

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION  
THE OBAMA PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE:  
A CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, May 29, 2013

**Introduction:**

RON HASKINS  
Senior Fellow and Co-Director, Center on Children and Families  
The Brookings Institution

**Keynote Address:**

THE HONORABLE ARNE DUNCAN  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education

**Discussant:**

THE HONORABLE NANCY JOHNSON  
Former Congresswoman (R-CT)  
U.S. House of Representatives

**Panelists:**

RON HASKINS  
Senior Fellow and Co-Director, Center on Children and Families  
The Brookings Institution

RUSS WHITEHURST  
Senior Fellow and Director, Brown Center on Education Policy  
The Brookings Institution

ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ  
Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy  
White House

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

W. STEVEN BARNETT  
Director  
National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University

JENNI OWEN  
Director of Policy Initiatives, Center for Child and Family Policy  
Duke University

\* \* \* \* \*

## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HASKINS: Well, welcome to Brookings. My name is Ron Haskins, and along with Belle Sawhill I run the Center on Children and Families here. Belle gave me careful instructions before we came in to talk slowly, which I'm not going to do because we're in a hurry.

You have bios for everybody so I'm going to give very brief introductions. I want to talk more about the substance of our event and of the administration's policy than introducing the speakers.

I think the most important thing to say is that the Obama Administration has been the most venturesome, maybe the most risky in its education policy of any president I think in my lifetime in their attempt to improve education in America. The Race to the Top provided well over \$4 billion for innovative practices in K-12 education on a competitive basis, so it didn't go to every state. This caused a lot of heartache. And then second, investing in innovation, so-called I3, Investing in Innovation, is bringing evidence of successful education programs and rigorous evaluation to center stage in education programming.

So along with the huge impact of the Institute of Education Sciences on education research under Russ Whitehurst's wonderful leadership, and Russ will be on the second panel, literally, for the first time we are building an evidence-based series of educational practices that hold great promise for improving K-12 education. Imagination and leadership, not to mention the political boldness of Secretary Duncan and his team are directly responsible for

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

much of this progress. Now, the secretary and President Obama are proposing the biggest increase in preschool education funding since the creation of Head Start in 1965.

We've organized this event to examine both the substantive and political prospects for this vitally important initiative. We'll first hear from Secretary Duncan about the preschool plan and the arguments on its behalf, and then following Secretary Duncan, we'll hear from Nancy Johnson, the former chair of the Human Resources Subcommittee for Ways and Means, and one of the most knowledgeable republicans on social policy to serve in Congress in recent years. I once said that introducing Mrs. Johnson and someone in the audience yelled out, "That's no achievement." (Laughter) In 24 years in Congress, Mrs. Johnson was the leading expert on preschool programs, as well as healthcare and played a vital role in passage of the refundable portion of the Child Tax Credit. We thank them both for coming.

Secretary Duncan.

(Applause)

MR. DUNCAN: Well, thank you so much, Ron, and Brookings for hosting this discussion about President Obama's landmark proposal for high-quality preschool. And you guys have been great supporters of high-quality preschool. Thank you so much. And I'm so happy to have the chance to listen to Congresswoman Johnson. I didn't know I grew up in the same neighborhood, went to the same school K-12, so maybe not so surprising that we agree on these kinds of issues. But thank you so much for your hard work throughout your

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

entire career.

As all of you know, and as Ron talked about, the president has proposed a groundbreaking plan for supporting and preparing our nation's children from birth through the age of five in a seamless continuum of opportunity. For children ages zero to three, the president's proposal includes a new early Head Start childcare partnership at the Department of Health and Human Services to improve quality and it expands the administration's Home Visiting Initiative. And Home Visiting is showing great results.

As anyone who has ever had to care for a new baby knows, we all need all the help and advice that we can get. And that's often especially the case for struggling single parents, first-time parents, and teenage parents. For four-year-olds, the president's proposal would create a new federal-state partnership to enable states to provide voluntary, universal, high-quality preschool for children from low and moderate income families.

These are critical long-term investments in early learning that our country and our children desperately need. They are the best, most effective tool we have to close both achievement -- and I like to talk about those opportunities gaps -- to close both the achievement and the opportunity gaps. We know that children from low income families begin school on average 12 to 14 months behind their peers in language development and pre-reading skills. They start school as a five-year-old in the fall already behind and often as we know, they actually never catch up.

We know that nationwide, for those children that are lucky enough

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

to enroll in a preschool program, fewer than three in 10 four-year-olds, less than 30 percent, are in programs that are of high quality. Simply put, the current status quo is both morally and educationally unacceptable. And from a long-term economic competitiveness standpoint, it's actually just plain dumb.

The United States badly lags behind other nations in supporting early learning. Out of 29 industrial nations, the U.S. devotes less public spending to early learning as a percentage of GDP than 24 of our competitors. And the United States is actually 28<sup>th</sup> among OECD nations in our enrollment of four-year-olds in early learning. Simply not good enough. That's an embarrassment and it's a missed opportunity for a huge return on investment.

Rigorous, longitudinal work by folks such as Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman, also at the University of Chicago, found a return of \$7 to every \$1 of public investment in high-quality preschool programs. Children who went to preschool have fewer special needs as they move through school. Less go into special ed. They get better jobs. They have better health and they commit less crime. A seven to one ROI. That's a much better return than any of us would typically get in the stock market and real estate or anywhere else that we can put our money.

Obviously, no study is perfect or fully represents our diverse nation, but the cumulative evidence over four decades is absolutely compelling. High-quality preschool gives children the foundation they need to succeed not just in school but in life. And let me just briefly mention a couple of other examples.

Four-year-olds who have gone through Tulsa, Oklahoma's preschool program start kindergarten seven months ahead in pre-literacy skills and four months ahead in math skills. The Tulsa program has small class sizes and well-trained teachers, both features of President Obama's proposal. A recent evaluation of the Great Start Readiness program in Michigan found that 58 percent of the state preschool participants graduated from high school on time; 58 percent compared to 43 percent of nonparticipants from similar backgrounds. The impact of Michigan's preschool program on on-time graduation rates was even larger among students of color; 60 percent versus 37 percent. Think about the power of that, almost doubling high school graduation rates. And in New Jersey, the follow-up to the Abbott Preschool Program, a study continues to find that high-quality preschool programs increase achievement in language arts and literacy, math, and science through fourth and fifth grade.

