



a campaign of the  
Pew Center on the States

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Pew Report: New Jersey Governor Shows Unique Leadership on Pre-Kindergarten**

*Corzine's innovative plan guides federal stimulus dollars into quality pre-k*

WASHINGTON, DC—(May 5, 2009)— Although New Jersey is among the 10 states with the largest budget shortfalls for FY10, Gov. Jon Corzine emerges as a national leader for making the state's pre-kindergarten program a fiscal priority, according to a national report released today by Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States.

"I am proud that the state's pre-k program and our commitment to its growth and effectiveness stand out as a national example," said Gov. Corzine. "Given the economy, we're working especially hard to make every dollar of our public expenditures count, and in few places does it count more than this."

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 Governor Corzine's proposal to increase state investment in early learning by a total of \$73 million, of which \$25 million would be dedicated to a new Preschool Incentive Aid initiative that encourages school districts to use federal recovery funds for pre-k expansion. Governor Corzine stands out as the only state executive to use stimulus funds as part of his plan to improve early education. If approved, the proposal would bring New Jersey's total investment in pre-k to over \$621 million and expand enrollment to 50,000 children statewide.

“Governor Corzine has set a high bar for other states to follow when it comes to investing in what works,” said Danielle M. Gonzales, project manager of Pre-K Now. “The proposed increases will allow thousands more children to start on a successful path in school and in life, and as we know from research, New Jersey will see the benefits of this investment for many years to come.”

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.

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.