood experts (Multnomah County, 2019). In terms of *public acquiescence,* it was important to the campaign to build a community tailored program and to build on past community work and previous relationships with community-based organizations, such as Latino Network (interview 13).

The involvement of the PAC in every decision with PFA was a powerhouse factor in *public acquiescence*. In fact, this was the North Star to which many participants in the PFA campaign referred (interviews 9, 11, 13, 15). Their goal was to establish a common vision and shared values that guided their entire process – What is best for all of our 3- to 4-year-olds and their families? What if all children had access to the preschool that was best for them? And what if every family could afford the preschool that was best for their children? (interview 11). In order to accomplish this goal, PFA essentially began the process with a blank page and centered community involvement (interviews 9, 13). This entailed building on previous community work, especially the preschool vision created by the Parent Accountability Council (PAC). Throughout the initiative process, these parents, who represented six culturally specific organizations, had decision-making power, support staff, and a respected voice. Lydia Gray-Holifield, a parent leader from PAC noted that the entire process was guided by the idea of "nothing for us, without us" (Haspel, 2020b) and that "Preschool for All has given me an opportunity as a parent to have a voice where I've never had a voice before" (interview 8).

This "community-based participatory policy making" (interview 9) with the PAC, workforce groups, and Task Force characterized the typology of the PFA policy – it was "emergent (gradual gestation of new ideas)" and "consensual" (Herweg et al., 2018). The policy could have developed in a quicker and more efficient process with Vega Pederson and her staff

drafting an ordinance themselves, but it would lack the thoughtfulness, community support, and community tailoring that they ultimately created (interview 12). Participants noted it was not a process they had seen before and it is unusual for parents, for example, to have the decision-making power that they did (interviews 9, 11).

As part of their effort to follow their North Star, the PFA campaign prioritized racial equity. Molly Day, director of the Early Learning Multnomah hub declared, "lack of access can't be separated from the broader social context of racial oppression that exists in our county" (Jensen, 2020). Previous research done with the Preschool Success Project identified populations with the highest needs and determined that these needs would be met first. "It's really hard to add race equity issues back into a policy measure," said Day. "But when you can design it from the start with that at the heart, you end up with something that is transformative and powerful. That's what we were able to do here." The voices of the PAC were highlighted in an effort to disrupt the privilege cycle and create a system of targeted universalism (interview 11). This is the idea that if you create a policy for the most marginalized population, it will also serve the needs of all other populations. Previous policy work, including public school policy, has often centered white populations and excludes and even harms other populations (interview 11). As one stakeholder said, "how do we ensure white people don't take it all again?...How do we make sure that highest priority families, people who have been blocked out of the system, get in there?" (interview 11).

Policy entrepreneurs also played a vital role in the creation of the PFA measure. There was a core planning group and skilled facilitators who spent enormous amounts of time on behind the scenes planning, connecting, and agenda setting to make meetings efficient and meaningful (interviews 9, 11, 12, 15). One of the facilitators, Chilton-Timmons remembered:

> I've never spent so much time planning and thinking through all aspects of meetings before, and I think that's partly why we were able to achieve so much is because there was so much intentionality put into every hour that the task force…spent together. We spent a lot of time thinking about how to make the meetings engaging, interactive (interview 9).

These individuals also had connections with people in early childhood, took input from them, and provided clarification to questions (interviews 11, 12). Additionally, Holloway, Vega Pederson and Day brought people to the table, kept people at the table, and did "outreach to the task force participants and the work team…to the degree that we had relationships so we could leverage" (interview 15). Parent leaders in PAC and leaders of culturally specific organizations should also be considered policy entrepreneurs in this case, as they were instrumental in neutralizing an interest group, Portland Business Alliance, as will be discussed below (interview 15).

Political

The political stream includes the three core elements of national mood, interest groups, and government (Herweg et al., 2018). This section will also discuss strategy methods and political development of the campaigns.

National mood was largely discussed above in terms of the focusing events that greatly influenced 2020 – the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial justice protests. As noted previously, there was a sense of fear and hopelessness as well as being "fired up" (interview 10) to make a change. In addition, some interviewees noted a public sense of a lack of control in national politics, and a desire to make a difference in their own communities (interviews 4, 6). "This is something we can do locally right now," King said. "We're so stymied at the federal level, and

the state is not much more accessible, but at the local level, we can accomplish this. It's

politically doable" (McIntosh, 2020).

The UP NOW campaign was multidimensional and created a large tent of coalition

members or *interest groups* with many angles of support – equity, women's rights, worker's

rights, and wealth redistribution.

> Tailored messaging included feminist arguments around the impact on working
> mothers; anti-poverty arguments around the fact that preschool costs were the
> equivalent of rent costs; worker's rights arguments around helping early childhood
> educators realize a living wage; and even criminal justice arguments, as the plan bans
> the suspension or expulsion of preschool children, often the first step on the school-
> to-prison pipeline (Haspel, 2020a).

Von W. Gilbert was supportive of all groups contributing their ideas and feedback with messages

such as "you're welcome to join, the table's big enough for everyone" (interview 1).

Consequentially, this large coalition was important in garnering sufficient support by mobilizing

their bases to support the measure. For example, a large portion of the signatures came from the

teachers' union who were off work with their summer break (interview 1). And Goldberg

recalled that UP NOW's support of unionization efforts played a substantial role in growing

support among child care workers (interview 3).

The Preschool for All initiative also included many *interest groups*. Vega Pederson

recalls that she likes to "set a large table" when making policy, including school districts,

community-based organizations, culturally-specific organizations, health care, housing, business

representation, other elected officials, and parents from the PAC (interview 13). This created a

large tent who were supportive of the policy because they were involved from the beginning.

This in turn generated a large mobilization effort to campaign for the measure and in the end

declare, "this is my win" when the measure passed (interview 11).