Despite all the evidence, dramatically expanding high-quality preschool poses real challenges, and these days, getting folks here in Washington to do anything productive together quite frankly is a challenge. But for all that reality, for all the dysfunction we see here in Washington, I'm actually confident. I'm confident, I'm hopeful that these challenges can be met because I see the leadership already across the country from Republicans and Democrats and Independents. 27 governors, more than half our nation's governors, as well as the mayor of D.C., referenced early learning in their State of the State addresses this year. These state leaders, regardless of party affiliation,

recognize that early learning helps prepare young children for educational success, provides crucial support for families, and ultimately strengthens our nation's economy.

As Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper said in his State of the State address, "Early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make to assure Colorado's kids are competitive and prepared for the future. Washington's governor Jay Inslee also gets it. He said, and I quote, "We need to invest more, where we get the biggest return in high-quality early learning programs. Governors from states as diverse as Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Vermont, and West Virginia, all of them, all called for expanded access for preschool for more of our nation's four-year-olds.

And when I talked to Alabama Governor Robert Bentley, a republican, after the president unveiled his preschool proposal at the State of the Union, Governor Bentley told me he thought the president had stolen many of his best lines. So clearly we owe him one, so I want to quote from Governor Bentley. He said, "I truly believe by allowing greater access to a voluntary pre-K education we will change the lives of children in Alabama."

And Governor Bentley isn't just talking. He is absolutely walking the walk. Just last week he signed a bill investing more than \$28 million in Alabama's preschool program to provide 1,500 more children with access to high-quality preschool. And we're seeing many other governors working hard in providing real leadership to do what's right for their kids and ultimately for their



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

states. Governor Susanna Martinez says this year the state will be able to support all 40 preschool programs across New Mexico that applied for funding, and she recognizes that to get a child reading by the end of third grade you must start exposing them to books, letters, and sounds long before they enter school.

This Friday, I'll be traveling to Georgia, our nation's first universal preschool program for four-year-olds, in a state that President Obama highlighted as a leader for high-quality preschool when he visited Georgia in February. In Atlanta, I'll be standing with Governor Deal, another Republican who made a promise in his State of the State address that he recently, like Governor Bentley in Alabama, that he recently kept. Governor Deal requested and the legislature recently approved a \$13 million increase in pre-K funding to add 10 additional days to the preschool year and increase the salaries of deserving teachers. That is state leadership that helps children, and that's exactly what the president's proposal seeks to support.

The Preschool for All plan would help all states keep their promises to our children and ensure that more than a million additional kids, regardless of zip code or family background or income, are ready to succeed in school and beyond.

I've had the opportunity recently to visit preschool classrooms all over the country, including Delaware, California, and most recently in Michigan. Governor Rick Snyder and I visited the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, where 50 years ago a group of preschoolers first participated in a famous study that has found preschools benefits continue well into the adult years. In Detroit,

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

Governor Snyder and I sat scrunched together in tiny chairs and read the book, *The Rainbow Fish*, to four-year-olds, who were fortunate enough to be getting an outstanding, high-quality preschool program. And like other governors, Governor Snyder tells me there are not enough programs to meet the real need in his state of Michigan.

Yet despite tough budgets and difficult economic times, these governors and many, many others are absolute champions for young children. They are prioritizing early learning because they know that in America, education must fulfill its role as the great equalizer. It must be the one force that overcomes differences in race and privilege and national origin.

In Washington, we are ready to follow their lead and support their efforts to transform the life chances of our nation's children. We're asking Congress to help support these governors in all the states in the historic federal-state partnership. The president's Birth to Five proposal is not only an essential investment to build a foundation for prosperity and entry into the middle class; it is simply the right thing to do.

As Governor Corbett said in his State of the State address this year, "Why do we want to spend more on these programs? Because every child in Pennsylvania deserves an equal start in life and I intend to see that promise kept." Like Governor Corbett, I believe that every child in America deserves an equal start in life -- in rural America, in our cities, and in our suburbs.

So let's invest to bring every child to the same starting line. Help us get our nation's public schools out -- out of the catch-up business, let's keep

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

our promises and reinvigorate the nation's commitment to equal opportunity. It's time. Our children and our country, we cannot wait.

Thank you so much, and I look forward to the questions later.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MRS. JOHNSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. I've admired you the years that you've been secretary. It's been a great asset to the nation to have someone who really has been at the front line in a city like Chicago and who respects the art of teaching as well as the art of parenting and the need for autonomy, a certain degree of autonomy of the systems throughout the country.

Before I ran for Congress I served in the State Senate of Connecticut, and before that I was an extremely active parent in the children's school system and led many initiatives to improve our public schools in a town that's just like Chicago, but smaller. But all the ethnic diversity, all the problems, and there's just so much we can do and I think the vision that the president has is exactly the right vision. And it's one that we've struggled with as a nation for many years and our Zero to Three program has actually saved the lives of many a child if you look at them as whole human beings. Some of the other things that we've done have really made big strides. So looking now at that whole zero to five as the challenge is really the right thing to do.

I would just say that as a very locally footed person, and also as chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means that does

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

frankly all the social services legislating outside of the Education and Labor Committee, I'm very, very conscious of the extraordinary diversity of infrastructure, philosophy, and vision of our states. We did lots of work in foster care. It took us a year and a half to get the Education and Labor Committee to have a joint hearing with the Human Resources Committee on worker training when we were doing welfare and how do you help women get off welfare?

So the silo issue is not to be underestimated. In my district a third of the towns had a smaller population than a battleship does, and they had to give up on some of the federal programs that they were entitled to because they really couldn't handle the administrative burden. We have Head Start. We have Early School Readiness. Connecticut has and each state has its own Head Start equivalent and Early Start and Preschool programs. So it is irresponsible, it's irresponsible, not to bring the thinking of smart government to the table of preschool. It's not only that we have some programs like Home Visiting and Birth to Three that are very successful. There are programs in New York City and in the rural parts of Connecticut that aim at this same population that are very successful, so I hope we don't bring to this, Mr. Secretary, too narrow a vision of what preschool education should be. I'm also the grandmother of two daughters who both held their children back from entering kindergarten for a year to everybody's great advantage and success.

So just keeping in mind the extraordinary capability of communities, if they have the resources, and how close they are to the diverse needs of their own people so that we don't want to be too rigid. One of the

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

programs that we most successful in the schools of New Britain which were having as great difficulties as any in the country, was the fact that a group of teachers together could ask for federal money to help them do what they needed in their classroom. And one principal in the first really heavily Hispanic school in my district said to me, "I don't even go to their meetings anymore because I squelch their ideas, or at least they feel that." So don't underestimate the power that as the president talks about this and as you talk about this, what will happen out there in the hinterland. And don't let this become another silo. In fact, you have the power to do what has been done in some other areas. It was a federal power that changed how communities dealt with homelessness because you couldn't get any more money from HUD unless your community put themselves to the task of not only how do you shelter but how do you provide education? How do you provide health care for a homeless person? How do you look at the whole person?

