



America's Pre-K Movement: State Progress on Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and How Congress Can Help

Hosted by the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Honorable Christopher "Kit" Bond
Co-Authors of S. 1823, *the Ready to Learn Act*

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Speaker Biographies

Libby Doggett, Ph.D. Executive Director, Pre-K Now

As executive director of Pre-K Now, Libby Doggett directs the organization's efforts to educate state policymakers, the media, and the general public about the potential of pre-k to improve outcomes for young children.

Prior to leading Pre-K Now, Dr. Doggett worked for the National Head Start Association, where she directed the HeadsUp! Reading program, an innovative, credit-bearing course designed to provide early-childhood professionals the skills needed to help young children learn to read and write.

Upon coming to Washington, D.C., in 1995, Dr. Doggett worked in the U.S. Department of Education, where she served as special assistant to the director of special education (OSEP) and as executive director of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council, coordinating multiple federal services for infants, toddlers, children with disabilities, and their families.

In her home state of Texas, she served as the executive director of the Arc of Texas, the largest voluntary organization for persons with mental retardation and their families in the Lone Star State. She also helped found and then chaired the Disability Policy Consortium, a coalition of 20 Texas disability advocacy organizations. Dr. Doggett co-authored the first book written on child care and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Honors for her leadership on children's and disability issues include an appointment to the Texas Commission on Children and Youth, the Governor's Trophy from the Governor's Committee on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Texas, and the Friend of Early Childhood Intervention award. She holds a doctorate from the University of Texas in early-childhood special education. She is married to the Hon. Lloyd Doggett, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. They have two daughters, Lisa and Cathy, and two granddaughters, Ella and Clara.

The Honorable Phil Bredesen, Governor of Tennessee

Phil Bredesen took office as Tennessee's 48th governor on January 18, 2003, delivering on a promise to leave stale political debates behind and focus on achieving real results for families. In November 2006, he was re-elected in a landslide victory – reportedly becoming the first governor in over a century to win all 95 counties in Tennessee.

In his first year, Bredesen worked with the General Assembly to manage the state through a fiscal crisis without raising taxes or cutting funding for education. By Bredesen's fourth year in office, Tennessee had passed four balanced budgets, received top rankings from national bond rating agencies and raised its Rainy Day Fund to a record high.

Bredesen set clear priorities for the state, beginning with Tennessee's number one priority - education. He raised teacher pay above the southeastern average and expanded the state's pilot pre-k initiative into a program for four-year-olds across the state. He also created the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, a statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library that offers children free books monthly in all 95 counties in the state. In his fourth year, Bredesen worked with the General Assembly to increase education funding by a record \$366.5 million.

Before serving as Tennessee's governor, Bredesen served as mayor of Nashville from 1991 to 1999, and worked with community leaders to make Music City U.S.A. one of the best places in America to live, work and raise a family. Under his leadership, Nashville invested nearly \$500 million to build new schools and hire new teachers. The city developed a state-of-the-art library system, redeveloped downtown, expanded its park system and drove down the crime rate. Also during his tenure, Nashville enjoyed record economic growth by recruiting high-quality jobs and companies such as Dell Computer Corp. and HCA Inc. He led the city's efforts to recruit two professional sports teams: the NFL's Tennessee Titans and the NHL's Nashville Predators.

Before entering public service, Bredesen worked in the health care industry. Between research trips to the public library, he drafted a business plan at his kitchen table that led to the creation in 1980 of HealthAmerica Corp., a Nashville-based health care management company that eventually grew to more than 6,000 employees and traded on the New York Stock Exchange. The company was sold in 1986.

Dr. Hank Bounds, State Superintendent of Education, MS

Dr. Hank M. Bounds was named State Superintendent of Education by the Mississippi Board of Education in June 2005, and began serving in the position August 1, 2005. As State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Bounds serves as the chief executive officer of the Mississippi Department of Education and provides overall leadership for all the school districts across the state.

As state superintendent, Dr. Bounds has guided several important reforms in education in Mississippi. He directed the implementation of a new, more rigorous curriculum and assessment program designed to be in line with national standards. He has redesigned high schools so that students will graduate ready to compete globally for college or career opportunities. Dr. Bounds has involved the business community to help sponsor *On The Bus*, a dropout prevention campaign that includes multimedia commercials and advertising, summits, and rallies across the state to increase the graduation rate.

Another area of emphasis for improving education is the early childhood education initiative. Dr. Bounds has been working with legislators, business partners and communities to put programs in place to ensure every child begins school prepared and empowered to learn.

Dr. Bounds previously served as superintendent of the Pascagoula School District. He was principal in two high schools and one K-12 school. He holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Mississippi.

Recent awards presented to Dr. Bounds are the University of Southern Mississippi College of Education and Psychology Alumni of the Year 2008; Mississippi School Nurse Association 2008 Distinguished Service Award; and the National Association for Gifted Children David W. Belin Advocacy Award 2007.

Dr. Bounds and his wife, Susie, are the parents of a son, Will, and a daughter, Caroline.

Dr. Ramona Paul, Assistant State Superintendent, Professional Services Division, OK
Department of Education

Ramona Paul, Ph.D., currently serves as Assistant State Superintendent, Professional Services Division, at the Oklahoma State Department of Education. In that role she oversees teacher certification and alternative certification, guidance and counseling, and the early childhood/family education programs including pre-k and home visiting, using the Parents as Teachers model.

