

April 2008

Leadership Matters:  
Governors' Pre-K Proposals  
Fiscal Year 2009



For fiscal year 2009, 16 governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia acted boldly to protect and grow high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten programs. Their proposals total \$261 million in increased funding for pre-k and would make early childhood education programs available to 60,000 more children, if passed by state legislatures.

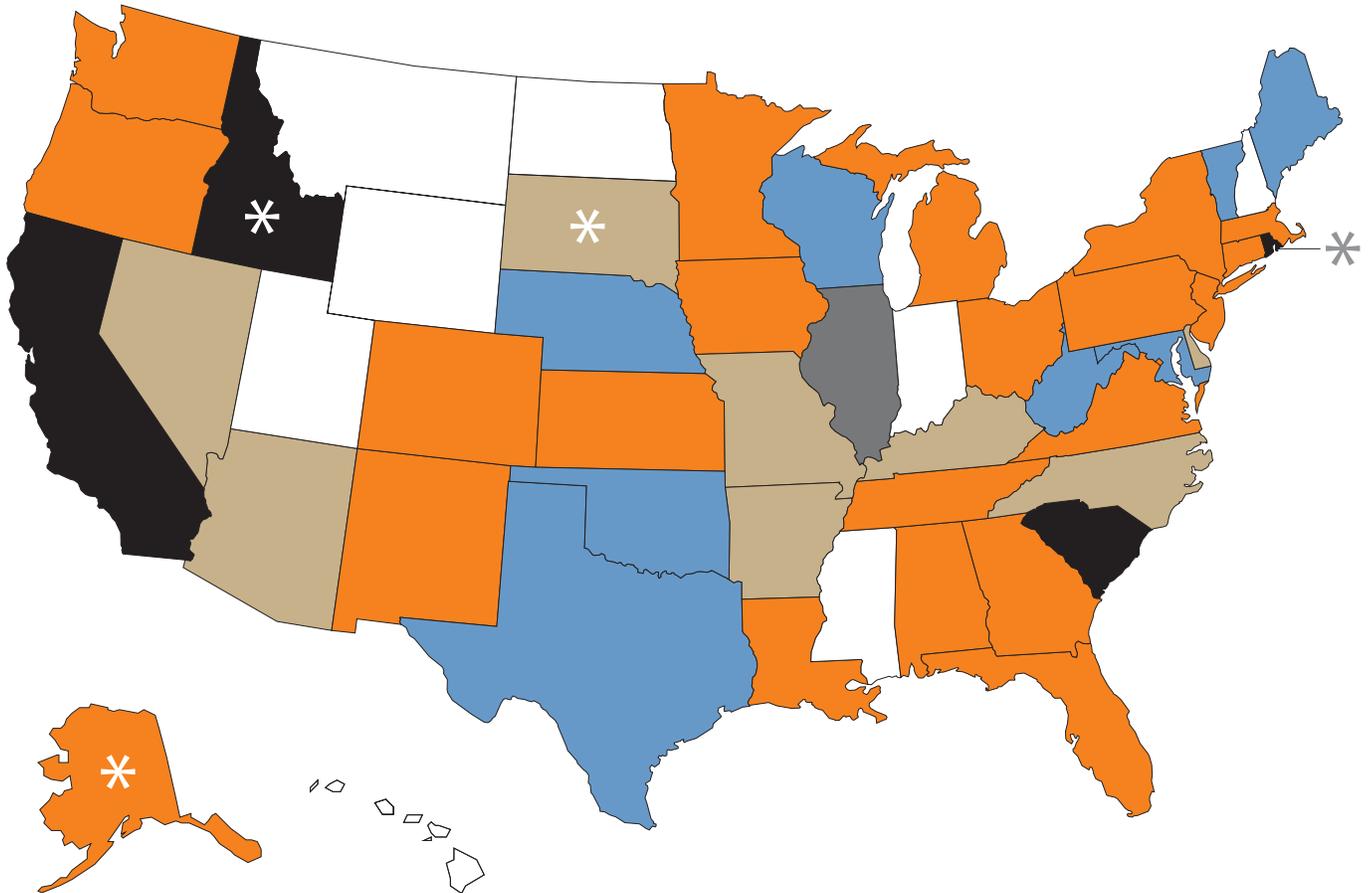
Tested by fiscal challenges, these leaders remained committed to pre-k. Others named here failed to recognize that pre-k is vital to both children's success in school and the health of the economy.

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## Governors' Proposed Investments in Pre-K



- Proposed Increased Investment in Pre-K
- Pre-K Funding through School Funding Formula
- Proposed Flat Investment in Pre-K
- Proposed Decreased Investment in Pre-K
- Incomplete Proposal at Press Time
- No Proposed Investment in Pre-K
- ✱ Proposed state investment in the federal Head Start program or a local pilot initiative, but no state-funded pre-k program.

This map illustrates the pre-k funding proposals of the 50 governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia. For FY09, tough budget challenges in many states separated true leaders in pre-k from those whose support cracked under fiscal pressure. Sixteen governors and the D.C. mayor made new proposals to increase investment in pre-k. Five other governors proposed FY09 increases in their biennial budgets submitted in 2007. In the minority are four governors who proposed to decrease investment in pre-k, abandoning both a powerful economic development strategy and their states' working families at a crucial moment.

*Note: Twelve states have no state-funded pre-k program: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.*

## Introduction: Weathering the Fiscal Storm

Over the past two years, a growing recognition of the importance of high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten combined with generally healthy budgets led governors to propose significant funding increases for pre-k programs in their states. For fiscal year 2009, however, many states face tighter budgets and, in many cases, deficits – a context that puts gubernatorial support for pre-k to the test.

Whether a family, city, state, or national budget, tight economic times crystallize spending priorities. Governors' budget proposals should reflect their own and their constituents' most cherished programs such as education. At the same time, responsible management requires that limited dollars be directed toward investments with proven returns. High-quality, voluntary pre-k is both an essential part of the education continuum and a high-yield public investment.

Tough fiscal conditions test gubernatorial leadership and integrity, distinguishing those with the strength to hold their course. With "Leadership Matters," an annual review of governors' budget proposals and state of the state remarks, Pre-K Now reveals those who did and did not make early education a priority. Several executives in particular stood out for their commitments to high-quality pre-k for all children, for their willingness to weather economic and political storms, and for their fiscal and administrative savvy.