The *interest group,* Portland Business Alliance (PBA), played an interesting role in these measures. The organization was essentially the only opponent of the UP NOW campaign, delaying their signature gathering with two lawsuits which threatened the likelihood of gathering signatures on time (interview 1). On the other hand, members of the PBA participated in workgroups as part of the PFA initiative (interview 13). There was rumor that the PBA would publicly oppose the final merged measure on the ballot, but ultimately, they remained silent (interviews, 13, 15).

In terms of *government*, both campaigns benefitted from a liberal county, with sympathetic County Commissioners. In particular, County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson played an integral part as the political champion for the PFA campaign. Through their extensive research of other municipalities, PFA participants ELM and SVP learned that one of the most important aspects to a successful campaign was having an invested political champion (interviews 11, 15) and Vega Pederson was approached in 2017 to lead the campaign (interview 15). Vega Pederson was a previous state legislator and was known as a champion of early education (interview 11, 15). She was also already connected with stakeholders, such as Holloway (interview 15). Vega Pederson was willing to invest considerable time, political capital, and inside leadership to be the political champion that was needed (interviews 11, 13) and thus became the *political entrepreneur* for the PFA campaign. Vega Pederson was convinced of the need to center parent and community voices through the PAC and was approved by the PAC group (interview 11). Consequently, Vega Pederson became the chair of the PFA Task Force in July 2018 with Mark Holloway as the vice-chair. This created a public-private partnership connecting public government with nonprofit organizations and foundations (Multnomah County, 2019).

Because the UP NOW campaign was an initiative petition, there was not a traditional *political entrepreneur.* Instead, the chief petitioners of the measure can be viewed as the political entrepreneurs. They were Will Layng, executive director of Jobs with Justice, Suzanne Cohen, Portland Association of Teachers President, and Sahar Yarjani Muranovic, a David Douglas school board member and director of the Oregon chapter of National Organization for Women. These three served as political entrepreneurs because of their coalition leadership positions and their work within the formal government system in serving as chief petitioners working for the measure's adoption (Herweg et al., 2018).

In relation to local government, location was part of the strategy for both campaigns. Both campaigns recognized that a state initiative would be too large to tackle (interviews 4, 15). In particular, Day noted that a targeted universal system could not be created at the state level because race equity could not be centered with state equality laws, and this was imperative to the preschool vision of the PAC (interview 11). For the UP NOW campaign, Multnomah County was chosen because of logistics and feasibility. The education programs and agencies are located within the County system, and Portland and Metro initiative petitions required twice as many signatures as Multnomah County (interview 4). In addition, von W. Gilbert asserted that "Multnomah County is…like a pilot site where you can push through…more progressive things and then…trial them out" (interview 1). She continued, "Multnomah County has not voted no on things like this, really *ever,* so it would have had to be a pretty substantial opposition campaign or something going horribly wrong that would have caused it to not work" (interview 1).

For the Preschool for All campaign, the county was selected as the avenue for change for several reasons. First, the early learning ecosystem is housed within the County and the early

learning hub had been involved in the process since its establishment in 2014 (interviews 11, 13).

Second, some of the areas that were identified in research as having the highest needs were

outside Portland or Metro jurisdictions (interview 15). And third, a political champion was

identified and secured in the Multnomah Board of County Commissioners (interview 15).

The UP NOW campaign used several strategies to garner recognition and support. The

campaign was made up of three stages – first, list building (adding people to email listserv)

which raised awareness that preschool is not free; second, signature gathering; and third, get out

the vote. At the list building stage, the campaign had about 1300 emails. By June 2020, when

the campaign qualified for the ballot, the list had surged to 13,000 emails (personal

correspondence, July 28, 2022). For all messaging, UP NOW applied a bright yellow color on

all materials, including flyers, social media posts, and even the color for all emojis, making them

easily recognizable online and at events (interview 5). Digital media presence was especially

important, including Twitter, Facebook, and 147 Instagram posts. Communications director,

Eric Gold, discussed that the holy grail is when people not involved in the campaign share its

message, as it is persuasive to have voices with direct experiences who are outside the campaign.

This emphasizes the grassroots aspect of the campaign, that it is not an organization trying to

fund itself (interview 5).

UP NOW also utilized a simple message that was pitched repeatedly, via social media,

email listserv and in person while gathering signatures and getting out the vote (interview 5).

This included the following points: preschool is not free, preschool is good for all of society,

preschool teachers are not paid a fair wage, and the current tax structure is not fair (interview 5).

Gold expounded on the problematic tax structure: "rich people have a lot of power and influence

and…laws that are geared towards their needs. And then the lower income people that would

really benefit from a program like this, not so much" (interview 5).   Kiesling explained her

experience in campaigning:

> You don't have to work very hard to convince people… Daycare is too expensive, daycare workers do really important work, and they don't make enough money,…those are such easy messages….this affects everyone in your community, not just…people who have kids (interview 6).

Von W. Gilbert explained that the messaging was important because "you have to be attentive to

what grabs people. The more technocratic and wonky you get, you lose people. You have to be

able to explain things very simply" (McIntosh, 2020). The campaign employed this message

through phone- and text-banking as well as yard signs, op-eds, and presence at farmer's markets,

outdoor events, and the racial justice protests (interview 4).

As the UP NOW campaign was almost entirely volunteers and not paid staff, they relied

on people power to mobilize the campaign. The core people who worked on the campaign

almost every day in some capacity was around 50 people total, with about 20 people at a time

because of people rotating in and out over the years (interview 4). Bethencourt indicated that

"none of us had…taken the lead in…organizing something like this from the ground up"

(interview 4). In the early days of the campaign, von W. Gilbert explains that the Portland Clean

Energy Fund gave UP NOW many pointers in terms of "volunteer coordination for…a large field

effort, and just the nuts and bolts of what it looks like to…run a campaign" (interview 1). Von

W. Gilbert further explained their campaign process: "everything that a traditional campaign

has…one paid staffer to do…we had at least two people sharing that role….as a

volunteer,…ideally with a whole committee…behind them that can…split up the work"

(interview 1). King advised how grassroots organizations go about building their base:

> Talk to a lot of people, keep talking to a lot of people, talk to groups, canvas, talk to more people, you know, and just try and build the people collections and involve

> people in every way that you can and build your endorsements…. and that you can do…without money (interview 2).