So we have to look not just at the child for whom coming to kindergarten is absolutely essential if they're going to have a successful life, but we have to look at the family because the more the mother can become involved -- and we have some school programs that do this, so we can build on them -- all the siblings of the kids who are in grade school want to go to grade school. It's a big deal. And if the mother and the children are allowed to come, and if those programs can adjust for working mothers, you educate the child but you educate the mother in that crucial year of four years old -- three years, four years, five years.

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

And so I think we can't have just the classroom model in mind, as important as that is, and I think Republicans are very interested in preschool education, and not just Bennett. I know lots of Republicans who are. Governor Rell, the former governor of Connecticut, tried hard to initiate a universal preschool program and couldn't get the legislature to go along. So it's not a question of the vision, although it is. And the leadership of putting forward the vision, absolutely. Hugely important to change. But we have to build on the blocks that are there, and in every state there are successes. And if states could just begin by doing an inventory of success, regardless of where it resided or under what program name, we would -- that state would know a lot more about how they can achieve your goals.

So I just wanted to congratulate you on the vision. I want to thank you and the president for your leadership. And I hope that you will not contribute yet another silo to the silos that are, in my mind, the biggest impediment. And I say that thoughtfully. The biggest impediment to real change. The children have already changed. They learn differently. Look at the way they use all that technology that is such a struggle for me. And so the way they are going to learn, the way they are going to share with each other, the way they are going to move along is different. And since they always did learn differently, those technologies will take advantage of that and feed to it. And so must our teachers.

I like the idea though of this partnership. I like your emphasis on X mastery excellence of preschool teachers and coaching. All that coaching

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

could be translated into a non-classroom setting as well. So thank you for being here and I look forward to the panels.

(Applause)

MR. HASKINS: So Mrs. Johnson, you'll be glad to know the first thing I want to ask about, and I agree with you is crucial, is this issue of silos. So we have a huge amount of money in Head Start. We have a fairly substantial amount of money in daycare. The states have close to \$5 billion in state pre-K programs. We have Title I. We have Early Head Start. So if you put it all together for early childhood, there's probably about \$30 billion out there between the federal government and the states. Is there anything -- is it part of your vision that you're going to make it easier for states to coordinate these programs? And in particular, I've constantly heard from states, most recently yesterday and one of our panelists will talk about this, that Head Start is often difficult to coordinate with for state preschool programs and other states' money for the preschool area. So what is your vision of how you can help use this initiative to knit these programs together and make it easier for the states?

MR. DUNCAN: Yeah, well, I absolutely agree with the premise that historically the silos have been a huge barrier to children's success and opportunity, and those silos frankly start here in Washington. I will tell you Kathleen Sebelius and I, my good friend and partner at (inaudible), have spent an inordinate amount of time together. We've jointly administered the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge which never happened before. She started calling me her work husband, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

(Laughter) But I think we're demonstrating in both a very real and also symbolic way that that dysfunction, those days are over and we are joined -- literally joined at the hip. We have days that we do breakfast together and lunch together, and then she asks what are we doing for dinner?

The goal here is just really simple. That HHS would focus on the zero to three, we would focus on four, and the goal would be to have children entering kindergarten at five ready to be successful. So whatever ideas folks have of things we can continue to improve to coordinate, but again, through programs we've already done together I think we're cutting through those silos in a very real way. People are feeling that at the state level, at the local level. She and I addressed the Head Start National Association Conference a couple weeks ago together, and for all that investment that we're making, at the end of the day the fact still remains that less than three in 10 four-year-olds have access to high quality pre-K. So there's tremendous unmet need out there. That's what we have to meet. We need to meet it efficiently and thoughtfully and productively, but to act like there's enough money to help all the kids who need it today, that's simply not the case. We have a tremendous number of families and kids who need more than what they have available.

MR. HASKINS: Nancy, do you want to add anything to that?

MRS. JOHNSON: No.

MR. HASKINS: Okay.

MRS. JOHNSON: Well, I should add one thing. That's very interesting what you say about you and the secretary. What I worry about is that



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

little rural school and it doesn't get down. And the states are incredibly bureaucratic and they take the bureaucracy you put in, then they imitate it and repeat that and then, so it is very serious. And if you could perhaps put more public stress on that and talk to states and governors, go to the Governor's Association and maybe be more specific because both parties talk about smart government but nobody does much about it. So I'm glad to hear that. All I can say is faster forward.

MR. HASKINS: So Nancy, this bill is not going to pass unless it gets through the House, and it seems that the House especially, but to some extent the Senate as well, the Republicans are determined to stop almost everything that the president wants to do. Do you see any prospect that Republicans could sign on to not only a preschool program that spends \$75 million -- billion dollars, but also a tax increase on a syntax granted, but still. So what are the prospects that the House would come around and enter into negotiations, do something serious, not accept it as it is, but, like in the old days, let's have a negotiation. Do you see that happening?

MRS. JOHNSON: Absolutely, it's possible. If you look at what's happening about the exchanges, I was fascinated to find that the deals that are being made have to do with allowing states to offer the people above 100 percent of poverty up to 138 percent the right to be on the exchange and use the Medicaid money to be in the exchange. But get this, because this is the critical thing. They're allowed to offer them programs. Now, Medicare does not allow this. They're allowed to offer them programs that reward wellness, reward

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

sticking to your regimen if you're a diabetic, reward health, and serious lifestyle changes. Now, those kinds of plans are proving all over the employment sector to save money and improve people's lives. But Medicare explicitly does not allow any variation in co-payments and so on and so forth. So the structure of Medicare doesn't allow the assistance and support and the provision of special supports to people who need it the most.

And so I was very interested. This was explicit in one of the states that recently made the agreement that they could offer these kinds. I think it was Iowa. So if we could just do that now rather than later, that way we don't use the word "block grant," which everybody seems to hate, but actually, you've got to have far more state flexibility and autonomy, and it's a time when you could actually say we will eliminate the requirements here if you'll eliminate those in your state grants. And so the money gets right down.

It's a big deal. It is complicated, but you could work all kinds of deals with the states to do this. And if you could get two or three models out there with the states that does evidence the next world of collaboration in a federalist system, because I myself have been astounded at the absolute intransigence of the concept of federalism when you think how much it has changed from where we are now to 50 years ago, 100 years ago. And I think with the secretary's experience, he could do that. So I think if we could model that then the issue of how much is going to be saved administratively at the state level and the federal level gets folded into funding this. And then if you need a little extra money you can get a little extra money, but you can't start out just

pass a new tax for a new mandate for four-year-olds to go to school.

