



# The Case for Degreed Teachers

Children's Campaign, Inc.



## Current Situation:

- *Current Law:* The goal of a BA degreed teacher is merely "aspirational".
  - Florida's readiness rate dropped by 4% last year.<sup>1</sup>
- *Proposed Law:* **SB 602** by Senators Mike Fasano and Nan Rich and **HB 487** by Rep. Will Weatherford and Janet Long would mandate a lead teacher with a BA degree in every Florida pre-k classroom by 2013.
  - Degreed Teachers will significantly improve Florida's readiness rate.

## Degreed Teacher Results:

- 99% gains in print skills; compared to 26% when taught by teachers with fewer credentials<sup>2</sup>
- 74% gains in spelling; compared to 18% when taught by teachers with fewer credentials<sup>2</sup>
- 36% gains in math; compared to 15% when taught by teachers with fewer credentials<sup>2</sup>
- The only pre-k programs that have delivered proven long-term educational gains for children have fully qualified teachers with 4-year college degrees.<sup>3</sup>



*Only* pre-k programs with proven long-term financial gains for taxpayers have fully qualified teachers with 4-year college degrees.

## Investment & Return:

- There is **NO** fiscal impact in FY 2009-2010
- The cost of upgrading teacher credentials will be paid for from the savings realized by cutting the failure rate of Florida third-graders in half. It is estimated that an investment of about \$60,000,000 annually is required to provide degreed pre-k teachers, starting in the year 2013.<sup>4</sup>
- Annual cost of school non-promotion -- pre-k through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade -- is \$336,534,323<sup>5</sup> (Florida's current 3<sup>rd</sup> grade failure rate is 6.654%<sup>6</sup>).
- The savings will more than pay for the upfront investment. **NOT PROVIDING** high quality pre-k has long term costs to taxpayers in excess of \$800,000,000 annually due to drop out rates in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.<sup>5</sup>



## Benefits:

- **Develops a Competent Future Workforce.**
  - Children who enter school ready to learn become skilled employees ready to work.
- **Corrects a Double Standard.**
  - Parents face an imbalance in quality. Florida already mandates degreed teachers for summer-

session pre-k students but not in the regular school year.

- **Makes better use of Tax Dollars.**
  - Florida TaxWatch reports that a high-quality pre-k program could significantly reduce the estimated \$5.2 billion spent annually on students whose poor educational foundation results in a variety of systemic and costly social problems.
- **Puts children on the right path.**
  - Based on brain science, that we only get one chance to do this right.<sup>7</sup>
- **Improves educational outcomes** (documented by years of research)
  - Including grade promotion, lower drop-outs and less crime<sup>5</sup>
- **Positions Florida to maximize federal support**
  - Degreed teacher requirements are becoming the national trend (28 states require it) and federal dollars are increasingly tied to it.<sup>8</sup>



### **Support:**

Governor Charlie Crist

Six former Florida Governors<sup>9</sup>

50 Mayors of Florida Cities

The Early Childhood Association of Florida<sup>10</sup>

Children's Campaign, Inc.

Florida School Board Association

Superintendents of School

Florida Education Association

Florida PTA

Florida Family Childcare Home Association<sup>11</sup>

Florida Voters<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fla. pre-K readiness rate drops. Miami Herald (Feb. 26, 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Do Teacher Qualifications Matter for Florida's Investment in Pre-K? W. Steven Barnett, National Institute for Early Education Research (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Increasing the Effectiveness of Preschool Programs. Debra J. Ackerman and W. Steven Barnett, National Institute for Early learning (2006)

<sup>4</sup> SB 602 Bill Analysis. Agency for Workforce Development (2009)

<sup>5</sup> What Are Cost Consequences of Not Implementing a Quality Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program? Florida TaxWatch (2004)

<sup>6</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> grade failure rate in North Carolina is 2.24%. North Carolina's pre-k program requires degree teachers. North Carolina Department of Education

<sup>7</sup> Connecting Neurons, Concepts, and People Brain Development and its Implications, Ross A. Thompson, Ph.D, National Institute for Early Education Research (2008)

<sup>8</sup> The State of Preschool 2007. National Institute for Early Education Research (2007)

<sup>9</sup> Governors Askew, Kirk, Graham, Mixson, Martinez, McKay, along with Rhea Chiles, wife of deceased Governor Lawton Chiles

<sup>10</sup> The largest association of pre-k providers with 3,000+ members serving over 10,000 children

<sup>11</sup> The largest statewide home childcare providers

<sup>12</sup> 2,868,500 voters supported a "high quality pre-k program at the ballot box.