

Alabama Pre-K Case Study

A GUIDE TO MOVE PRE-K FORWARD IN ARKANSAS

Alabama's goal is to provide access to voluntary, high quality Pre-K to every four-year-old child in the state whose parents choose for them attend.

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Office of School Readiness administers First Class Pre-K. This program is designed to provide an enriched quality environment with authentic, appropriate experiences for developing school readiness in a socioeconomically mixed classroom.

First Class Pre-K is a highly acclaimed program and nationally recognized for quality. It operates in public schools, childcare, Head Start, community-based, faith-based, and military-based programs.

Demonstrating Promising Results

Alabama First Class Pre-K students consistently over time and across grades:

Closed the achievement gap for lower income students by an average of

25%

miss fewer days of school

less likely to repeat a grade

less likely to need special education services

score higher in

READING

MATH

Strong Standards with Strong Supports

For over 15 years early childhood professionals from across the state have worked to develop what is now the Alabama's First Class Pre-K Framework.

This framework incorporates program guidelines, classroom guidelines, early learning standards, professional development, teacher salary, coaching and monitoring to create a model for high quality pre-K programs.

The pre-K classrooms are selected through a process, where three competitive grant options are available once a year. This process carefully examines criteria indicating the ability to meet specific quality assurances and abide by rigorous operating guidelines.

“There is no issue more important to Alabama’s economic future than developing our next generation children.”

- Governor Robert Bentley, Alabama Governor

Governor Bentley, as a strong conservative leader believes that all children deserve the benefits of early learning experiences. His leadership, support of grassroots program development and budget increases have been critical to shaping the vision for the future of Alabama First Class Pre-K.

Governor Bentley has successfully worked with the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance, a statewide, nonprofit coalition that is recommending increasing the budget for state-funded pre-K programs by \$20 million. The organization has a 10-year plan to gradually increase funding until all eligible students are covered.

Gradual and Strategic Investments

The incremental implementations of the program, investments in quality, and accountability have been key to the success of Alabama pre-K.

2000

Eight pilot sites were selected based on the existence of successful collaboration between program supports at the local level

2011

34 additional pilot sites were added through a competitive grant process.

2015

14 million dollar increase was given to expand Alabama First Class Pre-K, new classes and enhanced quality of existing programs serving four year old children increased access to 25% statewide

2016

819 First Class Pre-K classes are offered throughout all 67 counties in the state

ForWARD