MR. HASKINS: But Nancy, here's the shocker. You can't get any of those wonderful benefits unless the House approves the legislation.

MRS. JOHNSON: Well, that's why the House --

MR. HASKINS: So my question is why are you optimistic about the House doing it?

MRS. JOHNSON: Because I think there's kind of a bipartisan approach that could be taken, and needs to be taken at the beginning, not at the end of the process. Frontload it and I think you'll have support.

MR. HASKINS: So there's an advisor --

MR. DUNCAN: I'm right with her. I'm talking to a number of congressional House Republicans who are interested. And again, you have an opportunity here that doesn't normally exist. We talked a lot about the bipartisan governor support. You have many CEOs, many of whom happen to be Republicans who are hugely supportive because they see the ROI. You have military generals, military leaders who are fully supportive. You have states attorneys and police chiefs who love this because they know the reductions in crime. Faith-based community. Parents, you can build a very, very interesting coalition that doesn't exist on most issues that transcends all the silliness that doesn't exist here. So again, anything productive these days is definitely a heavy lift, but if there's going to be any area where folks can come together, I think this one is ripe and it is unlikely allies that makes me think there's a real opportunity.

MR. HASKINS: You mentioned several Republican governors. I

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

know you visited the state already and you're soon going to Georgia, and I understand from your talk and from your staff that you've talked with other Republican governors. Do you see that there's a way that you could use Republican governors or that they, of their own volition, would try to influence their representatives from their state and the senators to vote to support something like this?

MR. DUNCAN: So again, we're having conversations with governors and their staff but these guys aren't just talking. They're walking the walk. They are making these investments. They are trying to put, in tough economic times, real dollars behind this. But folks like Governor Snyder, which was my most recent visit, he's trying to invest but in everything he's doing, he still doesn't have enough resources. He still has a big unmet need. The idea that the federal government could partner, not a mandate. We wouldn't go to any state where they didn't want to partner with us, but where states wanted to expand access and make sure it's high quality to have some federal leverage, some matching dollars there, that's a pretty attractive proposition.

MRS. JOHNSON: I think though that you really do have to, because I remember talking to the federal agencies in my district and they had done phenomenal things to improve their efficiency. And the world just didn't know it. They knew that manufacturing was doing some of those things. They didn't know that the federal agencies were doing some of those things. So I think really you need to work to sort of frontload your conversation about smart government. We don't want just another bureaucracy and work with the

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

governors to be able to help people see these savings are going to be there for you as state taxpayers and for you as federal taxpayers but we're going to reuse the money. Your taxes won't go down but they won't go up but we'll have better output. Then if we need extra money we'll talk about where that should come from. But don't lead with the tax.

MR. DUNCAN: For me, the challenge, I mean, the bipartisan issue is a real one. The bigger challenge for me is that most politicians, regardless of party, they're wired to think short-term. You know, they think about the next election. And this is the ultimate long-term investment. This is a 10-, 20-, 30-, 40-year play, and the question is can you get politicians who normally think about the next new cycle to think all the benefits, you know, President Obama will see none of these benefits during his time as president. But this is arguably the biggest gift we can give to the country. So the question is can you get politicians to think about a much longer time horizon than they normally do? If we do that this becomes frankly a no-brainer. If we can't do that, this one isn't going to move.

MR. HASKINS: And what do you think of Mrs. Johnson's idea about a lot of discussion in the beginning, try to minimize the discussion of the tax increase and try to focus on the substance. Do you feel that that would work in the House and then Republicans in the Senate?

MR. DUNCAN: It's the only way we work. And again, just another example, the waivers we've done around no child left behind, different topic, but that's been a total bipartisan issue. And whether it's South Carolina or Maryland

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

or Michigan or Massachusetts, we partner with folks across the political spectrum in a very productive way. My whole mantra is sort of loose on means. Give people lots of room to move and to be innovative, to be flexible. Tie it on goals. Have a high bar. And frankly, this has been a really underreported story by the media because there's been so little controversy. With all these people working together, doing all this creativity, no one is yelling and screaming at each other so people lose interest. So I think people know we have always worked by listening very, very closely, having a high bar, giving people lots of room to move. And so this is not a new tactic or a turn for us. The only way things get done is if at the front end real input is heard and we make adjustments and we compromise and you never let the (inaudible) the good. But that's been our mode of operation from day one.

MR. HASKINS: Another thing that's fallen through the cracks a little bit, and this administration has clearly done more than any other administration, is Home Visiting. And already, a very large initiative, almost every state has money from this initiative. In order to qualify for the federal money, which is a neat thing you guys do, is make them do the right thing to qualify for the money. Some people don't like that, but they organize their programs much better than they were before and coordinated them. You made them use the federal dollars only on programs that had demonstrated evidence of success and rigorous experiments. And now you propose another big piece of money for Home Visiting. Are you optimistic that that can be passed? And how does that fit into your vision?

MR. DUNCAN: Yeah, so again, for me this can't be -- the part coming out of the Department of Education is the largest share, the \$75 billion for pre-K, for four-year-olds, but this is really about a \$92 billion investment, and it has to be zero to four -- it has to be zero to five to get kids ready for school. But we were just talking on the car ride on the way over, this idea, this reality that kids in more affluent homes, the kind of homes we grew up in, Hyde Park, by the time they're four-years-old, they have heard 30 million more words than children coming from welfare families. Thirty million more words. Think about that. Think about what that does for the rest of your life.

MR. HASKINS: You must live in Washington.

MR. DUNCAN: There's 50 million more words here.

And so if we're serious about closing these opportunity gaps, yes, we need high-quality pre-K at 4, but even that's late. And so getting to these young moms, getting to these teenage moms, getting these first-time parents, helping them understand that you can't just put your baby in front of the TV and you can't say "bad child," "bad kid" all the time. Every parent wants the best for their kids, they just don't always know. So having it, you know, not at four-years-old but at four-days-old and four-weeks-old and four-months old help all the way through. That can help parents who traditionally really struggle do what they want to do which is give their child a chance at a decent life.

MR. HASKINS: All right, audience, we'll give you a chance to ask questions.

Now, let me caution you. Please ask a question, not make a long

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

statement. Wait till the microphone comes. Tell us your name and where you're located. And then ask a succinct question.

Somebody with a microphone is coming here? Oh, right there. Here. Right here. Thank you.

MS. FISHER: Thank you. Annabelle Fisher, *Alexandria News*, but I'm also here as a licensed clinical social worker who has worked with Head Start. And my suggestions are, and having worked with Head Start, it is a good program. It has shown outcomes for pre-K. I would like to suggest -- in Seattle, I did this as a home-based contractor and in the school -- I would like to suggest that you raise the guidelines, the financial guidelines so more families can participate in the Head Start program, and that will allow more families and children to get involved. It's too low right now.

