

Office of the Governor



BOB RILEY
Governor

STATE OF ALABAMA

Press Office

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Governor Riley Praises Early Education Advocates for Help in Expanding First Class Pre-K



Gov. Riley (center) and Dr. Marquita Davis (left) listen as Linda Tilly of VOICES for Alabama's Children speaks at an event at the Cleveland Avenue YMCA in Montgomery. Gov. Riley presented awards to Dr. Davis and Tilly from Pre-K Now, a national organization, for their organizations' efforts to expand access to First Class Pre-K in Alabama.

MONTGOMERY - Governor Bob Riley honored pre-kindergarten advocates on Wednesday for their successful efforts to expand First Class Pre-K in Alabama.

Governor Riley presented the Alabama Office of School Readiness and a coalition of state pre-k supporters the

Pre-K Champion Award from Pre-K Now, a national organization that supports high quality, voluntary pre-K. Each year, Pre-K Now recognizes the work of state early learning advocates with its Pre-K Champion Award. Organizations chosen to receive the award have demonstrated outstanding advocacy, creative strategies and large measures of success in movement toward voluntary, high-quality pre-K.

In addition to the Alabama Office of School Readiness, advocacy organizations that received the award include VOICES for Alabama's Children, the Alabama Partnership for Children, A+ Education Foundation, Alabama Giving and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance.

"Alabama has emerged as a national leader in the pre-K movement," said Libby Doggett, Executive Director of Pre-K Now.

Governor Riley, who led efforts in the 2008 legislative session to double funding for pre-K programs to \$20 million, lauded the Alabama organizations for their help. The increased funding will allow an additional 1,800 four-year-olds to enroll in the First Class Pre-K program in the upcoming school year and will fund 103 additional pre-K classrooms.

"There is no greater investment we can make in the future of Alabama than an investment in the education of our children," said Governor Riley. "With the strong backing of these organizations and bipartisan support from the Legislature, we will provide the nation's highest quality pre-K to more of Alabama's children than ever before in our history."

The Governor presented the Pre-K Champion Award during a ceremony at the Cleveland Avenue YMCA in Montgomery, which has partnered with Head Start to provide pre-K classes to about 140 four-year-olds.

In March, the National Institute for Early Education Research rated Alabama's and North Carolina's pre-K programs the best in the nation for their overall quality for the second consecutive year.

In April, Pre-K Now called Governor Riley a "profile in courage" in its annual state-by-state analysis of gubernatorial leadership on pre-kindergarten. The report said that in spite of fiscal and political challenges, Governor Riley is among 17 state executives who chose to increase investments in early education.

For more contact information, visit Governor Bob Riley's Web Site: <http://www.governor.alabama.gov/>
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