At its largest stage, there were over 600 people helping gather signatures which Bethencourt describes as:

> an enormous kind of army of volunteers…The response was so enthusiastic — sometimes you would ask for a signature and get a new volunteer instead. It was just a handful of us petitioning at the beginning of June, and five weeks later, over 600 people had turned in signatures" (interview 4; Walicek, 2020).

The Preschool for All initiative used typical campaign strategies to raise awareness and obtain support. Prior to the merge with UP NOW, Vega Pederson went on a "road show" to the legislature, county board, school board meetings, and various organizations to share the Preschool for All Task Force's newly published report and recommendations (July 2019) (interview 13). In addition, Holloway and Vega Pederson gave presentations to various groups to provide clarification and gain support (interview 15).

After the merge and the measure was referred to the ballot, it became a "full-on campaign" (interview 13) with social media posts, videos, a campaign team, yard signs, phone banking, and involved culturally specific organizations doing their own outreach and phone banking (interviews 13, 15). One crucial contribution of the culturally specific organizations was in neutralizing the Portland Business Alliance whose endorsement committee had intended to oppose the measure (interview 13). According to Holloway, these groups called, "bullsh** on their racial equity plans, bullsh** if they're gonna oppose the most significant racial equity measure in the community" (interview 13). This was in response to PBA's new strategic plan, published in May 2020, after 18 months of work which said, "We recognize that the history of our region and state have unquestioningly placed communities of color at a disadvantage. It is incumbent on the business community to build a better economy rooted in providing *opportunity*

for all, especially those who have been marginalized in the past." (italics added for emphasis; Luther, 2020). Vega Pederson was also instrumental in her work with the PBA by emphasizing the high return on investment for preschool (interviews 13, 15). Last, the voter pamphlet endorsements were instrumental in helping the combined measure pass and included groups of economists (featuring a Nobel Prize winner), physicians, public health experts, teachers, and government officials. There was essentially no opposition campaign (Multnomah County Voters' Pamphlet, 2020).

Another key part of both campaign's development is adaptation. The PFA campaign was likely influenced by the UP NOW measure in honing in on their funding mechanism and settling on a universal program that was free to all instead of using a sliding scale for tuition (a tuition sliding scale was in the 2019 Task Force report) (interviews 12, 13; Multnomah County, 2019). As the two measures were quite comparable before they merged and the Preschool for All reports were public, it is likely that the campaigns influenced each other in additional ways, but it is challenging to know for certain without full disclosure from the participants.

Policy Window

Agenda Window

Herweg et al. (2018) identify two policy windows within the Multiple Streams Framework. The first is the agenda window in which the policy is secured on the political agenda. For UP NOW, this can be defined as the culmination of their signature gathering campaign when they qualified for the ballot. As indicated earlier, this was highly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice protests of 2020.

The Preschool for All agenda window occurred when the merged ballot measure was referred to the ballot by the Board of County Commissioners through the political stream, with Vega Pederson as political entrepreneur. This was also made possible by policy actors, leaders of culturally specific organizations, who testified to the Board and recommended the measure be referred to the ballot (interview 13).

But prior to this event, the two measures impacted each other and engaged in negotiations to merge. These are important aspects to consider. First, the two competing measures acted as motivation to qualify for the ballot and improve the measures (interview 4). Both campaigns were aware of the other's timeline, and this made it imperative that they be ready at the same time (interview 4). Otherwise, one measure could pass and create voter confusion if the other one was on the next election ballot (interview 4). In addition, each measure became stronger because of the influence of the other (interviews 6, 11, 12). Glitsch of UP NOW suggested, "We ended up really influencing the other measure to be more similar to ours, in like a healthy competition way" (interview 7), and UP NOW leaders recognized that they benefitted from the extensive research of the PFA campaign (interview 4).

Next, once the UP NOW measure was secured on the ballot, the county campaign, Preschool for All, accelerated negotiations to merge the two campaigns. Before this time, UP NOW felt they were not taken seriously by the county. Goldberg recalled, "until we managed to collect enough signatures to get on the ballot, they didn't want to talk to us" (interview 3). King remarked,

> Not only did the ballot measure signature campaign show that we were a serious contender, it also showed there was a lot of support because we were calling for a tax on the top 5%. And so, then they had to see, look, 32,000 people signed something, saying, 'great, do it' (interview 5).

In addition, the signature gathering campaign proved to the county that the tenets of the measure were well supported. Von W Gilbert said, "we sort of knew that for us to be able to build the leverage to…get what we wanted out of a merger we would need to…really demonstrate some serious…public support" (interview 1). Matesanz said, "the goal of grassroots politics is that you can actually force your… democratically elected representatives to capitulate to your will…[If we] had just come to them as a focus group,…we wouldn't have had the effect that we did" (interview 10). King recalled the UP NOW election attorney saying, "Oh, this is just a classic strategy to influence another group's proposal is to do your own ballot measure" (interview 2).

Layng, one of the chief-petitioners for UP NOW, and executive director of Portland Jobs with Justice, described the previous merge negotiation meetings as cooperative, productive, open, and positive, but not necessarily moving toward resolution (interview 14). Matesanz said, "I firmly believe we wouldn't have reconciled with them if we hadn't gotten on the ballot, like it was important that we show that we were serious" (interview 10).

On the other hand, the PFA campaign asserts that negotiations between the two campaigns did not end in resolution earlier because of their differing timelines. Participants in the PFA campaign note that they were not able to give answers or make promises because they had not finalized their policy and were still in the design process (interviews 11, 13, 15). This process involved polling as well as an approval process of working up and down the policy chains with the culturally specific organizations (interview 11, 13, 15). The UP NOW campaign had to finalize their measure by March 2020 and Preschool for All had until August.