The second thing I would recommend --

MR. HASKINS: Is there a question in there somewhere? Are you?

MS. FISHER: Oh, I better rephrase that. I'm sorry.

Will you consider raising the guidelines for families to get above the low income to enter into the Head Start program?

My second question, will you consider charging families of all income levels who participate in Head Start, because they get everything free. And so if you charge them something, if you have very low income, 50 cents, nobody has to know how much, once you --

MR. HASKINS: Okay. You've reached a limit of two questions.



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

MS. FISHER: -- you own it. You own it and you participate.

MR. HASKINS: We've got a lot of people who want to ask questions, please. So there are two questions.

MS. FISHER: I love the Head Start program and I think there's too much duplication.

MR. HASKINS: Ma'am. Ma'am. Can you stop, please? Grab the microphone.

MS. FISHER: Grab the microphone. And don't forget the parents, they need to be involved.

MR. DUNCAN: So a couple things. Having not just states but have parents have skin in the game is a really important thought and sort of figuring out how we do that. And we talk about making sure families have access up to 200 percent of the poverty line. People may not realize, 200 percent of the poverty line for a family of four is like 45,000, 46,000. That's a tough living for a family of four. So we want to start with the most disadvantaged families. If states want to go beyond that they have the right to do that. The only thing I didn't mention, if states are doing a great job in the zero to four space, they could use our resources to make kindergarten for five-year-olds full day. So again, we want to provide a lot of flexibility and creativity. Start with the kids most at need but work up that economic trajectory as far as we can.

MR. HASKINS: Another question.

MS. CHAUHAN: Hi, I'm Shree Chauhan and I'm with the National Urban League.

My question is how are you going to connect some of the goals for the Head Start program with the Early Childhood Initiative? How are these things going to align together because there's sort of different goals for each program.

MR. DUNCAN: So again, the goal would be to have HHS focus on zero to three. Have, over time, us focus on the four-year-olds, and then have all the children -- the goal is to have children entering kindergarten ready to learn and ready to be successful. That has to be the benchmark of how all these things are assessed, starting with Home Visiting to Head Start to Pre-K. Our children entering kindergarten, with the socialization and literacy skills they need to be successful.

Really quickly, we talked a lot about sort of the academic benefits, the math and the literacy. I've talked a lot to James Heckman, who is a Nobel Prize winning economist, who is a lot smarter than I am who has done so much of this research. And it's fascinating talking to him. I'm trying to get him to break this down for me. But in terms of these long-term, four decade long benefits, this return on investment, he feels probably the majority of the benefit is not the academic dividends; it's the non-cognitive skills. The ability to sit in a room like this and self-regulate and have self-control. Grit, resilience, and those skills that again frankly in middle class homes there's more opportunity to learn those things. In more disadvantaged communities there just isn't as much opportunity. So it's fascinating to me. It's not just the academic piece but this other piece is hugely, hugely important for young people not getting locked up, not becoming pregnant, graduating from high school and getting a good job long term.

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

MR. HASKINS: Another question?

Yes. Right here in the front. What is your name, young lady?

MS. SAWHILL: Bel Sawhill. Thank you to both of you for your terrific remarks.

I guess I want to raise two questions. One is on parenting. I understand Home Visiting does deal with the parenting side of this, but I was very intrigued by what Mrs. Johnson said about the fact that in healthcare there is beginning to be some experimentation with asking for more personal responsibility on the part of clients of, say, Medicaid to go along with the benefits. And I'm wondering if any thought has been given to saying in some of these early childhood programs that there would be a requirement that parents get educated and more knowledgeable about what they need to do in the home along with what needs to happen in the early childhood program itself.

I might just add as a footnote here that we have a model we've developed at Brookings, a very data-rich, longitudinal model, and based on our preliminary results it does show that early childhood education is by far the best thing we can do to provide greater social mobility and we can show the impact of it on a social mobility matrix in America.

MRS. JOHNSON: I really have been terribly impressed with what some of these school-based programs have accomplished in the neighborhood. The mothers with younger siblings come in and they have good curriculum about words and concepts and interpersonal behavior. And I think if you don't get to the whole family, then you don't build that base behind the child that supports

them when they want to drop out of high school or run off and get married or whatever.

So I hate to see a silo set aside for fourth grade preschool because the challenge to our society is much more human than that, and someone once told me that you go to the obstetricians in town and they can tell you exactly which children -- which parents are going to have difficulty with their children. That is one indicator but single parenthood is a terrible challenge for any parent of any age and we underestimate that. So there are ways you could funnel this money into a community or at least give the community the challenge of how would you make sure that any parent that your physicians, any parent that -- you could use that then not only for words but for the mental health screening. You can catch early family problems.

I was chairman of the Child Guidance Clinic for many, many years at home and we developed a program to go out and educate the parents at PTAs to just show them that you could do something about those programs. And now that there's much less prejudice on that issue, you can fold a lot of that into fourth grade education because the parents, you can get them involved. But if you fail to get them involved you only do half the job.

MR. DUNCAN: Yeah, I think it's been a very consistent concern. It's hugely important how do we engage parents very differently in their own children's education and in their own education. That's obviously part of Head Start's goal today and how we measure parental engagement.

I want to be clear. I don't want to deny access to a child whose

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

dad is locked up and whose mom is on crack. That's exactly the kind of child we need to serve. But we should be holding ourselves accountable for increasing parental involvement in their children's lives and in their education. One thing we haven't talked about is, again, we're really agnostic in terms of who delivers this high quality pre-K, so it could be school systems, it could be non-profits. It could be social service agencies. It could be churches. It could be whoever. So folks, we're the roots in the community, where there's some trust, I think that's so important to engage parents. And again, if we're trying to do this by ourselves we'll do some good. There will be a limit on how far we go. If we get parents actively involved and engaged, their kids I think are in an entirely different trajectory. And how we hold ourselves accountable, how we measure that over time I think will be hugely important to this effort.

MRS. JOHNSON: I would just like to add here one thing here, that it is not well known but the postman school at Columbia developed a Free to Grow program that develops Head Start and is very much more effective because it asks the questions that the whole family needs -- that involves the whole family, like drugs and alcohol. And at first our Head Start people were reluctant to do that but once they got over it they felt so much better. The families did so much better. So we become part, barriers to whole family development because we don't want to talk about the hard things. So I hope you'll look at the Free to Grow. I tried to get the Congress to lay it on Head Start but they were --

MR. HASKINS: It has to be evidence-based though.