For FY09, despite changing fortunes, 16 governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia, both Republicans and Democrats, are choosing to protect and grow pre-k investments, proposing \$261 million in increased funding. These budget proposals would bring total state funding for pre-k to \$5.2 billion and would make pre-k available to nearly 60,000 more three and four year olds.<sup>1</sup>

Budgetary challenges also cast a harsh light on executives who lack commitment and vision. For FY09, four governors proposed decreased pre-k funding, and two of the proposed increases are below the 2008 federal cost-of-living adjustment of just 2.3 percent.<sup>2</sup> In some cases, these proposals were part of shortsighted, across-the-board budget cuts that put political convenience ahead of smart policy. Some of these same governors took advantage of pre-k's significant political capital, lauding pre-k in their state of the state addresses but abandoning the programs in their budgets. Just as remarkably, two governors enjoying budget surpluses once again passed up the opportunity to lead their states out of the Pre-K Wilderness.

Tight budgets also highlight the best and worst in pre-k funding strategies. For instance, when pre-k programs are funded through school funding formulas, they have a degree of protection from economic downturns. Such funding grows with enrollment and is less vulnerable than other sources to the annual budget process. In FY09, seven states anticipate budget increases for pre-k through this sound funding mechanism, and one additional governor has chosen to move funding for his state's high-quality pre-k program in this direction.

In troubling economic times, true leaders set priorities, allocate dollars accordingly, and wage the necessary battles to provide for the most critical public needs. A significant number of governors underscored that pre-k is a vital educational opportunity and a smart investment strategy. Though all our nation's families deserve leaders who vigorously defend the futures of young children, only some are lucky enough to have them. They'll be the first to agree: Leadership Matters.

## Budget Heroes: Finding Money for Pre-K Amid Deficits

In a number of cash-strapped states, governors brought creativity and commitment to their budgets, recommending increases for pre-k and proving themselves to be real leaders.

Leading the way is **Governor Bob Riley (R) of Alabama**. Though his state faces an expected \$784 million FY09 deficit,<sup>3</sup> Governor Riley moved to expand the state's small but highly rated *First Class* pre-k program, which meets all 10 National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality benchmarks.<sup>4</sup> His proposed funding increase of 174 percent would make *First Class* available to about 5,200 more four year olds, more than tripling enrollment. The governor's efforts are backed by a broad alliance, including the state's faith community, the AARP, and education advocates, as well as by recent polling data indicating overwhelming public support.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the polling and the program's quality, the governor is facing pitched battles on all sides. Among the critics is the teachers' union, which has expressed concern about Governor Riley's wise support for diverse delivery, i.e. offering pre-k in both community-based settings and public schools. Some Democrats in the legislature are backing the union's position. Even some in the governor's own party are fighting increased pre-k funding. The budget deficit is exacerbating certain Republican legislators' resistance to new spending while other conservative lawmakers are reiterating long-standing objections to pre-k. This latter group is especially alarmed about the governor's recent statements indicating his intention to pursue voluntary pre-k for all Alabama children.

In the face of adversaries and serious budget challenges, Governor Riley is standing firm on his pre-k proposals. As he explained in his state of the state address, "*First Class* pre-K is the smartest investment we could ever make in our children. Nothing we do this session will make more of a difference in their lives and we should have no higher priority than our children's future."<sup>6</sup>

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### A Smart Strategy: Pre-K in the School Funding Formula

More and more policymakers have seen the wisdom of including high-quality pre-k programs in state school funding formulas. The use of school funding formulas can tie funding to enrollment, reducing the risk of cuts to pre-k programs.

**New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine (D)** is the latest state executive to include pre-k in the school funding formula. The move was part of a large-scale school funding reform plan which the governor worked with legislators to pass during the FY08 legislative session. Under the new school funding formula, taking effect in fall 2009, New Jersey's complicated three-program pre-k system will become a single program using the standards of the current high-quality *Abbott Preschool Program*. After a five-year phase-in period, all three and four year olds in low-income school districts and those eligible for free and reduced-price lunch in all other districts will have access to high-quality pre-k. When fully implemented, this initiative will serve an additional 30,000 children. In spite of budget deficit projections of up to \$3.5 billion,\* Governor Corzine demonstrated forward-thinking leadership by providing secure, enrollment-based funding for pre-k and expanding eligibility to thousands more New Jersey children.

As part of an historic 2007 pre-k-for-all initiative, **Iowa Governor Chet Culver (D)**, in collaboration with state legislators, launched the new high-quality *Statewide Voluntary Four-Year-Old Preschool Program* and established a process by which pre-k will become part of the state's school funding formula. The four-year phase-in plan featured a first-year appropriation of \$15 million as well as funding increases for each subsequent year through FY11. As they establish programs, districts will receive first-year funding from an annual appropriation to support quality programs across diverse settings. After their first year, district programs will become part of the school funding formula, freeing up dollars to support new programs in other districts. By the 2011-12 school year, all districts will offer pre-k, and the following year, all programs will be funded through the school funding formula. For FY09, as a result of this strategy, pre-k funding in Iowa will more than double.

\* Elizabeth C. McNichol and Iris Lav, "22 States Face Total Budget Shortfall of at Least \$39 Billion in 2009; 6 Others Expect Budget Problems," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <http://www.cbpp.org/1-15-08sfp.htm>.

## Budget Heroes: Finding Money for Pre-K Amid Deficits

*continued from page 3*

In **Massachusetts, Governor Deval Patrick (D)** campaigned on an education agenda with a strong pre-k-for-all component. In FY08, however, Governor Patrick felt forced by an inherited budget deficit to focus on cleaning up his state's balance sheet. For FY09, though Massachusetts is still facing a \$1.2 billion shortfall,<sup>7</sup> the governor is proposing to more fully pursue the education reforms he outlined in his campaign with a clear priority on high-quality pre-k offered in diverse settings.

Governor Patrick's budget recommends an increase in the state's pre-k investments of 22 percent, including a tripling of the *Universal Pre-Kindergarten* budget. The governor also created the cabinet-level Executive Office of Education to coordinate administration of a new pre-k-through-20 vision for education. Though the 10-year plan to realize that vision is still being developed, Governor Patrick wisely recognized that children must not be made to wait; so, he proposed the immediate funding increase and pledged, "we will stay on that path of annual increases until we have... high-quality early education for every child in this Commonwealth."<sup>8</sup>

To achieve his goals for Massachusetts, Governor Patrick is proposing corporate tax reforms as well as other cost-saving and revenue-enhancement measures. The governor's proposals reflect the sort of committed leadership states need to combat serious economic crises: building revenues responsibly while investing in policies and programs that promise impressive, long-term returns to the state and its children.

