



## PROFILES: SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

<b>State:</b>	Georgia
<b>Partnership name:</b>	Georgia Pre-K Week
<b>Web site(s):</b>	<a href="http://www.gaprekweek.com">www.gaprekweek.com</a>
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### 1. Background



In 2011, the Georgia Legislature reduced the lottery allocation for Georgia's Pre-K from \$350 million to \$300 million, prompting Voices for Georgia's Children (Voices) to design an advocacy strategy that would increase legislators' understanding and support for Georgia Pre-K in the future. The strategy was to create Georgia Pre-K Week and to schedule every legislator to attend a state-funded pre-K class in his or her home district to experience the value of a quality early education program. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) agreed to collaborate with Voices in communicating with Pre-K programs and actively

engaging in Georgia Pre-K Week. The success of the program in the first three years motivated DECAL to offer financial support to continue the program in 2014. It also demonstrated value for corporations that allowed the program to secure two large corporations as financial sponsors and participants for 2014.

### 2. Mission and Goals

As stated in the contract between Voices and DECAL, "Georgia Pre-k Week is designed to engage lawmakers and civic leaders in visiting Georgia Pre-K classrooms in their local communities to build public commitment for early learning from birth to third grade." The mission and goals evolved from the early

program goal that was focused on pre-K only to encompassing birth to third grade because of the policy agenda of Voices and the expanding vision of DECAL. Because Georgia's Pre-K is a public-private partnership with child care centers, public schools, and DECAL, visits during Georgia Pre-K Week include comprehensive tours of classrooms from infant-toddler through pre-K in child care centers.

### 3. Governance and Partnership Members

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The partnership does not have a formal governance structure. A contract exists between Voices and DECAL that describes the work, including the engagement of nonprofit organizations as partners and corporations as supporting sponsors and participants. There are usually 10 – 14 nonprofit partners whose role is to assign their executives or board members to accompany legislators on pre-K visits or to visit pre-K classrooms that celebrate Georgia Pre-K Week without an assigned legislator but with invited local VIPs. Corporate sponsors provide financial support but also, through a contract or grant proposal, agree to engage their employees and executives in reading to children during Pre-K Week; accompanying legislators; and advertising their support for Georgia Pre-K Week to customers, employees, and the community.



### 4. Funding and Other Resources

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DECAL helps to fund Georgia Pre-K Week in a flat fee contract with Voices. In addition, Voices seeks corporate partnerships that provide additional funding and in-kind resources such as books, printing, and postage. Funds support both direct expenses and the staffing provided by Voices.

### 5. Activities

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#### *March*

Launch Georgia Pre-K Week at the State Capitol during the Legislative Session. Place two children's books and an invitation letter on the chamber desk of each legislator on the day of the launch. The letter invites them to bring the book to a pre-K center in their home district during Georgia Pre-K Week. Staff join legislators in the well or gallery of the chambers for the reading of resolutions declaring the first week in October as Georgia Pre-K Week. Staff also bring a costumed book character or other notable to the Capitol for 3 – 4 hours for photo opportunities and book signings. A local author and book should be invited to attend the event if possible. In the past, *Pete the Cat* books have been used, incorporating the *Pete the Cat* logo with the author and illustrator's permission.

#### *May/June*

Host a meeting of prospective nonprofit partners to confirm their commitments to Georgia Pre-K Week. Nonprofit partners such as the Junior Leagues, Georgia Public Library Association, YMCAs, Georgia Child Care Association, United Ways, etc. sign up to assign an executive or board member to accompany legislators on their visits. This is an important demonstration that support for early learning comes from other community leaders, not just parents and teachers. In 2014, the two corporate sponsors assigned their branch managers and executives to accompany legislators.

## July

Send invitation letter to the homes or offices of all legislators reminding them that it is time to schedule their Georgia Pre-K visits. Follow up with an email and a link to an online registration where they select a date and time from drop-down menus.

## August

Secure list of recommended pre-K centers from DECAL. Email all centers that Pre-K Week will be held in October and encourage them to plan and host their own local events. Link to a registration site where they can also access online tools such as fact sheets, sample invitation letters, sample press releases, sample Facebook posts, and tweets. Offer signs or books as incentives to register and share information.



## August and September

Continue contacts and scheduling. Assign legislators to preferred centers and notify centers of assignments. Also notify partners and corporate sponsors of legislators' commitments and confirm assignments.

## October

Prepare media in key markets of legislative leadership. Host Georgia Pre-K Week. Follow up with thank you letters to all participants.

## 6. Evaluation and Outcomes

### Key Accomplishments from 2013:

- One hundred seventy-five elected officials, including the Governor, First Lady, State Commissioners and other state leaders made more than 200 visits to Pre-K classrooms;
- Sixty of the 125 elected leaders and commissioners were accompanied by an advocate from Voices or one of its 13 partners;
- Two hundred eighty-seven pre-K centers hosted visitors for Pre-K Week independent of Voices-sponsored legislative visits;
- Ninety-eight (of 159) counties were the sites of Georgia Pre-K Week visits, including legislative visits and center-sponsored visits;
- Over the last three years during Georgia Pre-K Week:
  - ◆ Seventy-two percent (169) of all current state legislators have visited a classroom;
  - ◆ More than 450 Pre-K programs have hosted visitors;
  - ◆ Thirteen nonprofit partners have provided local leaders to join legislative visits; and
  - ◆ Seventy-eight percent of all counties have had participating centers.
- Fifty members of the Governor's Leadership team participated in Georgia Pre-K Week by reading to students in pre-K classrooms across the State. These staff members are younger appointees across the departments who are part of a leadership development program.

***Media Relations:***

- Twenty-nine versions of the Pre-K Week press release were created and customized for distribution by the pre-K centers, the legislators, and 23 lawmakers identified as priority contacts for Voices;
- Thirty-six media outlets around the State were targeted resulting in 140 phone calls and emails;
- Seventy-four stories appeared in 60 media outlets across the State including a story in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution;
- Media pieces covered 36 leaders, including 10 of the 23 targeted by Voices;
- The Augusta Chronicle printed an opinion piece by Voices board member Clint Bryant which was retweeted by the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan;
- On Twitter, there were 388 posts using the hashtag #gaprekweek; those posts had 361 retweets; and
- One hundred eight Facebook posts used the #gaprekweek hashtag as well.

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