



News Release

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Salt Lake County Joins First-Of-A-Kind Partnership To Expand Preschool For Low-Income Children

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Salt Lake City, UT—Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams today announced an agreement approved by the bipartisan County Council to partner with local school administrators, United Way of Salt Lake and private sector donors in an innovative program to expand preschool offerings to 600 economically disadvantaged children.

The County Council approved the mayor's request for \$350,000 to participate in the expansion of voluntary preschool this coming school year.

Private sector investors, including Goldman Sachs and J.B. Pritzker, committed several million dollars to support the expansion of the high quality preschool program in Granite and Park City School Districts. With "results-based financing", the investors are paid back by Salt Lake County and United Way of Salt Lake funds, based on the savings generated by the children who stay with their peers on grade and do not need special education.

"As a parent and as a taxpayer, I believe that education is the best investment we can make in our children," said Mayor McAdams. "Every Utah child should have the opportunity to achieve his or her potential—regardless of their zip code or economic circumstance."

Mayor McAdams joined County Councilman Richard Snelgrove, Brenda Van Gorder, Director of GSD Preschool Services, and United Way of Salt Lake Executive Vice President Rebecca Dutson to announce the Council's decision. Granite has operated a rigorous, well-managed preschool program for the past five years. The district's data

tracks 15 classrooms of 300 children each year. Test scores prior to preschool and after third grade confirmed that the "achievement gap" between the economically

disadvantaged children and their non-economically disadvantaged peers shrank dramatically. Granite's results are mirrored by several national studies that document impressive educational and economic results from investing in preschool programs.

Last month, United Way of Salt Lake announced the creation of the country's first-ever "results-based financing" vehicle, designed to expand access to high quality preschool for at-risk Utah kids.

"We applaud the Council's decision today," said Deborah Bayle, President and CEO, United Way of Salt Lake. "Without high quality, early education opportunities, it will not be possible to achieve our state's goals of 90 percent proficiency in core subjects, 90 percent high school graduation and 66 percent of Utahns with a post-secondary education."

"We must invest early and intelligently in the development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers in order to make significant progress in boosting their education achievement," said J.B. Pritzker, president of the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation. "These investments will reduce social and economic inequality, build a better workforce and grow a stronger America."

"Access to early education gives children a foundation they will build upon throughout their education and beyond," said Alicia Glen, Managing Director of the Urban Investment Group at Goldman Sachs. "Through this innovative financing, we are pleased to partner with J.B. Pritzker and United Way of Salt Lake to provide the opportunity to thousands of children who otherwise may not have been able to attend preschool."

Salt Lake County's funding will ensure that at least 600 additional at-risk children will be able to enroll. That will assist Granite District in reducing its 1,100 waiting list.

"In a state like Utah where we have more children than most states to educate and scarce taxpayer dollars, this type of innovative approach simply makes sense," said McAdams. "The research shows expanding preschool is also the fiscally responsible thing to do, for Salt Lake County taxpayers."

McAdams notes that investment in early childhood development—when children's brains are developing at their most rapid pace—yields an extraordinary return, far exceeding the return on most investments, private or

public.

"Our investment of \$350,000 will result in an estimated \$1.2 million in 'cost avoidance' - money we won't have to spend on drug abuse and drug crime, incarceration, or gang involvement," said McAdams. "I'd much rather spend a dollar on a preschool classroom than four dollars on a jail cell. This investment helps the county live within its budget and it helps grow our economy, since successful students become the educated workforce needed by Utah companies," said McAdams.

McAdams and the nonprofit and private sector partners expressed the hope that as the expanded preschool program continues to deliver results, the state of Utah will take note of those results and consider adopting the voluntary preschool model statewide.

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