### Honorable Mentions

**Virginia Governor Tim Kaine (D)** is facing one of the state's toughest budget years on record with a projected deficit of \$1.2 billion,<sup>9</sup> and he has made clear that prudent fiscal management includes increased investments in high-quality pre-k. In his FY09-FY10 budget, the governor proposed a substantial expansion of the *Virginia Preschool Initiative* with a 20 percent funding increase during the first year of the biennium. The proposal would raise per-child investment from \$5,700 to \$6,790 and, over the next two years, would make pre-k available to 4,800 more low-income children. To expand working families' high-quality options, 10 percent of the new slots would be guaranteed to community-based settings. In spite of efforts by some legislators to initiate a partisan battle, Governor Kaine stayed true to the bipartisan spirit of the program – created under a Republican administration – and kept the focus on Virginia's children.

**Florida Governor Charlie Crist (R)**, despite an estimated FY09 budget deficit of \$3.4 billion,<sup>10</sup> is proposing to increase funding for the *Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)* by \$32 million of which \$24 million would restore cuts made by the legislature in FY08.<sup>11</sup> He has also come out in support of a bachelor's degree requirement for pre-k teachers, responding to the concerns of advocates and citizens who have made this a very public issue. Higher teacher-qualification requirements are urgently needed to improve the overall quality of *VPK*, which continues to meet only four NIEER benchmarks.<sup>12</sup>

## The Long View: Steady Commitments to Pre-K

While budget deficits and political wrangling make for dramatic tales of pre-k heroism, it is only those executives with a clear vision and a proven, long-term commitment to high-quality pre-k who will ultimately make lasting differences in the lives of young children.

**Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen (D)** is among the nation's leaders in high-quality pre-k innovation and funding. Since 2005, Governor Bredesen has presided over the growth of a small, high-quality pre-k pilot into the superb *Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten* program serving 17,000 four year olds. Thanks largely to the governor's bipartisan political strategy, insistence on quality, and substantial yearly funding proposals, pre-k investments have increased by more than 200 percent since FY06. For FY09, the governor is recommending another 31 percent funding increase, which would support an additional 250 classrooms.

Governor Bredesen has been an outspoken champion for pre-k, his top-priority education initiative. In 2008, the governor continues his steady march toward high-quality, voluntary pre-k for all four year olds, not only those deemed at risk. Legislators have strongly supported the governor's pre-k agenda over the past several years, but some are wavering at this critical moment. The governor is meeting the challenge, armed with business-community support, polling numbers showing that 69 percent of Tennessee voters support pre-k for all,<sup>13</sup> and his own eloquence. In his state of the state address, he asked, "How do you say to a middle class family...: 'Yes you pay taxes for these classrooms; yes, they are public schools; but no, those classrooms aren't open to your children?'"<sup>14</sup>

Because families need full-day services as part of high-quality pre-k, the governor has advocated improving the quality of child care services and providing before-and-after care for pre-k children. Governor Bredesen clearly understands the wisdom of pre-k for all, the value of quality, and the needs of families in his state. The futures of Tennessee's young children are brighter for his efforts.

### Honorable Mentions

In 2007, his first year in office, **Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. (D)** made education, including pre-k, a priority. He established a P-20 Education Coordinating Council – co-chaired by Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien – to develop a seamless pre-k-through-post-secondary education continuum and proposed a \$12.6 million increase for the *Colorado Preschool Program*. For FY09, the governor maintained his pre-k commitment and heeded the advice of the council's pre-k-through-third-grade sub-committee, recommending a \$21.4 million increase in pre-k funding. Governor Ritter has worked closely with the legislature on pre-k and, if passed as expected, his proposal would eliminate the current waiting list for the state's targeted pre-k program.

**New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (D)** launched an ambitious pre-k initiative, *New Mexico Pre-K* in 2005, which received inaugural funding of \$5 million and served 1,500 children. Since that time, with continued political and fiscal support from Governor Richardson and Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish, the program has grown to serve nearly 3,400 four year olds. For FY09, the governor is proposing another significant funding increase of 76 percent, including \$7 million in non-recurring start-up and infrastructure funds. *New Mexico Pre-K* is now one of the highest-quality programs in the country, meeting nine NIEER benchmarks following the phase in of high state standards.<sup>15</sup>

**After the Appropriation:  
Putting the Money to Work for Children**

As political leaders, governors outline priorities in speeches; as policymakers, they propose budgets and legislation. Their day-to-day work, however, is more mundane: supervising a state’s many departments and agencies. The rubber meets the road in this last arena where even the most gifted orators and efficient fiscal managers must excel if their policies and initiatives are to succeed.

**Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell (D)** won a hard-fought budget victory in 2007 to create and fund *Pre-K Counts*, a state pre-k program featuring high teacher-quality standards, small class sizes, and comprehensive services for children and families. The inaugural investment of \$75 million made the program available to 11,000 four year olds in the 2007-08 school year. Effective use of funds, however, requires a different set of skills than the politics of budget hardball: careful planning, smart administrative decision making, and selecting the right leadership. The successful launch of *Pre-K Counts* is a product largely of Governor Rendell’s skilled management.

Before the legislature approved the funding, the governor convened the state’s early education stakeholders to help craft the program. He tapped Harriet Dichter to reorganize early childhood programs into a new Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). Under Dichter’s leadership, experts developed a straightforward

request for grant proposals, which was ready right after the program was authorized. OCDEL also conducted a statewide analysis to identify where eligible children live and then worked closely with local officials to apply for funding and set up programs within short timelines. Through this collaborative process, state and local administrators ensured classrooms were ready when children arrived.

