



a campaign of the  
Pew Center on the States

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Pew Report: Despite Economic Crisis, North Dakota Governor is One of Three Proposing First-Time Investments in Pre-Kindergarten**

*Hoeven budget puts state on course to join national movement toward voluntary pre-k*

WASHINGTON, DC—(May 5, 2009)— North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven is one of three governors proposing new pre-kindergarten initiatives in their FY10 budgets, according to a state-by-state analysis released today by Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States.

“After years of little activity, it is promising to see North Dakota consider steps to introduce and expand pre-k,” said Danielle M. Gonzales, project manager of Pre-K Now. “Governor Hoeven is wise to invest limited dollars where research shows they will produce a solid return for North Dakota’s youngest learners and the state’s economy.”

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. Hoeven’s proposal to add pre-k to the state’s K-12 funding formula, a move that would treat early education as a fundamental part of the state’s system and would enable pre-k funding to grow with parents’ demand. The North Dakota legislature considered and approved an omnibus education bill that creates an early childhood advisory council but does not fund the pre-k pilot proposed by Gov. Hoeven.

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.
- Like Gov. Hoeven, the governors of Alaska and Rhode Island – states that also do not currently 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.