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

All right. Well, Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for coming. And Mrs. Johnson, thank you. I really appreciate it. And please join me in thanking them.

XXXTRACK 2 BEGINSXXX

MR. HASKINS: All right. So what a wonderful panel we have here. I'm really looking forward to what they have to say. I think I have some good questions for them.

As is our practice, we'll start out with opening statements and then I'll follow that up with some questions.

So right here on my right -- it doesn't seem right, does it? But Roberto Rodriguez. I've been working with the administration for the last say five or six weeks to plan this event and discuss preschool, and it's pretty obvious to me that Roberto, from the White House, is coordinating things from the White House, so he's playing a very important role in this. And we're really glad to have him here to give us sort of the inside scoop and defend the administration against all these other panelists who will be attacking viciously his program. So we'll look forward to that.

And then all the way down at the end, on the far right as it were, is Russ Whitehurst. Russ is a person I mentioned in the beginning who started the Institute for Education and Sciences and did a magnificent job. The National Academy of Sciences once said that we know nothing about education interventions. That's probably 15 years ago, but thanks to Russ and now this administration we have lots of random studies. We have lots of evidence. Very

good. And Russ knows a lot about preschool as well.

Jenni Owen from Duke University. It's so hard to say from Duke. We couldn't get anybody from UNC, so we settled for someone from Duke. (Laughter) And Jenni heads an organization at Duke called the Center for Child and Family Policy, so that's a good name for an organization, right? In case you hadn't noticed that's our name, too. We copied them.

And then Steve Barnett from Rutgers. And Steve has played a major role in many preschool programs but especially for those of you who may know, he runs the Institute for Early Education Research, and every year they put out a volume called *The State of Preschool*. They didn't have enough money to print it this year but it's available on their website. It is the bible of preschool in the United States. It has fantastic information. If he didn't do it, nobody would. And it would take you three days to figure out how many states have what kind of standards, and now you can do it in three minutes.

And then finally, Linda Martin. We're so pleased that Linda could come. She's the deputy state director for economic services in the state of South Carolina, so she has -- her department has jurisdiction over the preschool programs, and we felt it was necessary to have a state perspective here. I have some questions for you to try to confuse you in a few minutes. We'll begin with Roberto.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, thank you so much, Ron. I want to thank Brookings for the opportunity. I'm happy to join this esteemed panel today. And I'll try to pick up here where our secretary left off. He really, I think, did an

outstanding job of presenting the plan here. We're really excited about the opportunity that we have, particularly for our youngest children to really take an important step forward as a country in providing the type of high quality early learning experiences and opportunities that we know are just so essential for their later success in school, for their later success in life, and ultimately, for our economic future. I mean, I think when when you look at the fact that we rank 28<sup>th</sup> out of 38 developed nations in access for four-year-olds to high quality early learning, you begin to really recognize that there is an economic imperative to this work. And certainly, our administration comes at this both from the important opportunity that early learning can provide to help our children be well equipped to succeed in life. But also, we know that for our country's future we have to do better in these early years in providing a high quality opportunity for all of our children to be able to be successful.

So let me unpack briefly the three elements that are part of the president's initiative that he announced as part of the State of the Union and were further illuminated with his budget. And you heard Secretary Duncan talk about our Preschool for All Initiative. This really is the final piece along a broader continuum of proposed investments here by the president.

The first is a piece that was touched on a little bit in the first panel around Home Visiting. Our administration has been really proud to expand voluntary, evidence-based home visitation now across all 50 states to over 200,000 young children and their families. These are opportunities for nurses, for social workers, for parenting educators, for other early educators to really visit



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

at-risk families and provide them the parenting skills, the nutrition, the maternal and child health in the early learning and cognitive supports that they need to be able to equip their children for success at the earliest point in their life. And there's just such strong research that shows what a difference evidence-based models make in this space. Our administration supports about 12 different models that meet the highest standards of evidence through Home Visiting, and the president has proposed expanding that program, investing \$15 billion through 2023 to expand that program to reach 185,000 additional children and families. We believe that that's one of the most important things we can do really at the earliest time in a child's life is to provide that opportunity, and we have a whole host of evidence that shows what a difference it makes to cognitive outcomes, as well as the social and emotional outcomes that the secretary talked about.

The second piece of this really is proposed investment in new approach to expand the supply of high quality care for our infants and toddlers, for our children zero to three through a new Early Head Start childcare partnership. So this is a \$1.4 billion proposed investment on the discretionary side of the budget. And the model here is to really bring the standards that we know make a real difference in the environments in which our infants and toddlers spend time. Bring those standards into our childcare subsidy system and foster greater partnerships between our Early Head Start providers and between our family childcare providers to make sure that the environments in which our infants and toddlers spend time, their childcare environments, are of the highest quality; that they're meeting their social and emotional needs; that

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

they're maximizing their opportunities to learn and to develop because we know what a difference that makes.

And we have over a million children right now, about 1.6 million children in our childcare subsidy system. We believe that if we can bring some of these early Head Start standards into that environment and raise the quality, either through across certain states, through networks of providers, in communities particularly that are communities that are in need, we know that we can have a tremendous impact on that, for instance, that vocabulary gap that you heard mentioned of about 50 points between our more affluent children at age three and their less affluent peers.

And then finally, of course, is the investment which we do acknowledge is a bold, ambitious investment of \$75 billion over a 10-year period really to expand preschool for all children. And the secretary talked about this. I just want to underscore the point in particular that our approach to this is not to establish a new permanent silo at the federal level where we will subsume the responsibility on a permanent basis for all of our four-year-olds in pre-K, but rather to help accelerate the momentum that we have underway across 40 states in beginning to establish state funded pre-K programs. And what we want to do there is to make sure that we're meeting states where they are, not with a "one size fits all" approach, but with some solid standards that we know will help accelerate enrollment and participation in the state-funded preschool programs. Whether those are programs at the community-based level, childcare centers or other providers or whether those are programs that are delivered through our

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

schools. States have a very different mix and I'm sure you'll hear from Dr. Barnett about the panoply of programs that are out there currently with the states. We believe there's a strong federal role in accelerating the participation in high quality programs. You heard the secretary say fewer than three out of 10 of our children actually participate in high quality programs. So we want to provide the opportunity to really put ourselves on a path to lead the world. We should be -- if we are going to continue to be the world leader economically, we need to be sure we're leading the world in providing the opportunity for our youngest learners to be able to be successful. And certainly, all of these opportunities, from Home Visiting to high quality child care and infant and toddler care, leading to high quality pre-K, ultimately leading to a full day of kindergarten, right, because we have to have that continuum of learning time for our children as they transition into the school system. All of that has to lead into greater focus on quality and on outcomes for our children in the early grades.