During her career, she has served on the faculty in Child Development and Early Childhood Education at Oklahoma State University, Texas Woman's University, Purdue University, University of Alabama, Birmingham, and as an administrator in the Edmond and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, public schools.

Dr. Paul received her B.S. in Family Relations and Child Development, Early Childhood, and Elementary Education from Oklahoma State University. She received her master's in Child and Family Development from Oklahoma State University, and her doctorate in Child Development and Family Science from Purdue University.

She currently serves on the Boards of numerous organizations and is a member of various other professional organizations as well as the author of 35 published books for children and professional articles.

Her husband, Homer, is the former CEO & President of the Citizens Security Bank and Trust Company in Bixby, Oklahoma, where Ramona served on the Board of Directors. The Paul's have a combined family of seven children (including two sets of twins).

Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D. Superintendent of Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools

Dr. Jerry D. Weast is Superintendent of the Montgomery County Public Schools, the largest and most diverse school system in Maryland and the 16th largest district in the nation. Appointed to the position in 1999 and reappointed in 2003 and 2007, Dr. Weast is directing an ambitious and comprehensive reform effort designed to raise academic standards and narrow the achievement gap for nearly 140,000 students. Under his leadership the Montgomery County Public Schools received the U.S. Senate/Maryland Productivity Award in 2005. In addition, the school system was a 2006 Finalist for a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

In recognition of his innovative leadership in early childhood education, professional development, school accountability, and parent involvement, Dr. Weast was named the Maryland Superintendent of the Year in 2003 and was one of the final four candidates for consideration as the National Superintendent of the Year. He is one of a few superintendents to have won the state superintendent of the year award in two different states.

Among other awards, Dr. Weast recently received the C. Jackson Grayson Award from the American Productivity and Quality Center for his leadership in consistently implementing best practices across all areas of school system administration. Dr. Weast has served as superintendent for more than 30 years, overseeing eight school districts in five states. He has been in public education since 1969 and also has been a clinical professor and instructor at several universities. He received his Ed.D. from Oklahoma State University and undergraduate and graduate degrees from Pittsburg State University.

Diane Addison, Director of Early Childhood Education, Hannibal (MO) Public Schools

Diane Addison is the Early Childhood Director for Hannibal Public Schools in Hannibal, Missouri. She currently oversees prenatal through pre-kindergarten services for 1, 200 families, as well as Parents as Teachers services for incarcerated women at a women's correctional facility in Vandalia, Missouri. Mrs. Addison is a Missouri Regional Coordinator for Parents as Teachers as well as a trainer. She has served as a certified Parents as Teachers parent educator for 23 years as well as an instructor for Moberly Area Community College.

Mrs. Addison holds a BSE from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, and a MS in Education from Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Missouri.

She was awarded the 2003 National Parent Educator of the Year Honor from the Parents as Teachers National Center. In 2002, she was named the Early Childhood Parent Education and Collaboration Award winner from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for her collaboration with the local Head Start program.

Erica B. Stubbs, Representative, New Mexico State Head Start Association and Director of Children's Services, Presbyterian Medical Services, NM

Ms. Stubbs currently serves as the Director of Children's Services for Presbyterian Medical Services; providing Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K, Home Visiting and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families services to families across the State of New Mexico. Prior to her appointment with Presbyterian Medical Services, Ms. Stubbs worked as a Technical Consultant for the Eastern Washington National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Project, supporting non-profit, and for-profit early education programs through the NAEYC accreditation process.

During her career Ms. Stubbs has also worked in almost all aspects of early childhood education including center based for-profit and non-profit programs, home visiting, parent education, military childcare and higher education instruction. Ms. Stubbs holds a BS in Child Development and Family Relations and a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education Curriculum and Instruction.

Kimberly Oliver Burnim, Teacher, Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools and 2006 National Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Kimberly Oliver Burnim began her teaching career in Montgomery County Public Schools in August 2000. Determined to make a difference in the lives of children at risk, she chose to teach at Broad Acres Elementary, a culturally and linguistically diverse school in Silver Spring, Maryland. Broad Acres was under consideration for reconstitution by the state due to several years of declining test scores but the school system took action internally and worked to restructure the school. Throughout the process, Kimberly served as a teacher leader and is credited with having a major role in the instructional design of the school. Significant school-wide gains in student achievement have been made and Broad Acres has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress for several consecutive years, meeting or exceeding all requirements for the No Child Left Behind Act.

Now in her ninth year of teaching, Ms. Burnim provides hands-on, differentiated lessons and activities tailored to meet the specific needs of her students. She believes that it is essential to build a rapport with each of her students and their families, so that students feel comfortable

exploring, working, taking risks, and learning. She is proud to be the “first teacher” for many of her students and strives to develop and instill a love of learning. She recognizes the importance of quality early childhood education programs and is an advocate for our youngest learners.

In November 2004, she achieved National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as an Early Childhood Generalist. Committed to professional development, she serves as a teacher trainer for Montgomery County Public Schools.

On April 26, 2006 Kimberly Oliver Burnim was named the 2006 National Teacher of the Year by President George Bush at a ceremony held at the White House. For a year she served as a full-time spokesperson and advocate for education. She returned to her classroom in 2007 and continues to enjoy speaking across the nation, sharing her story, advocating for students as well as teachers, and spreading her enthusiasm for education.