After UP NOW was on the ballot, Holloway said "it became sort of a snowball rolling downhill at that point, so…we had to figure something out for sure" (interview 15). Holloway

recalls various groups, including the County Commission and unions pressuring for a merge saying "we really want to support both of you, but…you really have to come together for this to be workable for us" (interview 15). Both groups recognized that two measures on the ballot would be problematic and would lead to voter confusion and decrease the likelihood of either measure passing with a possible splitting of the vote (interviews 1, 4, 13, 15). This urgency made conversations easier as the two groups focused on their shared goals of getting to one measure and doing what is best for families (interview 13). Holloway discussed that "earlier conversations felt more…difficult and sort of grinding,…like I'm not sure this is ever gonna happen and come together" (interview 15). But Vega Pederson reflected that in later conversations, "I didn't have doubt that we could get to unification. I had concerns that if we couldn't get to a single item being on the ballot that the work that we were both doing and trying to accomplish was going to come to be undermined just because of the nature of that" (interview 13). Both campaigns also recognized the skilled facilitating of individuals from both campaigns that helped them to unify, namely von W. Gilbert, King, Holloway, Vega Pederson, and consultant with Preschool for All, Megan Irwin (interviews 1, 2, 5, 13, 15).

The atmosphere for merge negotiations was described as being "cooperative at times and difficult at times" (interview 15), "tense" (interviews 12, 13), "spirited" (interview 12), "challenging" (interview 2), and "kind of a complicated relationship…a little bit friends, little bit competitors" (interview 4). It was recognized that "the campaigns were complementary and had the same goals,…a lot of the same motivations… [but] somewhat different priorities" (interview 4). Holloway recalled, "Both of us were pursuing things that we felt very strongly about" (interview 15). Vega Pederson observed that concern and tension were natural because "we

wanted to make sure that the things we had worked so hard for were not going to be wiped away" (interview 13).

In interviews, members of the two campaigns largely agreed on the main sticking points of negotiation. First, the funding mechanism for universality was a major sticking point. UP NOW wanted to secure funding with one vote and Preschool for All was inclined to ask voters for an increase in several years (interviews 12, 15). Irwin recalled, "the Preschool for All team wanted something that was more clearly able to pass and not attract an opposition campaign," (interview 12) but UP NOW was adamant about achieving funding for universality in one vote. With the evidence of polling support, Preschool for All agreed to a singular vote mechanism (interviews 1, 4). Holloway recounted the experience:

> We'll capitulate it…we'll give up on the going back to the voters…because you know it polled fine. It was just a matter of whether politically we thought it was viable. I think at that point, UPN sort of convinced…everybody that it was (interview 15).

Another sticking point was the wage floor for assistants. Wages for assistants in the Preschool for All campaign were originally at about $15 per hour (Multnomah County, 2019). The UP NOW campaign wanted wages to be 145% of minimum wage (about $20 per hour) (Universal Preschool NOW! Ballot Initiative, 2020). Consensus was reached with wages at a minimum of $18 per hour in 2020 dollars, with cost of living adjustments (COLA) based on the County's union-negotiated COLA rate OR to bring wage to 135% of Portland metro minimum wage, whichever is greater (Multnomah County, 2020).

Other final negotiation points included the implementation timeline as UP NOW wanted a faster rollout but Preschool for All cited the need for time to grow infrastructure and workforce as well as the research from other municipalities that too fast implementation pushed home providers out of the workforce (interviews 9, 12). Irwin highlighted, "It will take time to build

that capacity and to do it in a way that doesn't bulldoze small providers and providers from

BIPOC communities…that was based on lessons learned from…all the jurisdictions that did it

before us" (interview 12). Finally, UP NOW insisted that union neutrality for child care workers

be included (interview 14) and Preschool for All stressed the need to prioritize the people who

have the least access right now (interview 12).

> Ultimately, the parallel campaigns led to a stronger final measure. Irwin noted,

> The conversations were tough at times, but I think that we shouldn't be afraid of that in…the policy-making world, and that…spirited debate can get you to a place where it's…actually stronger than it would have been if it had just been one initiative or the other on its own (interview 12).

Day expressed that the measure was "so much stronger combined" and that "we ended up

with…the best of both worlds" (interview 11). Von W. Gilbert of UP NOW explained, "I think

the combined wealth of knowledge and early childhood education experience on their side, as

well as their process of building the parent's council, were invaluable to the end result" (personal

correspondence, July 28, 2022). Kiesling of UP NOW argued that the combined measure "ended

up as close to ideal as you can get" and that "because the groups were together it…could attract a

lot of different people who, if it had just been one group or the other may not have been

compelled by it" (interview 6).

The second *policy window* is the *decision window* which results in the adoption of a bill

(Herweg et al., 2018). The UP NOW measure was already on the ballot from the signature

campaign and now the combined measure from the merge had been referred to the ballot by the

Board of County Commissioners. At this point, the only option for having only one measure on

the ballot was for the County to adopt and then immediately repeal the UP NOW initiative. This

entire merging procedure was an unusual process. In fact, Gold of the UP NOW campaign

mused that it was "uncharted territory" and that "I don't think there was really a roadmap for how

we should deal with it" (interview 5). However, two board members voted against the ordinance because of the questionable precedent it would set for initiative petitions. One of those commissioners, Sharon Meieran said, "I believe that this would directly contravene the spirit of our initiative petition system. Further, it could set a dangerous precedent—that legislative bodies would be willing to simply dismiss initiative petitions that have been signed onto by thousands of people, leaving them without recourse in our democratic process" (Monahan, 2020). Three of the five board members approved of the ordinance to be enacted and repealed, which secured its passage (interview 13).