We have today a situation where at grade three we have an achievement gap that looms large and that puts too many of our children at a significant disadvantage if they are not reading at grade level to not be able to graduate. And we're losing a million children a year to the dropout crisis. Really solving that crisis and meeting the president's charge of delivering the opportunity that every child needs to succeed, that has to start early. That has to start in these early years. And so we've made early education and the panoply of investments that I've described here, we've made that a major thrust of our second term agenda. And the president has visited Georgia. He's been around

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

the country, was up in Baltimore just a couple weeks ago now visiting an early learning program, and he's going to do all he can to work with Congress to see that we make the progress we need on this agenda.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you for that clear statement.

Russ Whitehurst.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to talk about this. I've been writing about this. Some of you will know, and so I want to come at this as best I can from a research perspective. And so let me give you some background. I think what I'll describe here is not in dispute but is worth having on the table.

The first fact is that children f-- as the secretary mentioned, children from low income families, minority families, start school behind. There is a substantial achievement gap. To date, our schools have struggled and not succeeded in closing it. So the differences exist before children come to kindergarten. Preschool programs can have an impact and narrow those achievement gaps, and so starting early with a good preschool education makes a difference.

States with the largest proportions of low-income families, who therefore need to do the most to provide more preschool opportunities for children, are also the poorest states and the most challenged in having the finances to do that job. The federal government has a long, established role in providing aid for the education of the disadvantaged. It does that in K-12. It's a legitimate role and I think it's perfectly appropriate to extend that to pre-K. So I'm

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

in favor of a program, a federal program that dispenses aid to states in a way that's proportional to the number of the low-income families they have. It helps those states provide free or affordable preschool education for kids.

For me, there are some issues with the plan, the Obama administration has presented. Again, I've written about these things. You can Google Brown Center Chalkboard, Whitehurst, and you'll get some of that writing. Examples are the requirement that teachers be paid and credentialed in the same way as K-12 teachers is going to drive up the cost considerably, and there's very little evidence that that credentialing has much of an impact on the quality of interactions in the classroom.

Though the secretary mentioned choice today and letting a variety of service providers be involved, in fact, none of the narrative from the administration includes any provision for choice. And there's a requirement that the funds be dispensed by states either to school districts or school districts in partnership with other organizations. Kids are going into school districts that are failing them, and I'm not sure we want school districts to be central to the provision of pre-K services.

What I want to talk about today is some data analysis I've been doing in the last week or so where I'm trying to address the question of what's the likely impact of expanding pre-K for four-year-olds on measurable outcomes? And I want to focus on fourth grade reading. And NAPE is the national assessments given the representative samples of children in every state; it is a nation's report card. Teachers can't teach to it, so it's a good outcome. And the

first one we have where we can -- in terms of a child's development, it allows us to compare performance across states. And I've used the very good data from Barnett's organization on pre-K enrollment to look at variations in state pre-K enrollment in 2006 as they are associated with NAPE scores five years later in 2011. And my question is, is there an association between the level of pre-K participation at the state level and later NAPE scores for that same cohort of kids. And I've done that adjusting for differences among states in their demographics and wealth, because that drives student performance in ways quite independent of the schooling system.

There's a great range of pre-K enrollment. It ranges from, in 2006, from zero in 10 states to 70 percent in Oklahoma. And of course, there's a great range of performance on NAPE among kids. So the good news for advocates of investment and state pre-K, the correlations are positive and statistically significant. The correlation for the works in the audience is about .30, which is a good size correlation for any kind of education intervention. And the relationships I see in the data make sense at least to me. So the relationships are stronger for reading than they are for math, and preschools are much more involved in developing the skills that are related to reading than they are in developing skills related to math. So that makes a lot of sense. And the relationships are stronger for the groups that should most benefit from preschool. So they're stronger for Hispanics and other minority groups than they are for whites. They're stronger for children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch than for affluent kids. So all that makes a lot of sense.

The sobering news is that variation among states in NAPE scores is much less than variation among students or classrooms or schools, so existing differences among states and all of their education policies and practices account for a relatively small amount of the differences that exist among students and their achievement outcomes. And you can think about this intuitively. It probably made a lot more difference to you the teacher you had in your classroom than the state in which you lived in terms of what you learned. And that's the intuition I'm capturing with the data.

The student standard deviation on NAPE happens to be about 30 points. The state standard deviation on NAPE happens to be about four points. And so in other words there's not a lot of variation among states and there's huge amount of variation among kids. So if we increased a state's performance on NAPE relative to other states by one standard deviation of state differences, that is moving a state from the 50<sup>th</sup> to the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile in terms of states, or from the 25<sup>th</sup> best state to the eighth best state, a huge difference, it would be associated with a four point change in NAPE. Not a big difference.

I've crunched the numbers with respect to the pre-K enrollment figures I mentioned earlier to see how they might be associated with changes in NAPE since pre-K is, of course, only a small portion of the overall state policy and practice that might be related to education. And what do I find? I find a 16 percent increase in state enrollment in pre-K would predict about a one point increase in NAPE five years later. That number is bigger if you focus on kids in greater need but that's the average figure.

So what do I conclude from this? There's a positive association between enrollment levels and state pre-K and later academic achievement. That's a good thing if you're an advocate for the expansion of pre-K programs. Should these associations -- and they're just correlations -- truly reflect a cause and effect relationship, then raising the level of state K and pre-K enrollment would certainly enhance academic achievement. However, the impact of very substantial increases in the level of state pre-K enrollment would likely be modest on the order of magnitude of a few points at most on NAPE in fourth grade.

From my perspective, these are impacts worth pursuing, but they fall far short of the impacts that advocates of the expansion of state pre-K have pushed based on generalizations. For example, from the Perry Preschool Project, an intensive program that focused on 70 kids in Ypsilanti, Michigan, 50 years ago that was a multi-year, that involved home visiting that had lots of components that are not part of state pre-K. So we need to be realistic about what we're going to achieve. We need to think carefully about the cost and the benefits and figure out how to minimize the former while maximizing the latter. For me that means targeting these programs on the kids and population that are going to benefit from them the most. I think we're likely to find a benefit ratio there that is worth pursuing, though certainly not seven to one. And I think the politics of this on the Hill require the administration to think less about strings tied to the money and more about providing the money to the communities and states that have the greatest need for it.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you, Russ.



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

Jenni Owen.

MS. OWEN: I'm delighted to be here this afternoon. And as Ron said, I'm here representing Duke Sanford School of Public Policy and Center for Child and Family Policy, as well as representing APAM.