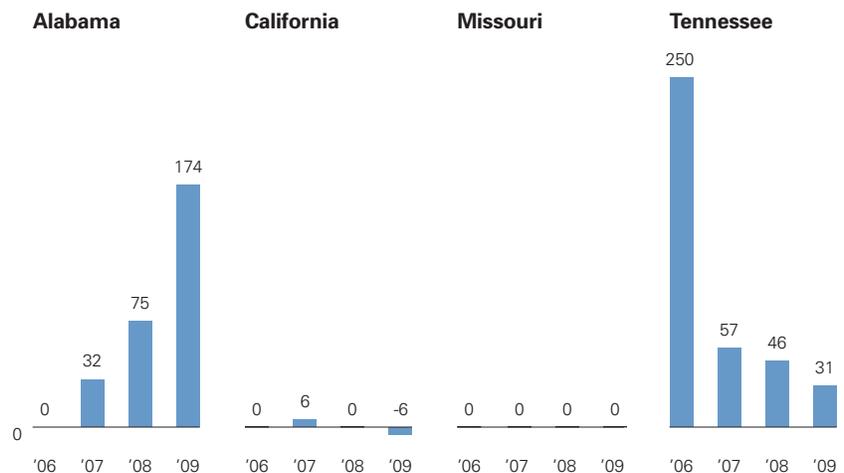
In his budget address, Governor Rendell acknowledged, “Teachers and administrators all over Pennsylvania have worked diligently to maximize the benefit of the wise investments we have made together in pre-K....”\*

By contrast, several states have struggled to put pre-k appropriations to work, leaving millions of dollars unspent and thousands of children without access to pre-k. **California, Florida, New York, and South Carolina** have all experienced implementation challenges, ranging from restrictions on how funds can be used to staff and facilities shortages, low-quality services, and inadequate public outreach. Unfortunately, governors in these states have not committed to solving the problems, and some have pointed to unspent dollars to justify cuts in state pre-k funding.

\* Edward G. Rendell, “Budget Address, Fiscal Year 2008-2009,” (2008), [http://www.state.pa.us/papower/lib/papower/08-09\\_budget/governors-budget-address.pdf](http://www.state.pa.us/papower/lib/papower/08-09_budget/governors-budget-address.pdf).

**Proposed Percent Change in Pre-K Investment for Fiscal Years 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009**

As shown by their pre-k proposals for the last four fiscal years, the governors of Alabama and Tennessee backed up their words with action while the governors of California and Missouri chose inconsistency and inaction.



## Scorched-Earth Policymaking: When Governors Fail to Lead

When faced with tough budget choices, true leaders set priorities and make a case for them. For FY09, one governor failed this test, opting to avoid difficult decisions and instead proposing across-the-board cuts that place an extra burden on legislators, agency administrators, service providers, and the public.

Like many others states, **California** is facing dramatic budget deficits. Rather than set clear policy priorities to help his state weather the economic downturn and ultimately emerge stronger, **Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R)** proposed shortsighted, 10 percent, across-the-board cuts to all state agencies. For the *State Preschool Program*, which already suffers from limited access and low quality, the governor's budget proposal would mean a funding decrease of \$28.5 million. And, the story gets worse for the 13 percent of the nation's four year olds who live in California.

In 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger declared that 2008 would be the "Year of Education" in California. Following his announcement, the governor's own committee on education and the state superintendent of public instruction's P-16 Council both recommended high-quality, voluntary pre-k for all children in the state. Also in 2007, the RAND Corporation released a study that said evidence indicates that pre-k can help raise student achievement. Yet, despite both his own pronouncement and the new research supporting significant increases to pre-k in California, Governor Schwarzenegger did not make pre-k education a priority in his FY09 budget.

In fact, the governor's lack of leadership has extended to pre-k improvements with little or no cost. Due to long-standing constraints on how state agencies and pre-k providers may use state funding, \$75 million in pre-k appropriations from FY06 and FY07 remained unspent in 2008.<sup>16</sup> Though his education committee presented him with reform proposals to simplify pre-k funding streams and ensure state investments are fully utilized, Governor Schwarzenegger has yet to publicly endorse these much-needed reforms. Instead of using his bully pulpit to spur legislative action, the governor chose a passive approach, proposing to return the unspent money to the general fund under the auspices of deficit reduction.

Ironically, in his search for budget balancing strategies, the governor has been looking to Arkansas as his model. If Governor Schwarzenegger really wants to follow Arkansas's example, he should emulate its investments in high-quality pre-k. Arkansas has increased funding for pre-k by 117 percent since FY05 and, unlike California, offers one of the nation's highest-quality programs.<sup>17</sup> California's young children deserve nothing less.



## Empty Rhetoric: All Talk No Action

Each year, certain governors recognize the political value of high-quality pre-k but exploit it to advance only themselves. They know the public is behind it, research supports it, and the economy would benefit from it. Yet, while espousing commitments to pre-k, these executives have failed to walk the talk.

**Missouri Governor Matt Blunt (R)** knows vocal enthusiasm for high-quality pre-k programs is good politics. In each of his first three state of the state addresses, Governor Blunt declared his commitment to education reform in Missouri and underscored the important role of early education. Yet, after the speeches were over, the governor's budget proposals undermined the high-quality *Missouri Preschool Project*.

In 2005, Governor Blunt gave his first state of the state address in which he laid out his agenda for education, calling it his "number one priority" and lauding programs that ensure "...young Missourians are better prepared to learn... when they start school."<sup>18</sup> The governor's FY06 budget then flat funded the state's pre-k investment at \$14.8 million.

In 2006, the governor spoke again of his commitment: "My priorities remain clear. From pre-school to college, the state budget should reflect the number one fiscal priority of state government – 'to educate and prepare our children for the 21st century,'"<sup>19</sup> he said. For FY07, his budget flat funded the *Missouri Preschool Project* at \$14.8 million.

The next year, Governor Blunt proclaimed in his state of the state address, "...early childhood education is a great investment for the future" and "...my budgets place schools, classrooms, teachers and students first."<sup>20</sup> His FY08 budget flat funded pre-k.

Now in his final year in office and with no plans to seek re-election, Governor Blunt's actions indicate that if young children's needs cannot serve his own, he has nothing substantive to say on the subject. The governor's 2008 state of the state address included virtually no mention of pre-k. Of course, his budget is the same as always: flat funding for pre-k at \$14.8 million. This means that during his single four-year term, Governor Blunt has proposed and with the legislature's consent has achieved a cut in his state's pre-k investments of nearly 8 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars.<sup>21</sup> The children of Missouri can only hope their next governor will offer more than just words.