Day remarked on the years of strategic planning that took place for this "one really good shot," (interview 11) drawing attention to the premise of a fleeting policy window. She said, "we just caught lightning in a bottle in many ways there. But we worked really, really hard for a long time to get there" (interview 11). In fact, Day and ELM had been approached many years before about creating a preschool program through a sugary beverage tax. They rejected the proposal because it would not "ensure that communities of color were in the lead and were the chief beneficiaries…Let's wait till we got a really good, clear shot at this" (interview 11).

The campaign process to get out the vote for the final measure was supported by the large coalition behind both campaigns. Regarding UP NOW, Holloway acknowledged, "they had a better ground game than we did… We had different sort of bodies of support and camps… There was a surge of energy because…we found a way to pull this together" (interview 15). Day recognized that UP NOW would not have needed to do signature gathering if the campaigns had merged earlier, but that their campaign efforts benefitted the vote "because it really activated the voter base in a very different way than a measure that's put on the ballot just by vote of the Board of County Commissioners" (interview 11).

The campaign participants expressed a range of feelings in their predictions for the outcome of the election. Because there was so much support in the community in the gathering of signatures and virtually no organized opposition, the campaign coordinators, Von W. Gilbert and Bethencourt, and other volunteers felt confident that the measure would pass (interviews 1, 4, 10). Von W. Gilbert recalled, "We had big union endorsements,…every single community validator on board, every big organization, *all* elected politicians. I mean it was just such a huge parade of…confidence,…on top of what we already have felt [from] vast amounts of conversations on the ground" (interview 1). One UP NOW volunteer said,

> So many individual people did such an incredible job gathering so many more signatures than we needed that it was a bit of a confidence booster. You know people don't normally sign for something to be on the ballot because they want to vote no to it. They sign because they want to vote yes (interview 3).

Bethencourt also recalled, "we didn't really have much of an organized opposition. I think it was because it was such a popular issue, you would just look like a monster to oppose it" (interview 4).

Members of the Preschool for All campaign ranged from cautiously optimistic to confident that the measure would pass. The political consultant, Amy Ruiz, was confident that the measure would pass (interview 13). Vega Pederson described feeling "pretty strongly that it was going to pass," but also expressed concern about the several tax measures on the ballot and voters experiencing fatigue with that (interview 13). Day declared, "if we get a good solid piece out there, the voters are gonna go for it. We may have a slim margin win, but I did not expect the overwhelming…majority win" (interview 11). Chilton-Timmons described her "cautious optimism" with the following: "I think people are hopeful, but also scared to be too hopeful. And to be disappointed because there has been so much work and so much love and…time have been

poured into this" (interview 9). Irwin recalled that getting on the ballot was hard and not a

"foregone conclusion," but also stated,

> I always thought we would win. I knew if he could get on the ballot, we would win…or that really I should say kids would win…I had no doubt about that. Even before we got the polling, I just know that parents are desperate for care, and that preschool is a really popular, highly winnable issue, and…other jurisdictions showed us that really strongly (interview 12).

Ultimately, there was a successful *decision window* as the final, merged Preschool for All

ballot measure passed at the ballot, on November 3, 2020. The measure passed with a 2:1

margin with 64% of Multnomah County voters approving measure 26-214 (Multnomah County

Elections Results, 2020). Over a ten-year implementation timeline, the measure will create

tuition-free, culturally responsive preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in Multnomah County

through a mixed delivery model, prioritizing the highest needs populations, and paid for through

a high earner income tax.[2]

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[2] For much more detailed information, please see the complete Preschool for All plan at https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/FINAL-Preschool-for-All-Plan-July-2020.pdf as well as the County PFA webpage: https://www.multco.us/preschool

Multiple Streams Framework Application

	UP NOW	Preschool for All
PROBLEM	wealth inequity	early childhood disparities - kindergarten readiness disparity, inequitable preschool system
Feedback, indicators	Community feedback	Research, PSU investing in equity event, discussions with PAC
Framing of problem	Framing as gain to worker's rights, women's rights, children, parents, equity, only wealthiest pay (doesn't affect most), ROI	Framing as gain - equity, children, parents, providers, ROI; tax framed to reflect polling
Focusing Event: COVID-19	brought awareness to essential need of child care/preschool workers; people want to do something to create change; but made signature gathering difficult	brought awareness to essential need of child care/preschool workers; people wanted to do something to create change
Focusing Event: Racial Justice protests	brought awareness to inequity in access to preschool and low wages for workers – often women of color; likely saved the campaign with signature gathering	Put spotlight on issues of inequity and participation of culturally specific organizations and parents in PFA
Problem Broker	Coordinators von W Gilbert, Bethencourt, economist King, child care workers (Jobs with Justice), teachers (PAT), women (NOW)	PAC, Mark Holloway with SVP, Molly Day with ELM
POLICY		
Policy Entrepreneurs	Von W Gilbert, Bethencourt, King	Facilitators: Chilton-Timmons, Day with ELM, Holloway with SVP, Irwin; PAC; Task Force - typology emergent - gradual gestation of new ideas, consensual policy community
Criteria for survival:		Workgroups determine; Task Force/PAC signs off
Technical Feasibility	von W. Gilbert - "It was small enough to win, but it's big enough to matter."	Research - can we do it
Value acceptability	Identified as important need among coalitions	All decisions through PAC -
Public acquiescence	Identified community needs	Community tailored program; PAC power
Financial Viability	DSA Tax the Rich thought exercise	Research - what will raise enough money to fund the program
POLITICAL ENTREPRENEUR	3 Chief Petitioners	Jessica Vega Pederson, County Commissioner
POLITICAL	UP NOW	Preschool for All
Political Entrepreneur	Chief Petitioners - Cohen (PAT), Layng (Jobs with Justice), Muranovic (NOW)	County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson Political consultant Amy Ruiz
National Mood	Focusing events; desire for change at local level because lack of control in presidential election	Focusing events
Interest Groups	Large coalition- equity, women's rights, worker's rights, redistribute wealth; PBA opposition;	Large coalition, PBA becomes neutral through PAC; CBOs testify to board
Government	Democratic controlled	Key policymaker - JVP
POLICY WINDOW		
Agenda window	Signature gathering to qualify for ballot – highly influenced by COVID-19 and racial justice protests	Refer to ballot by board (political stream - JVP as champion)
Merge		
Decision window	Required county to adopt and repeal UPN initiative; Passes at ballot – adoption of bill	Required county to adopt and repeal UPN initiative; Passes at ballot – adoption of bill

