



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Thousands of Texans Coming to Austin to Fight for Pre-k**

*Model Classroom in Rotunda, Rally on South Capitol Steps, Legislative Visits, Appearances by PBS Character "The Cat in the Hat" are all Components of the Day*

**(Austin, TX)** –“Pre-k Day at the Texas Capitol” will take place on Monday, February 1, 2011 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM at the Texas State Capitol Building. Nearly three thousand early education advocates, business leaders, and other stakeholders will join with the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) at the Capitol today to show their strong support for high-quality early education in Texas.

### **The day will showcase a number of activities, including:**

- A **Rally and Press Conference** at **10:00 AM** on the Capitol South Steps. Confirmed speakers include Senator Judith Zaffirini, Representative Mark Strama, Bill Hammond of the Texas Association of Business, and Dr. Juliet Garcia, President of the University of Texas at Brownsville.
- A **Model Pre-k Classroom** set up in the Ground Floor Capitol Rotunda (basement level): the classroom includes four components including math and science, English Language Learners, children with special needs, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology. Legislators have been invited to see firsthand what a high-quality environment looks like for young learners, and to take a tour, read, and interact with visiting pre-k students.
- **Legislative Visits** conducted by thousands of advocates from all across Texas.
- Surprise appearance from **PBS Character, the Cat in the Hat**, to entertain an expected 750 children coming to Pre-k Day.

Advocates will be seen in all corners of the Capitol, wearing “Pre-k Works” buttons. Legislators will hear from advocates on the following **revenue-neutral** high quality policy options:

- Continued investment in proven pre-k reform programs, including the Prekindergarten Early Start (PKES) Grant Program and Early Childhood School Readiness Models (Texas Early Education Model, Texas School Ready Project, and the Texas School Readiness Certification System)
- Improving the child care subsidy system in Texas through the existing federal allotment (legislation is in the process of being filed by Representative Mark Strama)

## Quotes from Texas Leaders:

“The state of Texas cannot afford to lose pre-k reform programs that drive student achievement, improve educator effectiveness, and ensure accountability” said **Kara Johnson, President and CEO of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition**. “Not only do these proven programs lay the foundation for other K-12 reforms, but they ensure Texas is investing in its workforce of the future,” she added.

“Texas’ pre-k reform programs are a prerequisite for prosperity in the state of Texas,” said **Bill Hammond, President and CEO of the Texas Association of Business**. “History demonstrates that economic recovery requires both a reduction in spending as well as an investment strategy. This session, legislators must invest in the programs proven to benefit our economy today and tomorrow” he added.

Pre-k Day is open to all who wish to participate. TECEC invites everyone to visit the Model Pre-k Classroom in the Ground Floor Rotunda and to join us at 10:00 AM on the South Capitol Steps for our rally and press conference.

**Pre-k Day Sponsors include:** Brewer Educational Resources, Hatch Early Childhood, Imagine Learning, Kaplan Early Learning Company, Lakeshore Learning Materials, National Educational Systems, Inc., OZ Systems, Pearson, Scholastic, School Specialty, Teaching Strategies, and Teachscape.

## Agenda for Pre-k Day:

9:00 am	Exhibits & Classrooms open in the Ground Level Capitol Rotunda
9:30 am	Interactive Classrooms open for tours in the Ground Level Capitol Rotunda
9:30 to 10:00 am	Legislators visit Interactive Classrooms
9:50 to 10:00 am	Choral performance by Pre-k Kids on South Capitol Steps
10:00 to 10:30 am	Rally/Press Conference on the South Capitol Steps
12:00 to 1:30 pm	Lunch Break (on your own)
1:30 to 3:00 pm	Legislators visit Interactive Classrooms
3:30 pm	Close of Interactive Classrooms
4:00 pm	Close of Pre-k Day at the Texas Capitol 2011

## Link to TECEC Legislative Agenda:

<http://www.tecec.org/files/TECEC%20Legislative%20Agenda%202011x.pdf>

## Link to Pre-k Day Toolkit:

<http://www.tecec.org/files/PreK%20Day%20Toolkit%20Final%20February%201%202011.pdf>

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*The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) represents more than 350 member organizations and 6,000 individuals dedicated to building a high quality early childhood education and development system for children ages birth to five.*