### Dishonorable Mention

Pre-k has been thriving in the American South, with one exception. **Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour (R)** presides over the only Southern state that fails to fund pre-k. Head Start serves the state's most at-risk children with federal funds, but low- and middle-income children have no publicly funded pre-k opportunities. The chief state school officer has proposed implementing high-quality pre-k to address these needs, but the governor has failed to act. With Mississippi's neighbors offering the nation's highest-quality pre-k to ever-increasing numbers of children and pressure rising within his own administration, Governor Barbour's 2008 state of the state address skirted the issue: "...we need to better utilize the existing early childhood programs that already serve 80% of our four-year-olds by providing financial incentives for them to expand and improve..."<sup>22</sup> His statements paint a false rosy picture, and his budget offers no remedy for Mississippi's lack of state funding for pre-k. A genuine pre-k leader would have proposed a path out of the Pre-K Wilderness. Governor Barbour gave his state's families hollow words instead.

## Bucking the Trends: Pre-K Wilderness States with a Surplus

Nationwide, state-funded pre-k is growing at an impressive rate, but for FY09, many governors are facing a serious economic downturn. Two state executives, however, are going against both grains, enjoying budget surpluses and yet investing no state funds in pre-k.

**Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer (D)** is fortunate to have a budget surplus in FY09. In addition, though Montana is one of eight states not funding pre-k, the governor plainly understands the value of high-quality pre-k for his state's economic competitiveness. "Given the increasingly global economy, it is more important now than ever that the United States set a long term strategy for economic competitiveness," he said in remarks at the Telluride Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment. "It is not clear at this point that our nation's children are prepared to take on the challenges of the 21st century. If we invest in their development, however, then the U.S. can secure its position as a global leader."<sup>23</sup>

For FY09, the state's budget surplus is projected at \$125 million.<sup>24</sup> According to a well-respected economic analysis, it would cost \$88 million to provide high-

quality, voluntary pre-k for every three and four year old in Montana.<sup>25</sup> This same study projects returns to participants, government, and society of up to \$8 for every one state dollar invested in high-quality pre-k for all. In spite of these and other data, the governor proposed an FY09 budget that once again offers no pre-k funding. In his three years in office, Governor Schweitzer has allowed more than 18,000 Montana three and four year olds to languish in the Pre-K Wilderness.<sup>26</sup>

### Dishonorable Mention

Like his neighbor to the north, **Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal (D)** heads a state that is both flush with cash and devoid of state funding for pre-k. In fact, FY09 is Wyoming's fifth consecutive year with a surplus. Though the 2008 surplus, projected at \$325 million,<sup>27</sup> is smaller than those in recent years, it is still more than seven times the estimated \$44 million cost of voluntary, high-quality pre-k for all Wyoming three and four year olds.<sup>28</sup> For FY09, the governor has offered no pre-k proposal. During his five years in office, Governor Freudenthal's policies have cost more than 9,800 children the opportunity for a high-quality pre-k experience.<sup>29</sup>

### Faltering Federal Leadership

The federal government provides resources to states for early education initiatives through more than a dozen programs. Three have a direct impact on states' ability to support pre-k: Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and Head Start. Unfortunately, a steady erosion of federal support for these programs has characterized the Bush presidency, and the president's proposal for FY09 would continue that trend, including:

- Flat funding of CCDBG discretionary grants at \$2.1 billion. The president and Congress have not provided a significant increase since 2002, and at the proposed FY09 level an estimated 200,000 children would lose assistance.
- An increase to Title I funding of less than 3 percent.
- An inadequate, sub-inflation increase for Head Start that would eliminate access for as many as 14,000 children.

Funding for Head Start between FY02 and FY08 fell short of the amount needed to keep pace with inflation by \$813 million or 12 percent.\* The administration's FY09 proposal fails to fund Head Start reforms that the president signed into law in December 2007 and eliminates funding for two programs that serve at-risk children: Reading is Fundamental and Even Start.

Federal early education funds are critical to state efforts to improve and expand pre-k. Now, states face the challenge of assuming more costs for Head Start and child care at a time when many are confronting deficits. This failure of federal leadership has seriously undermined efforts of state policy-makers to provide programs they know to be essential to children's school and life success and to the nation's future prosperity and global competitiveness.

\* The Library of Congress, "Status of Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2008," <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/approp/app08.html>.

## Conclusion

The economic landscape has changed dramatically in the past year. Several years of strong budgets have given way to deficits in most states. These circumstances are forcing governors to refocus on their most valued policy priorities. True leaders, those with the strength to confront political and fiscal challenges, are defending voluntary, high-quality pre-k programs from the budget chopping block. Many are proposing increased pre-k investments, recognizing the high returns to families, communities, and treasuries. Some state executives lack the courage to articulate and protect priorities and have chosen to neglect early education programs and the children they serve, but these governors are the minority.

The bottom line: FY09 is a crucible, testing the mettle of the nation's governors and offering voters the chance to evaluate the commitment and constitution of their elected leaders. In some states, that leadership proved wanting, and families are left to hope new and stronger leaders will emerge. Fortunately for hundreds of thousands of other children around the country, their governors are passing the test, choosing to safeguard and expand the high-quality pre-k experiences children need to enter school ready to learn and thrive.

## Endnotes

1. Seventeen other states have a biennial budget that spans FY08 and FY09, and their governors did not propose any pre-k adjustments for FY09 in 2008. In seven of these states, however – Connecticut, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin – pre-k funding will increase in FY09 due to budget proposals and appropriations made in 2007.
2. U.S. Social Security Administration, “Latest Cost-of-Living Adjustment,” (2007).
3. Elizabeth C. McNichol and Iris Lav, “22 States Face Total Budget Shortfall of at Least \$39 Billion in 2009; 6 Others Expect Budget Problems,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <http://www.cbpp.org/1-15-08sfp.htm>.
4. North Carolina has the only other program to meet all 10 benchmarks. Source: W. Steven Barnett, Hustedt, Jason T., Robin, Kenneth B., and Schulman, Karen L., “The State of Preschool: 2007 State Preschool Yearbook,” (New Brunswick: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2008), 6.
5. Jay Campbell and Dave Sackett, “Re: Survey of Alabama Voters,” (Peter D. Hart Research Associates and the Tarrance Group, 2007).
6. Bob Riley, “Governor Riley’s State of the State Address,” Feb. 6, 2008, <http://governorpress.alabama.gov/pr/sp-2008-02-06-sots2008.asp>.
7. McNichol and Lav, “22 States Face Total Budget Shortfall of at Least \$39 Billion in 2009; 6 Others Expect Budget Problems.”
8. “Governor Patrick Joins ‘Rising Stars of Massachusetts’ Celebration of Massachusetts Universal Pre-Kindergarten (MA-UPK) Program,” (Boston: Strategies for Children, Inc., 2008).