Theoretical Implications

Contrary to some of the literature on education reform, the Multnomah County measure did not seek incremental changes or adopt stealth tactics to secure passage. Instead, a full upheaval of current policy occurred as an entirely new system was created, one which supports multiple avenues – all children through a universal policy, child care workers through a substantial increase in wages and the ability to unionize, and low-income people in particular as preschool is paid for by high-income earners only. The successful passing of the measure does follow some of the factors found in the literature, namely having Democratic control of state legislature, prolonged presence of a targeted preschool program (Head Start and Preschool Promise), and deliberate strategy including the decade long work toward the county plan. In addition, the public initiative of Universal Preschool NOW provided a path for creating universal preschool as well as pressure to make the ultimate county campaign a universal one. Last, both campaigns exhibited elements of the Multiple Streams Framework. The two campaigns benefitted from problem brokers, influential policy actors and political entrepreneurs, technically feasible and financially viable policies with public support, helpful focusing events, and a fruitful policy window (MSF).

Policy Implications

The Multnomah County Preschool for All measure has been heavily written about in local and national media, including the New York Times (Miller, 2020), as a possible model to follow in other municipalities. Several in the UP NOW campaign indicated their hope that their measure would be like "a pilot project" (interview 5). Bethencourt said:

> This is definitely something we were thinking of right from the start. This wasn't just about….Multnomah County or Portland. We wanted to do something that would inspire people, and that would be replicated far and wide, ideally. And that definitely seems to be the case (interview 4).

Leaders from the UP NOW campaign and County campaign have been asked for advice on creating measures in other municipalities (interviews 4, 13). UP NOW has even given other entities permission to use the name, Universal Preschool NOW, and their branding (interview 5).

Political implications were gleaned from the interviews with participants in both campaigns in how other municipalities may be successful in passing universal preschool policies. Advice from the UP NOW campaign and creating policy through a ballot initiative will first be considered. An integral part of their success was due to their coalition building. King said she learned that "early relationships really mattered" (interview 2). Von W. Gilbert and King both recall building up capacity by talking to a lot of people, doing this over and over, building people and collections, building endorsements, involving people in every way you can, learning from what others know and can to do help (interviews 1, 3). Goldberg concurs that their success was due to talking and listening with others, "take their feedback into consideration and into our programming" which will "set us aside from…someone sitting in an office writing a piece of policy that they know lots about on paper but not a lot of real world stuff" (interview 3). When policymakers do not talk to stakeholders, "we end up with so many laws and programs that don't actually work for the people they're intended to help" (interview 3). For a universal preschool program, UP NOW specifically advises involving child care workers as stakeholders which avoids pitfalls in policy design and gives respect for people who are doing skilled and trained work (interviews 7, 14).

UP NOW participants also voiced encouragement to "believe they really can do something" (interview 5). Bethencourt said, "anyone can do this. Be bold…if you can dream it

you can do it, or you can at least try,…it's worth trying" (interview 4). Participants do not need to be elected officials or activists, but "come together with people with different expertise" (interview 5) as a "dedicated group of core volunteers" (interview 10). Bethencourt reminisced that "we were amateurs and created very progressive policy because we wanted to do something that made a difference" (interview 4). This is possible in places with a ballot initiative process.

The UP NOW campaign also highlights the importance of a powerful, succinct message as the purpose of communications is to "grease the machine" for field work (interview 5). Messaging also needs to be framed by learning what resonates with different people (interview 5, 10). In addition, there is the potential need for a good lawyer in dealing with legal challenges. Bethencourt was surprised at how long the legal challenges took and this can sink a campaign as it is tied up in court, leaving no time to gather signatures (interview 4).

There are different lessons in policy implication that can be learned from the Preschool for All campaign and those seeking to make policy through elected officials. Participants were emphatic on the need for community and parent voice to be included, centering racial equity, and not just as a "rubber stamp" of approval (interview 15). Holloway said, "it can be a burdensome process…, but it really fueled good policy making" (interview 15). Irwin's words were powerful:

> People deserve the opportunity to get their hands in the work on problems that affect their lives…When I say community design process, I'm not just talking about school district superintendent, and the executive director of the nonprofit. I mean actually people who take care of children every day whether that's providers or parents. They've got to be in there (interview 12).

Day asserts that community leaders and parent voice are so vital, that if they had not started the process with the PAC, they would need to "stop everything and back up and get it in place" (interview 11).

Expanding on the parent and community voice, Holloway stressed the importance of having a "broad swath of players together" of "nonprofit and business together" (interview 15) which was evident in the Task Force and workgroups. These included school districts, community-based organizations, philanthropy, business, child care entrepreneurs, providers, and parents (interview 15). Day pointed out that child care providers need to be at the table because of the complicated business model (interview 11). However, Holloway recognized that PFA could have done a better job engaging more child care teachers and entrepreneurs in the policy making process, and conceded that UP NOW did a better job engaging the teacher workforce and small businesses (interview 15).

Preschool for All participants made it clear that it was "really important to have a champion on the inside from the beginning… don't underestimate the importance" (interview 12). Vega Pederson was committed to the issue, figuring out answers to County administrative questions, working with members of the Board, and even talking to Portland about their permitting system for child care providers (interviews 11, 12, 15). These were environments that would otherwise be difficult to gain access. In addition, strong facilitation was essential. According to Holloway, "it's the backbone" of the process in keeping momentum, making progress in discussions, and making decisions (interview 15). This was a result of funding and large amounts of work behind the scenes for "operation flow" (interview 15).

