



**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

Ensuring a bright future for every child

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NEWS RELEASE

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MDE Awarded \$6 Million Grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation for Early Childhood Education

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) announced today that it has been awarded a \$6 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) to expand its effort to develop an early childhood education infrastructure in Mississippi.

The grant will support teachers statewide in a variety of pre-K settings to implement developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms. Major grant activities include professional development and coaching support, pre-K program evaluation to ensure program quality and student progress, the implementation of developmental assessments for students, and assistance with increasing parents' participation in their children's education.

"I am thrilled that the Kellogg Foundation is making this investment for the children of Mississippi. High-quality early childhood education has a powerful effect on academic achievement throughout a child's education," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. "Building the capacity of teachers and early learning programs to equip pre-K students for success in school will have a significant, long-term impact on student outcomes."

Mississippi's Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 enabled the MDE to establish an Office of Early Childhood Education. The office provides support to pre-K programs throughout the state and oversees 14 Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs). The Legislature provided \$3 million in the first three years for the ELCs, and increased funding to \$4 million for 2016-17.

"Our work with the state's ELCs and other pre-K programs have improved the quality of instruction for Mississippi's youngest learners," Wright said. "The statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment shows that the majority of students who attend an ELC or other high-quality pre-K program start school prepared for kindergarten."

A 2015 Mississippi State University study identified the powerful, long-term effect pre-K had on student achievement in Mississippi. The report found that Mississippi children who attended public pre-K were 1.5 times more likely to be proficient in 3rd grade reading. The study also reported that Mississippi children who were proficient readers in 3rd grade are 9 times more



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likely to be proficient readers in 8th grade, and those who were proficient readers in 8th grade are 3.5 times more likely to graduate on time.

Mississippi's work in early childhood education has earned the state national recognition. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) recognized Mississippi's ELCs in its 2015 State of Preschool. This puts Mississippi among only five states in the nation that meet all 10 quality standards for preschool.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.

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