9. McNichol and Lav, “22 States Face Total Budget Shortfall of at Least \$39 Billion in 2009; 6 Others Expect Budget Problems.”
10. Ibid.
11. Florida legislators cut \$10 million during the initial FY08 appropriations process and an additional \$14 million later in 2007.
12. Of the 49 state pre-k programs evaluated by NIEER for the 2006-07 school year, *VPK* was one of only eight to meet four or fewer quality benchmarks. Source: Barnett, “The State of Preschool: 2007 State Preschool Yearbook,” 19.
13. “Poll Shows Most Favor Expansion of State’s Pre-K Program,” *Nashville Business Journal*, Mar. 10, 2008.
14. Phil Bredesen, “State of the State Address: ‘Back to Basics,’” Jan. 28, 2008, <http://www.tennesseeanytime.org/govfiles/2008-SOS-Address.pdf>.
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## Governors' State of the State Addresses and FY09 Budget Proposals for Pre-K

This chart details FY09 state pre-k investments as proposed in the budgets of all 50 governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia and compares them with the final appropriations for FY08. In total, 17 executives recommended more than 260 million new dollars for pre-k this year. The chart also identifies which governors took advantage of the policymaking power of their state of the state addresses to support pre-k.

New for this report, each of the 26 executives who made FY09 pre-k proposals in 2008 receives a rank based on the percent change proposed.

† FY09 is the first year of the biennium.

‡ FY09 is the second year of the biennium.

§ Governor has not made a pre-k proposal in 2008.

\* No state-funded pre-k program according to the National Institute for Early Education Research.

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
<b>Alabama</b> Gov. Bob Riley (R)  <b>174%</b> <b>Rank: 1</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Increases</b> the <i>First Class</i> pre-k program by \$20 million for a total of \$30 million.  <b>Eliminates</b> state supplement of \$950,000 for Head Start.	
<b>Alaska*</b> Gov. Sarah Palin (R)  <b>9%</b> <b>Rank: T-12</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Increases</b> state investment in Head Start by \$600,000 to \$6.9 million, \$6.7 million of which are from the state general fund.  <b>Increases</b> Early Learning Programs by \$7,100 for a total of \$407,100.	Funding for Early Learning Programs supports implementation of Ready to Read, Ready to Learn recommendations.
<b>Arizona</b> Gov. Janet Napolitano (D)  <b>0%</b> <b>Rank: T-18</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Flat funds</b> the <i>Early Childhood Block Grant</i> at \$19.4 million of which \$12.7 million are projected to support pre-k.	

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
Arkansas <sup>†</sup> Gov. Mike Beebe (D)  0%	No speech	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>flat funds</b> the <i>Arkansas Better Chance</i> program from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, the <i>Arkansas Better Chance</i> program will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$111 million.
California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R)  -6%    Rank: 23	No	<b>Decreases</b> the <i>State Preschool Program</i> by \$28.5 million to \$413.4 million.	The decrease would reduce pre-k slots by about 7,600.
Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter (D)  47%    Rank: 4	Yes	<b>Increases</b> the <i>Colorado Preschool Program</i> by \$21.4 million for a total of \$67.1 million.	The increase would allow the program to serve all children currently on waiting lists.
Connecticut <sup>†</sup> Gov. M. Jodi Rell (R)  25%	No	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>increases</b> the <i>School Readiness Program</i> by \$19.5 million from FY08 to FY09 and <b>flat funds</b> the state investment in Head Start from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>School Readiness Program</i> funding will increase by \$14.3 million from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$81 million in FY09. State investment in Head Start will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$6.7 million.
Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner (D)  0%    Rank: T-18	Yes	<b>Flat funds</b> the <i>Early Childhood Assistance Program</i> at \$5.7 million.	
Florida Gov. Charlie Crist (R)  9%    Rank: T-12	No	<b>Increases</b> the <i>Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK)</i> program by \$32.1 million for a total of \$384.4 million.	The FY08 appropriation for <i>VPK</i> was reduced to \$352.3 million to reflect a lower-than-anticipated enrollment rate.

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
<p>Georgia</p> <p>Gov. Sonny Perdue (R)</p> <p></p> <p>4%    Rank: 15</p>	Yes	<b>Increases</b> funding for the <i>Georgia Prekindergarten Program</i> by \$12.2 million for a total of \$337 million.	
<p>Hawaii<sup>†*</sup></p> <p>Gov. Linda Lingle (R)</p> <p></p> <p>N/A</p>	No	No state investment in pre-k.	
<p>Idaho<sup>*</sup></p> <p>Gov. C.L. Butch Otter (R)</p> <p></p> <p>-100%    Rank: T-25</p>	No	<b>Eliminates</b> \$1.5 million of discretionary TANF funds for Head Start.	
<p>Illinois</p> <p>Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D)</p> <p>Incomplete</p>	No	<b>Increases</b> the overall education budget by \$300 million but does not specify an increase for the <i>Early Childhood Block Grant</i> or <i>Preschool for All</i> . The governor's budget lists <i>Preschool for All</i> among his four key education priorities and encourages continued investment in the program.	The <i>Early Childhood Block Grant</i> received a supplemental increase of \$4.6 million for FY08, which increased funding for <i>Preschool for All</i> by \$4.1 million to \$309.6 million.
<p>Indiana<sup>†*</sup></p> <p>Gov. Mitch Daniels (R)</p> <p></p> <p>N/A</p>	No	No state investment in pre-k.	
<p>Iowa</p> <p>Gov. Chet Culver (D)</p> <p></p> <p>73%    Rank: 3</p>	Yes	<b>Increases</b> <i>Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four Year Old Children</i> by \$17.1 million for a total of \$32.1 million.	Of the total budget for the <i>Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program</i> , \$17.1 million are from the school funding formula and \$15 million support new grantees in FY09.
		<b>Flat funds</b> <i>Shared Visions</i> at \$8.5 million.	