Additional helpful factors for other campaigns include to "research the tax mechanisms available" to know your options from the beginning (interview 12); to dream big and push hard for something, but know the "ceiling" in terms of revenue (interview 12). Chilton-Timmons also recommends having holistic supports in place. In the PFA program, there are no suspensions or expulsions. This starts with a large investment in child care resource and referral to coach and

support providers so children can retain their preschool placements (interview 9). In addition, the 2019 Preschool for All Task Force report with its 50 recommendations, that took "an exhausting two years" to create, has provided a "guiding document" to refer to regularly for implementation and keeping on track (interview 11). Chilton-Timmons concedes that "running a task force and work group process is a ton of work" but "I just think it makes policies better" (interview 9). A similar guiding document, created with community leaders and parent voice, would assist other municipalities in creating and implementing a successful universal preschool policy.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the interviews occurred at least one year after the passing of the measure, and in many cases, events happened years prior to the interview. This could reduce the accuracy and details that interviewees recalled, although it also could offer a more comprehensive perspective of the experience. In addition, I was able to procure more interviews with UP NOW participants than PFA participants. Ideally, I would conduct additional interviews with PFA participants in various roles.

Another limitation is that the qualitative study is a single case study and Multnomah County is largely made up of Portland city proper which is a highly liberal city. Therefore, implications from the qualitative study are limited in generalizability for other municipalities. It is also important to note that this measure passed at the county level which avoids many of the difficulties observed in passing policy at the state level. However, there are currently 24 states that have initiative processes through voters' petitions (Initiative & Referendum Institute), making the UP NOW campaign a potential model for other municipalities.

Conclusion

The results from this study indicate that child care capacity, particularly preschool slots, has a positive relationship to kindergarten readiness scores. The most significant results are improvements in upper letter recognition scores correlated to increases in preschool slots. For example, we would expect an increase of 100 preschool age slots in a medium-size district and large district to result in a statistically significant increase of upper letter recognition scores by 0.680 and 1.093 points, respectively, holding other factors constant. Thus, policymakers should use public funding to prioritize preschool availability in order to improve kindergarten readiness and decrease disparities between children. In addition, further research would give insight into preschool expansion. In particular, panel data with individual student data would allow researchers to identify the number of years and type of care for each child and their individual kindergarten readiness scores. This would better inform policymakers on specific preschool programs that are most beneficial.

One tenable option to increasing preschool slots is to implement universal preschool as evidenced through the Multnomah County Preschool for All measure. This study served to describe the creation of and campaign strategy for the preschool measure that passed in November 2020, including the merging of the county and grassroots campaigns. It also functioned to identify themes associated with the passing of the preschool measure which align with the Multiple Streams Framework. Analysis of this measure also serves to inform other geographic areas which seek to replicate this policy window success. Further research on the implementation of the Preschool for All measure, which begins Fall 2022, would be helpful in assessing the impact that the program has on kindergarten readiness disparities.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of Interviewees

Number	Name	Description	Date
1	Emily von W Gilbert	UP NOW coordinator	February 7, 2022
2	Mary King	UP NOW researcher	February 23, 2022
3	Lauren Goldberg	UP NOW researcher	May 3, 2022
4	John Bethencourt	UP NOW coordinator	May 5, 2022
5	Eric Gold	UP NOW communications director	May 6, 2022
6	Lydia Kiesling	UP NOW communications	May 12, 2022
7	Nat Glitsch	UP NOW child care worker	May 13, 2022
8	Lydia Gray-Holifield	PFA - Parent leader, PAC; PFA Task Force	May 18, 2022
9	Brooke Chilton-Timmons	PFA management analyst	June 8, 2022
10	Gabriel Matesanz	UP NOW child care worker	June 14, 2022
11	Molly Day	PFA - Early Learning Multnomah director	June 15, 2022
12	Megan Irwin	PFA - consultant, facilitator	June 16, 2022
13	Jessica Vega Pederson	PFA - County Commissioner	June 17 and 22, 2022
14	Will Layng	UP NOW chief petitioner; Jobs with Justice Exec Dir	June 21, 2022
15	Mark Holloway	PFA - Social Venture Partners Portland CEO	July 5 and 6, 2022

Interviews are numbered in the order that they were interviewed

Appendix B – <mark>Interview Guide</mark>

When did you start thinking about a preschool measure?

What was the original goal of Universal Preschool NOW/Preschool for All?

How was the campaign group established?

When and why did you become involved in the measure?

How did a preschool plan develop amongst the organization?

What was your role in the policy creation and strategization?

How did the campaign envision funding the program?

Was a preschool measure believed to be publicly supported?

How did you garner support?

How do you feel the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the campaign?

How do you feel the racial justice protests impacted the campaign?

When did you learn that the county commissioners/grassroots campaign were working on their own preschool measure?

Tell me about the process of merging the campaigns

Tell me about the differences between the campaigns

In preparing for the election, what strategies were employed?

Before the election, how did you feel about the outcome of the measure?

Now that the measure passed, is there anything you would do differently?

Other geographic regions are looking at the Multnomay County measure as an example. What advice would you give these areas in creating and strategizing for their campaigns?

Is there anything else you'd like to share with me?

Is it all right if I follow up with you if I have more questions?

