

# Start Early: Invest in the Youngest Learners

CEELO Early Childhood Roundtable

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MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

**Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.**

State Superintendent of Education  
President, CCSSO Board of Directors

# Challenges for Mississippi

- Highest rate of child poverty in the U.S.
  - 1 in 3 children living in poverty
  - 1 in 2 African-American children living in poverty
- Bottom 20 percent for per-pupil spending and educational attainment



# Strategies for States

- Build capacity of public *and* private early learning providers
  - Share standards, guidelines and resources
  - Provide free professional development
- Use data to advocate for expanding access to pre-K
- Partner with philanthropic groups to strengthen pre-K system



# Mississippi's Successes & Outcomes

- Students completing public or private pre-K scored **above** the target score for kindergarten-readiness (while the majority of all entering kindergarteners scored **below** the target score)
- Pre-K students exit Early Learning Collaboratives with the state's highest rate of kindergarten readiness





# Mississippi's Successes & Outcomes

- National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) recognized Mississippi as one of only six states that meet all 10 original benchmarks for quality pre-K and 9 of 10 new standards
- 93.2% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders met reading requirement for promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 2018, up from 85% in 2015



# Future Steps

- Focus on birth-to-grade-3 continuum through education, health and family partnerships
- Build capacity of early learning providers to increase parental engagement
- Partner with Head Start to improve teaching and learning
- Join CCSSO initiative if early learning is one of your priorities



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*“We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.”*

- Ron Edmonds

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[www.mdek12.org](http://www.mdek12.org)