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
<p>Kansas</p> <p>Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D)</p>  <p><b>17%</b>    <b>Rank: 10</b></p>	Yes	<p><b>Increases</b> funding for the <i>Pre-K Pilot Program</i> by \$1.2 million to \$6.2 million.</p> <p><b>Increases</b> the <i>Four-Year-Old At-Risk Program</i> by \$2.8 million to \$21.5 million.</p>	The proposal would support merging the two programs into one, using both the pilot's higher standards for class size, child-adult ratio, and professional development and its diverse delivery model.
<p>Kentucky<sup>†</sup></p> <p>Gov. Steve Beshear (D)</p>  <p><b>0%</b>    <b>Rank: T-18</b></p>	No	FY09-FY10 biennial budget proposal <b>flat funds</b> the <i>Kentucky Preschool Program</i> at \$75.1 million for FY09.	The governor is creating an early education and care coordinating committee.
<p>Louisiana</p> <p>Gov. Bobby Jindal (R)</p>  <p><b>2%</b>    <b>Rank: 16</b></p>	Yes	<p><b>Increases</b> <i>LA4</i> by \$2.5 million for a total of \$85.9 million. <b>Decreases</b> the <i>Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program</i> by \$1.7 million to \$6.8 million. About \$15.4 million of the <i>8(g)</i> grant will be available for pre-k, an <b>increase</b> of \$1.2 million.</p>	
<p>Maine<sup>†</sup></p> <p>Gov. John Baldacci (D)</p> <p>Funding based on enrollment</p>	Yes	<p>The <i>Four Year Old Program</i> is funded by the school funding formula. FY09 figures are not yet available.</p> <p>FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>flat funds</b> the state investment in Head Start from FY08 to FY09.</p>	The <i>Four Year Old Program</i> received \$4.5 million from the state school funding formula in FY08 and an additional \$4.2 million from local districts. Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, state investment in Head Start will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$4 million.
<p>Maryland</p> <p>Gov. Martin O'Malley (D)</p> <p>Funding available for pre-k based on number of low-income K-12 students.</p>	No	<p>The <i>Maryland Prekindergarten Program</i> is funded by the school funding formula. FY09 figures are not yet available, but enrollment is expected to increase.</p> <p><b>Flat funds</b> state investment in Head Start at \$3 million.</p>	FY08 funding is estimated at \$84.6 million. Pre-k funding comes from the compensatory education portion of the school funding formula, which is based on the number of low-income students enrolled in each county's K-12 system.
<p>Massachusetts</p> <p>Gov. Deval Patrick (D)</p>  <p><b>24%</b>    <b>Rank: 8</b></p>	Yes	<p><b>Increases</b> <i>Universal Pre-Kindergarten</i> by \$15 million for a total of \$22.1 million. <b>Increases</b> the <i>Preschool Direct Services</i> portion of <i>Community Partnerships for Children</i> by \$161,095 for a total of \$47.8 million. <b>Flat funds</b> state investment in Head Start at \$9 million.</p>	The proposed budget would increase early childhood professional-development funds by \$1.2 million and funding for full-day kindergarten by \$8.4 million.

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
<p>Michigan</p> <p>Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D)</p> <p></p> <p>26%    Rank: 7</p>	Yes	<b>Increases</b> the <i>Michigan Great Start Readiness Program</i> by \$24 million to \$117.8 million.	The proposed budget would increase the <i>Great Start</i> community collaborative grants, which support infrastructure needs of birth-to-five programs, by \$7.5 million for a total of \$11.4 million.
<p>Minnesota<sup>‡</sup></p> <p>Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R)</p> <p></p> <p>99%</p>	No	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>increases</b> the <i>Pre-Kindergarten Allowance Program</i> by \$28.1 million from FY08 to FY09 and <b>flat funds</b> the <i>School Readiness Program</i> and the state investment in Head Start from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>Pre-Kindergarten Allowance Program</i> will increase by \$2 million from FY08 to FY09. The <i>School Readiness Program</i> and the state investment in Head Start will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$10.1 million and \$20.1 million, respectively.
<p>Mississippi*</p> <p>Gov. Haley Barbour (R)</p> <p></p> <p>N/A</p>	Yes	No state investment in pre-k.	The governor proposed an increase of \$3 million for a quality rating system and child care resource and referral services.
<p>Missouri</p> <p>Gov. Matt Blunt (R)</p> <p></p> <p>0%    Rank: T-18</p>	Yes	<b>Flat funds</b> the <i>Missouri Preschool Project</i> at \$14.8 million.	The governor proposed a \$2 million increase for Parents as Teachers.
<p>Montana<sup>‡*</sup></p> <p>Gov. Brian Schweitzer (D)</p> <p></p> <p>N/A</p>	No speech	No state investment in pre-k.	
<p>Nebraska<sup>‡</sup></p> <p>Gov. Dave Heineman (R)</p> <p>Funding based on enrollment</p>	Yes	Pre-k is funded by the school funding formula. FY09 figures are not yet available, but enrollment is expected to increase by 550 for a total of 1,150 children in FY09. FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>flat funds</b> the <i>Early Childhood Grant Program</i> from FY08 to FY09.	In FY08, an estimated \$1.7 million from the school funding formula supported pre-k programs. Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>Early Childhood Grant Program</i> funding will decrease by \$10,841 from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$3.6 million in FY09.

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
Nevada <sup>†</sup> Gov. Jim Gibbons (R)  0%	No speech	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>flat funds</b> the <i>Early Childhood Education Program</i> from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>Early Childhood Education Program</i> funding will increase by \$87,204 from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$3.3 million in FY09.
New Hampshire <sup>†*</sup> Gov. John Lynch (D)  N/A	Yes	No state investment in pre-k.	
New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine (D)  5%     Rank: 14	Yes	<b>Increases</b> pre-k funding by \$26.9 million for a total of \$543.8 million.	
New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson (D)  76%     Rank: 2	Yes	<b>Increases</b> funding for <i>New Mexico Pre-K</i> by \$9.3 million for a total of \$23.3 million.  Also proposes a total of \$7 million in non-recurring funds, \$3.8 million more than FY08.	Of the proposed non-recurring funds, \$4 million are for start-up programs, and \$3 million are for capital costs.
New York Former Gov. Eliot Spitzer (D)  1%     Rank: 17	Yes	<b>Increases</b> the <i>Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)</i> program by \$6.3 million to \$452.3 million.	The FY09 proposal also includes \$2 million for full-day kindergarten expansion and start-up money for new <i>UPK</i> programs.  Estimated spending for <i>UPK</i> during the 2007-08 school year was \$363 million.
North Carolina <sup>†</sup> Gov. Mike Easley (D)  0%	No speech	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>flat funds</b> the <i>More at Four</i> program from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>More at Four</i> will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$140.6 million.