Appendix C – Code Book for Universal Preschool NOW

Codes	Subthemes	Description and Examples
Creation	Feasibility – what can we win	What is practical with almost no budget Research - imitating successful policy What you can win "collectively identified what would have enough support in community, to actually be able for us to take to the ballot." EVWG
	Financial Feasibility	What can we accomplish with ____ amount of money from tax the rich? "a reason that we picked a high-end income tax is the affluent aren't organized like businesses are organized." MK
	Value Acceptability	What is important to community – met with coalitions to determine priorities: Equity, redistributing wealth, livable wages "a second thing was after housing was always child care, and people would talk about it in the terms of like this costs as much as housing so people were expressing that you know their household budget was being stretched thin by these two things." EVWG
Strategy and Development	Multidimensional	Many angles of problem – equity, women's rights, worker's rights, redistribute wealth Volunteers vs consultants Large tent of coalition members - "you're welcome to join, the table's big enough for everyone." EVWG
	Location	Multnomah County specific pros "Multnomah County is a little bit of like a pilot site where you can push through like more progressive things and then like kind of trial them out."
	COVID-19	Focusing event that brought awareness to essential need of child care/preschool workers; people wanted to do something to create change "I think it probably helped in many ways. I think it helps, it obviously didn't help anyone anyone's like daily life. But I think people were feeling a sense of urgency and desperation to like make a change." LK "And I think the covid situation…made the children more visible. And the workers more visible, who were like subsisting on incomes that were not sustainable." LK
	Racial justice protests	Focusing events that brought awareness to inequity in access to preschool and low wages for workers – often women of color "people that are at the protests were probably pretty likely to want to sign this, and that's what we ended up seeing" EG "people who are concerned about racial justice many times also realized that there's a racial justice component to preschool not being free. not only are the teachers of preschool nationally, disproportionately, you know, are people of color, they're overwhelmingly women, and then they're like somewhat more likely than the average population to be people of color. And then, of course, like i'm sure if you broke it down like who actually can afford preschool? It's gonna be a lot more white people and a lot fewer people of color." EG "It was a thing where the people who were going out there were the people who would be at those protests anyway, so it felt like a like authentic and like organic way to kind of get signatures from there and there was a lot of overlap with people who were out protesting, who are like, Yes, this is part of the broader suite of changes that need to happen. So that's like, that also played a huge part in how

		many signatures they were able to get in a short period of time is that there was like a broader mass mobilization around racial justice that like aligned ideologically with you know, a hope to get universal programs." LK
	Perseverance	Wading through legal challenges Aiming for signatures despite the odds "because it did seem so unlikely that was like a very strong communication sort of message to be like, it seems impossible. But like this, we just might make it work. And that is very powerful. People were really like motivated by that I think." LK
Passing	Merge: Competition as motivation	Two competing measures acted as motivation to qualify for the ballot and improve the measures. "we sort of knew that for us to be able to build the leverage to like we get what we wanted out of a merger we would need to like really demonstrate some serious like public support." EVWG "Not only did the ballot measure signature campaign show that we were a serious contender, it also showed there was a lot of support because we were calling for a tax on the top 5%. And so, then they had to see, look, 32,000 people signed something, saying, 'great, do it'." MK
	Outcome prediction	Prediction by campaign members on the outcome of the ballot measure "we *knew* it was going to pass" EVWG

Appendix E – Code Book for Preschool for All

Codes	Subthemes	
Creation	North Star	Establish common vision and shared values that guide entire process – *What is best for all of our 3 to 4 year-olds and their families? What if all children had access to the preschool that was best for them? And, what if every family could afford the preschool that was best for their children?* PAC Vision for Preschool Blank page
	Community Involvement -Value acceptability	Build on Past community work Previous relationship with community based organizations (CBOs) Community tailored program Engage experts from multiple sectors and disciplines, including providers and early childhood experts Parent involvement at all times with voice, power, support
	Research - Feasibility	learning from successful outcomes (technical feasibility) know revenue mechanism options (financial viability)
	Policy Actors	Core planning group and skilled facilitators – behind the scenes planning and connecting
	Racial equity	Targeted universalism Disrupt privilege cycle Serves children of highest need first
Strategy and Development	Political Actors	Political champion – County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson
	Multidimensional	Large tent = This is my win (for many) PAC (parents, CBOs), business, education, health Community supportive because of involvement from beginning Coalition→Mobilization
	Strategy Methods	Phone-banking Yard signs Social Media CBOs do own outreach and phone banking, neutralize Portland Business Alliance JVP road show JVP/Holloway presentations to organizations Endorsements – economists, physicians, public health, teachers, government
	Location	Multnomah County specific pros
	COVID-19	Focusing event that brought awareness to essential need of child care/preschool workers; people wanted to do something to create change
	Racial justice protests	Focusing events that brought awareness to inequity in access to preschool and low wages for workers – often women of color
	Adaptation	Influenced by other campaign Free for all (no sliding scale tuition for those above Self-Sufficiency Standard) Funding mechanism
Merge	Initial Differences but shared values	Differing timelines make negotiations challenging Implementation timeline

		Free for all or Self-Sufficiency Standard
	Atmosphere	Cooperative and difficult (Holloway)
	Sticking points	*Revenue to universality – funding through one vote or back to ballot (Preschool for All wants to avoid opposition campaign) *Wages for assistants Implementation timeline and priority populations Union neutrality
	Merge is imperative	1 measure on ballot instead of 2 Decrease confusion, increase likelihood of passing Snowball rolling downhill
	Better together	Stronger than either measure on its own Competition led to growth
Ballot	Outcome prediction	Polling Range from cautious optimism – confident Concern about fatigue with several tax measures on ballot

Appendix E – Concept Map of Multiple Streams Framework Application

PROBLEM STREAM
- UPN-Wealth inequity
- PFA-disparities in school readiness
-Feedback, indicators
-Focusing Events
-Framing
-Problem brokers

POLICY STREAM
-UP NOW
-Preschool for All
-Technical Feasibility
-Financial viability
-Value acceptability
-Public acquiescence

POLICY ENTREPRENEURS
Von W Gilbert, Bethencourt, King; Facilitators; PAC, Task Force

POLITICS STREAM
-National mood
-Interest Groups – large coalitions; PBA
-Government – Democratic controlled; JVP
-Location – Mult County pros
-Strategies

POLITICAL ENTREPRENEURS
UP NOW leaders and chief petitioners
Jessica Vega Pederson, County Commissioner
PAC

POLICY WINDOWS
Agenda Window:
-UPN measure on ballot
-PFA measure on ballot
MERGE
Decision Window:
-UPN measure adopted and repealed
-Unified PFA measure passes

MEASURE PASSES