



News Release

October 24, 2013

Salt Lake County Mayor, Council Members Visit Preschool Class Made Possible By County's Partnership Action

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Salt Lake County, UT—Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams and Council members Sam Granato and Richard Snelgrove today visited a new preschool class in the Granite School District, made possible by bipartisan action to support expanded preschool access for at-risk children in the county. A July vote by the council approved the mayor's request for \$350,000 to participate in the expansion of voluntary preschool this school year. With Salt Lake County's participation, the "results-based financing" initiative opened spots for an additional 600 children, including the classroom visited today.

"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."

"We all know that the youth of today are our most valuable natural resource. I'm thrilled to have supported this visionary initiative and it's wonderful to see children benefitting from it already," said Councilman Sam Granato.

"This is a great tool to break the cycle of poverty and government dependency. It also can help reduce crime in future years. It is a conservative initiative," said Councilman Richard Snelgrove.

The county joined a partnership that includes United Way Salt Lake and several private sector investors to support the expansion of Granite School District's high quality preschool program. Granite has operated its rigorous preschool program for several years. The district's data, including standardized test scores, confirms that children

who participate overcome the educational “achievement gap” between them and their non-economically disadvantaged peers by the third grade.

This past summer, 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, at no risk to taxpayers. Private sector, low-interest loans are only required to be repaid if the program works, and the achievement gap is closed. Such a result saves money due to fewer children ending up in special education classes.

McAdams and the Council point to an economic analysis provided to them showing that for every \$1 invested in preschool, \$14 can be avoided in county costs such as juvenile crime, gangs, drugs and truancy.

National studies conducted by numerous groups show that without high quality early childhood intervention, an at-risk child is: 1) 25 percent more likely to drop out of school; 2) 50 percent more likely to be placed in special education; 3) 70 percent more likely to never attend college and; and 4) 60 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.

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. Both the mayor and council members agree that expanding access to preschool is not only the right thing to do for the child; it is also the fiscally responsible thing to do, for Salt Lake County taxpayers.

There’s more on McAdams’ support for education [here](#).

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