State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
North Dakota <sup>†*</sup> Gov. John Hoeven (R)  <b>N/A</b>	<b>No speech</b>	No state investment in pre-k.	
Ohio <sup>†</sup> Gov. Ted Strickland (D)  <b>9%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>increases</b> the <i>Early Childhood Education</i> program by \$2.5 million from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>Early Childhood Education</i> program funding will increase by \$5.5 million from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$36.5 million in FY09.
Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry (D) Funding based on enrollment	<b>Yes</b>	Pre-k investments are included in the school funding formula and totaled \$209.5 million for FY07. FY08 and FY09 figures are not yet available, but enrollment is expected to increase in the 2008-09 school year by about 1,000 to 36,300 children.	The governor proposed a recurring \$10 million annual state investment in the <i>Early Childhood Pilot Program</i> , which is a public-private partnership that provides early childhood services to at-risk children under the age of five.
Oregon <sup>†</sup> Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D)  <b>31%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>increases</b> the <i>Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten</i> program by \$13 million from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten</i> funding will increase by \$11 million from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$53.5 million in FY09.
Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell (D)  <b>10%</b> <b>Rank: 11</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Increases</b> <i>Pre-K Counts</i> by \$12.6 million for a total of \$87.6 million. Pre-k spending from the <i>Accountability Block Grant</i> is estimated to remain at the FY08 level of \$15.7 million.  <b>Flat funds</b> state investment in Head Start at \$40 million.	An additional \$4 million are recommended for the Early Learning Network, an information technology system that tracks assessment data on young children in the various early learning programs.
Rhode Island <sup>*</sup> Gov. Don Carcieri (R)  <b>-100%</b> <b>Rank: T-25</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Eliminates</b> state supplement of \$3.3 million for Head Start.	



State, Governor, Proposed Percent Change, & Percent Change Rank	State of the State Mentions Pre-K or Early Education	Proposal	Comments
Virginia <sup>†</sup> Gov. Tim Kaine (D)  <b>20%</b> <b>Rank: 9</b>	<b>Yes</b>	FY09-FY10 biennial budget <b>increases</b> the <i>Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)</i> by \$10.5 million for an FY09 total of \$63.6 million.	The two-year expansion proposal would serve all children who are eligible for free lunch and 75 percent of those who are eligible for reduced-price lunch. The governor proposed using \$14.9 million of TANF funds to further expand <i>VPI</i> in the second year of the biennium.
Washington <sup>‡</sup> Gov. Christine Gregoire (D)  <b>25%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, <b>increases</b> the <i>Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)</i> by \$9.6 million from FY08 to FY09.	Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>ECEAP</i> funding will increase by \$8.5 million from FY08 to FY09, for a total budget of \$56.4 million in FY09. Another \$4.2 million will support a pilot quality rating and improvement system.
West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin (D)  Funding based on enrollment	<b>No</b>	The <i>West Virginia Pre-K System</i> is funded through the school funding formula. FY09 figures are not yet available, but enrollment is expected to increase by 1,300 for a total of 13,500 children.	FY08 spending is estimated at \$50 million.
Wisconsin <sup>†</sup> Gov. Jim Doyle (D)  Funding based on enrollment	<b>Yes</b>	<i>4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)</i> is funded by the school funding formula. FY09 figures are not available. FY08-FY09 biennial budget proposal, made in 2007, includes a <b>new investment</b> of \$3 million for <i>4K</i> start-up grants and <b>flat funds</b> the state investment in Head Start from FY08 to FY09.	In FY08, <i>4K</i> received about \$85 million from the school funding formula plus local contributions of \$46 million. Under the enacted FY08-FY09 biennial budget, <i>4K</i> will receive \$3 million for start-up grants and the state investment in Head Start will be flat funded from FY08 to FY09 at \$7.2 million.
Wyoming <sup>†*</sup> Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D)  <b>N/A</b>	<b>No</b>	No state investment in pre-k.	Under the Children and Families Initiative, created in 2005, the governor proposed more than doubling the state's share of the child care budget in the FY09-FY10 biennium to expand access and increase reimbursement rates for infants and toddlers.
Washington, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty (D)  <b>29%</b> <b>Rank: 6</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Increases</b> funding for D.C. Public School pre-k by \$8.6 million for a total of \$51.3 million.  <b>Increases</b> funding for charter school pre-k by \$9.6 million for a total of \$29.6 million.	Due to the transfer of early childhood programs from the Department of Human Services to the newly created Office of State Superintendent of Education, the status of the <i>Pre-K Incentive Program</i> is unknown.

## Acknowledgements

This report was researched by Albert Wat and written by Jennifer V. Doctors for Pre-K Now.

Pre-K Now thanks the following individuals for their contributions to this report: Libby Doggett, Danielle Gonzales, Clairee Hammond, Holly Barnes Higgins, Matt Mulkey, Kathy Patterson, Stephanie Rubin, and Tina Trenkner, as well as state advocates, budget officers, and department of education personnel for their assistance in compiling the data.

Pre-K Now is a project of The Pew Charitable Trusts and other funders to advance high-quality, voluntary pre-k for all children. The findings and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the view of the Trusts.

## Pre-K Now at a Glance

### **Mission**

Pre-K Now collaborates with advocates and policymakers to lead a movement for high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.

### **Vision**

Pre-K Now's vision is a nation in which every child enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

### **Location**

Washington, DC

### **Leadership**

Libby Doggett, Ph.D.  
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### **Funders**

The Pew Charitable Trusts  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation  
The McCormick Tribune Foundation  
The Foundation for Child Development  
RGK Foundation  
CityBridge Foundation  
PNC Financial Services Group  
The Schumann Fund for New Jersey

### **Pre-K Now Key Differentiators**

- Focuses exclusively on pre-k
- Provides the most up-to-date gauge of the pre-k pulse in any state
- Offers nationwide access to pre-k advocates
- Monitors and distributes daily pre-k newsclips
- Provides a national perspective on local pre-k issues
- Provides outreach, policy, and Spanish-language information targeted to the Latino community
- Leads a national movement which has gained significant momentum in the last five years

### **The Case for Pre-K**

- Pre-k benefits all children academically, socially, and emotionally.
- High-quality pre-k for all nets a high return on investment in children and the community.
- The most important brain development occurs by age five.
- Pre-k is the first step to improving K-12 education.

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Leadership Matters:  
Governors' Pre-K Proposals  
Fiscal Year 2009