



a campaign of the  
Pew Center on the States

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Pew Report: Georgia Governor Among Leaders Making Bold Pre-Kindergarten Proposals**

*Perdue applauded for efforts to spur state pre-k expansion in FY10*

WASHINGTON, DC—(May 5, 2009)— Despite significant economic challenges, Gov. Sonny Perdue is joining the majority of the nation’s state executives in making pre-kindergarten a fiscal priority for FY10 and proposing new dollars to expand enrollment in the Georgia Prekindergarten Program, according to a state-by-state analysis released today by Pre-K Now, a campaign of Pew Center on the States.

“This fall Georgia’s voluntary, universal Pre-K program will serve its one millionth child,” said Gov. Perdue. “I believe the success of our pre-k operation, which annually serves 82,000 children, can serve as a national model. Georgia Pre-K gives children access to the high-quality early education opportunities that help lead to academic success in the years ahead.”

The non-partisan annual report, “Leadership Matters: Governors’ Pre-K Budget Proposals Fiscal Year 2010,” evaluates budget proposals for the next year and governors’ remarks in recent state of the state addresses to determine which leaders count voluntary, high-quality pre-k among their top education and economic development strategies. The findings underscore a growing interest among federal and state policy makers in targeting limited public resources to effective programs backed by research. This year’s report also addresses federal action, such as the Obama administration’s inclusion of funding proposals for early education in the stimulus package.

Even as they confront significant economic challenges and whittle spending to core priorities, the majority of the nation’s governors are increasing or protecting state investments in pre-k programs in the coming fiscal year.

The report spotlights Gov. Perdue’s efforts to proactively address the state’s stagnant pre-k enrollment rate and growing waiting lists, and characterizes his pre-k budget proposal as a meaningful increase that would lessen the financial burden on families and improve children’s chances for success in school and life. The \$12.7 million increase, which has been approved by

the state legislature, represents the largest single-year funding boost in five years, and will make pre-k available to an additional 3,000 4-year-olds in Georgia.

Key findings include:

- Fourteen governors are proposing to increase investment in early education.
- Thirteen governors are proposing to “flat-fund” early education programs, preserving current investment levels.
- The governors of Alaska, North Dakota and Rhode Island – states that currently do not provide state-funded pre-k – are proposing new pre-k initiatives.
- The governors of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina and South Carolina proposed a cut in pre-k investments.
- Total proposed state investment in pre-k is four percent greater than FY09 appropriations (which were \$5.2 billion in 43 states and the District of Columbia).
- If passed, these proposals would bring total state pre-k funding to \$5.4 billion in 43 states and the District of Columbia in FY10.
- Facing one of the biggest budget shortfalls in the country, New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine is calling for a 14 percent increase in pre-k investment, including the creation of an “incentive fund” to encourage school districts’ use of federal recovery funds to expand pre-k.

Pre-k is one of the most well-researched public education strategies of the last forty years. The preponderance of evidence shows quality early education helps children succeed in school and in life, and results in savings for every dollar invested. Children who complete quality pre-k programs enter school more prepared cognitively and socially, are less likely to be held back or need special education services, are more likely to complete high school, and become more successful and productive adults.

To view a copy of the report and learn more about the early education initiatives of the Pew Center on the States, please visit [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org) or [www.pewcenteronthestates.org](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org).

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The Pew Center on the States identifies and advances state policy solutions. Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States, collaborates with advocates and policymakers to lead a movement toward high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.