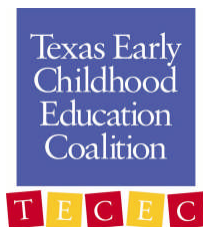


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Report: More Governors Than Ever Before Prioritizing Pre-K *Coalition Urges Governor Perry to Follow Suit*

AUSTIN, TEXAS-May 10, 2006- Pre-K Now just released *Leadership Matters: Governors' Pre-K Proposals Fiscal Year 2007*, a comprehensive national analysis of governors' leadership and budgetary commitments to expanding access to pre-kindergarten.

Nationwide, gubernatorial increases to pre-k were bolstered for 2007 by favorable state revenue forecasts. Twenty-two states are likely to enjoy increased income in fiscal year 2007 while 26 others anticipate fiscal stability. Texas is not anticipating a severe budget shortfall in 2007, as was the case during the 79th Legislative Session in 2005. However, the current special session on public school finance will impact how much money is available to expand pre-kindergarten and other critical services in 2007 and beyond.

A recent poll commissioned by United Ways of Texas and conducted by Impact Texas Communications, LLP found that 81 percent of Texas voters believe that pre-k is important to the overall learning potential of children, and that 73 percent of Texas voters believe Texas should fund high-quality pre-k for all children, even if it means increasing state revenue.

"We commend the Governor for his support of this critical issue through his Early Start Initiative over the past several years," said Kaitlin Guthrow, Executive Director of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC). "Thanks to the recent polling conducted on pre-kindergarten, we now know that there is both a strong understanding by Texas voters of the importance of high quality pre-kindergarten, as well as overwhelming support to move towards increasing investments in this area," she added.

Children who attend high quality pre-kindergarten programs are less frequently assigned to special education classes, more likely to graduate from high school, and have higher college entrance rates, as well as lifetime earnings. "Governors are committed to reforming an American education system that is failing many children. High-quality pre-k is a proven way to begin those efforts," said Libby Doggett, Ph.D., executive director of Pre-K Now.

The report, *Leadership Matters: Governors' Pre-K Proposals Fiscal Year 2007*, can be accessed at http://www.preknow.org/documents/LeadershipReport_May2006.pdf.

The poll commissioned by United Ways of Texas, along with regional data, are available online on the United Ways of Texas website at www.uwtexas.org.

To learn more about the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC), please visit www.tecec.org.

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The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) is a policy and advocacy organization comprised of more than 200 member organizations in 60 communities across Texas dedicated to building a movement for a high quality, voluntary, early childhood education system for children ages birth to five in Texas.