

# United Way Success by Six of Southwest ND

## Summary of the Pre-K Now National Conference Broadcast "Breaking Down Barriers to Quality Pre-K" • December 10, 2008

Our host, Sharon Hansen, sent out invitations and reserved the viewing site at DSU (Klinefelter Hall - Rm 216). Ten people attended at our location; more than 2000 total people across 35 states were participating.

### Partnering with Home-Based Providers

Case Study: Illinois

Action Items for Success:

- 1 - Funding should be flexible (to be able to cover transportation, materials for providers, etc.).
- 2 - Plan best practices training for prek staff regarding community outreach and organizing.
- 3 - Fund assessment of potential barriers for families to program access (transportation, etc.)
- 4 - All child care providers (home, center, etc.) should be valued and able to participate in prek system.



### Community Collaboration

Case Study: Wisconsin

Action Items for Success

- 1 - Establish state and local early childhood councils with diverse representation - builds relationships and support for collaboration.
- 2 - Policymakers should invest in collaborative resources (coaches, technical assistance teams, facilitators, etc.).
- 3 - Give prek funding priority to communities that commit to a collaborative approach.
- 4 - Level playing fields (quality - funding - accountability).



### Professional Development

Case Study: North Carolina

Action Items for Success:

- 1 - Degree and professional development programs should be aligned with state early learning guidelines.
- 2 - Establish mentoring programs that focus on teaching practices; all teachers should have access to support, regardless of their setting.
- 3 - Provide teachers with financial incentives to pursue life-long education/training.
- 4 - Monitor and evaluate professional development investments to find out what works and what doesn't.

## **\*\*Local Discussion\*\***

Sharon spoke about the work being done in ND regarding the future of early childhood. She also explained the prek plan proposed in ND (which consists of two 1/2-days).

Attendees' Concerns for Our State:

- Teacher credential requirements
- Transportation for parents as a challenge
- Access - If a local school doesn't want to participate, children in that area won't have access. Consideration of incentives for schools to participate.

## **Pre-K Now Question and Answer Session**

- **Boys** - be careful to meet their needs; higher expulsion rates (even in prek); developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- **Engaging Families** - Parents should be considered partners in the delivery of prek. Prek is about children and families as a whole (comprehensive). It's more about relationships (positive, respectful - between parents and teachers) than involvement in the classroom/workshops.
- **Keeping Trained Teachers in EC** - challenge; will go to schools for better pay/benefits; states should be sure to consider this.

## **Message from Governor Edward G. Rendell**

- Pre-K Now's "Pre-K Star" for 2007
- Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts Program
- How do we focus on prek in tight economic times? Rendell suggests emphasizing that prek offers:
  - large economic returns
  - improved school readiness
  - immediate financial relief to parents
  - quality workforce

## **Other Key Messages from Pre-K Now Panelists**

- Support for prek seems to be bipartisan. States that are leaders in prek come from both "red and blue" sides.
- Current economy is a challenge but we don't want it to result in fewer opportunities for children.
- Obama proposed \$10 Billion package in campaign which was to cover pregnant moms to 5 year olds. Must be sure funding is adequate.



**Visit <http://preknow.org/> to view a recording of the webcast.**