



a campaign of the  
Pew Center on the States

## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Pew Report Praises Gov. Strickland for Committed Leadership on Pre-K**

WASHINGTON, DC—(May 5, 2009)— Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland is applauded for finding smart and strategic ways to improve the state’s early education programs despite major fiscal constraints, according to a state-by-state analysis released today by Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States.

“Tough times call for creatively targeting limited public resources and pursuing new strategies to improve Ohio’s early education and care system,” Governor Strickland said. “When we help Ohio’s families with young children get the services and support they need, it can’t help but strengthen our economy – today and down the road.”

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. Strickland who had to develop a budget with a projected shortfall of more than \$7 billion. He proposed to protect funding for the state’s Early Childhood Education program, also known as public pre-school, at the FY09 levels. In addition, the governor recommended low-cost yet valuable changes to streamline the state’s prenatal-to-five systems, mainly through the creation of a Center for Early Childhood Development within the state’s Department of Education and an Early Childhood Financing Workgroup.

“State leaders who let budget shortfalls get in the way of investing in our children should learn from Governor Strickland’s innovative, low-cost solutions,” said Danielle Gonzales, project manager of Pre-K Now. “The governor’s proposal requires fewer resources in the short term, but still builds quality and efficiency in the services Ohio families and children need.”

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.