Given the emphasis of the president's proposal on high quality, early childhood education, I want to talk about three interrelated priorities to keep in mind. They are alignment of early care in education efforts, which has been addressed already, support for the early childhood education workforce, which I don't believe has been addressed, and implementation. All of these are critical if we're to do a better job making sure all children arrive at kindergarten not just ready to learn but already learning. And each of these is also influenced, as has come up today, by the broader context in which the president's proposal is emerging. So just a few words first about the broader context.

I think there's consensus up here and out there that we know more than ever from rigorous research that early childhood education can make a difference. But we also know that all early childhood education is not created equal. And perhaps more importantly, the implementation of programs to improve early childhood education are not implemented equally. We know, yet rarely sufficiently address, that the early care in education workforce needs more support.

And finally we know, as again has been addressed, that children's preschool years don't exist in isolation from the care and education that come before and after. So I'll speak a little bit first to alignments. They are part of a

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

continuum that starts when a child is born or earlier in preschool education as the secretary said. To support the administration's stated goal of, and I quote, "A cohesive and well aligned system of early learning from children birth to four children, from birth to age five, Home Visiting can play a central role in a preschool for all environment." I was very happy to hear how many times Home Visiting has been mentioned today. I wasn't sure that would be the case and I think that's a great thing.

Effective alignment would link to and benefit from Home Visiting levels at the federal, state, and local levels, efforts that are identifying and implementing evidence-based and evidence-informed models underway across the country. Home Visiting provides a critical platform to build high quality preschool, which in turn provides a critical platform for entering kindergarten. And I wonder whether we might be able to apply a Home Visiting model in the preschool environment and perhaps in early school years as well in a way that would make a difference to children beyond the Home Visiting -- the traditional Home Visiting years.

Moreover, successful alignment would help to alleviate debates faced by numerous states, including mine, about whether to increase pre-K slots at the expense of childcare slots, or to do the reverse, which is something many states right now are struggling with.

Another priority is workforce support. When considering what's best for all young children we must remember that the early childhood workforce is in large part the parents of many of the low resource children that we're talking

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

about today. Research shows that a highly paid childcare assistant -- this is a highly paid childcare assistant, earns somewhere in the neighborhood of \$10,000 to \$11,000 annually, and some of the highest paid childcare teachers, early childhood teachers, earn somewhere in the neighborhood of \$18,000 to \$19,000 a year annually. That's under the poverty level for a family of four in the United States.

So the early childhood education workforce needs enhanced support, so it, in turn, can support the kids that we're talking about today again. To give some ideas for what these supports might include and some of these I think are reflected in Steve's recent report in terms of benchmarks, sub-supports might include training and professional development opportunities that go beyond the rote requirements of policies and programs and that reflect the high value we place on early education that we're discussing today. They also might include something like a shared employee assistance program that I imagine many of us working in for-profit, non-profit, and public entities can benefit from if we have struggles in our own families and our workplaces and so on. I'm not aware of anything quite like that in most early childhood, childcare, and preschool settings.

As Steve's recent Annual Pre-K Report highlights -- we'll hear from him in a minute -- North Carolina is one of a few states that meets all 10 of the quality benchmarks, some of which have relevance for workforce support. But, as the implementers in North Carolina will attest, and I really made an effort to talk with some of them recently about this challenge, is these quality components really took time to refine and realize. They required investment in

people on the ground -- and I think this is something that Mrs. Johnson was speaking to -- on the ground in local communities who are doing the work, somehow connecting what happens at the federal level to what happens on the ground.

That gets to implementation, the third priority that I would emphasize. Guidance systems from research evidence often focuses on the why behind the policy change without an equal emphasis on the how of the policy and program implementation. That's not new news but is there something we can do about that? During and following implementation is often where the most critical gap in the transition from policy to practice occurs. A brilliantly developed program won't succeed if it suffers from careless or incomplete implementation. Moreover, implementation that allows time for mid-course check-ins and corrections is essential to long-term progress.

As one state Early Childhood Office director recently said to me, "Even the greatest pilot program is the beginning of a long road." So success in a pilot doesn't mean long-term success, doesn't mean universal success, and so on. Implementation science has a lot to offer here and I'll make Ron happy by mentioning something that comes out of UNC. In particular, I would turn to the work of the National Implementation Research Network based at UNC and the brief it produced for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in February, the same month that the president announced his proposal. It focuses not only on what makes evidence-based programs work but on what makes them successful when they're implemented.

Thankfully, and I think hopefully, the president's proposal seeks to balance high standards for early childhood education policy change with flexibility for states to determine the best implementation plan for high quality programs. President Obama's preschool proposal highlights the challenges of cross sector interaction and coordination and challenges of applying research in policy and practice. It also presents exciting opportunities for doing this successfully.

The three priorities I've highlighted -- alignment across early education systems, workforce support, and implementation reflect a need for coordination among different stakeholders with common goals as we've heard already today. Early childhood education matters to everyone -- to children, to families, to employers, to policymakers, practitioners, to the workforce that depends on it for their own livelihood, and to the products that come out of it, young children and the schools they go to. For its strikingly universal importance, it's strikingly un-systematized.

I believe that this proposal is a test of whether research, policy, and practice can combine forces for the benefit of young children and their families. And we've had some really, I think, exciting possibilities stressed today that will make that possible.

I'll conclude with a note about Mt. Everest, which will surprise some of you, maybe all of you. Today is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir Edmund Hillary's ascent of Everest. And I was thinking about that and thinking about how advances in early childhood education stack up against advances in mountaineering. So they wore wool suits. And I looked to see what they had

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

and what they wore. They wore wool suits. They had five-pound walkie-talkies each that apparently went two-way, so that's good. As small as the number of Everest ascenders is relative to the number of families who seek quality early childhood education for their children, some of the themes we're discussing today really, truly apply to both contexts. Those are access, research, and careful implementation of what evidence says works. Thank you.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you very much.

Steve Barnett.

MR. BARNETT: Thank you, Ron.

I'm happy to be here today to talk about what I think is a tremendous opportunity for opportunity.

We have some educational problems in the United States. I don't think they're necessarily the problems that people think they are. Actually, for example, I think our public schools perform pretty well overall and have been steadily improving over time. And it is remarkable to me how little the improvement in kids' test scores over the last couple of decades, how little attention is given to that because then you might have to say, gee, I wonder why the public schools are getting so much better instead of talking about how terrible they are.

I also think that while we talk a lot about the achievement gap that in many ways that leads us to frame the problem incorrectly. We don't have an achievement gap in the United States. We have an achievement gradient. We have a continuum that links family, human, and economic capital and resources

with children's achievement, and it's a lot steeper than it is in many other countries. But there's no sharp cut off, right, and so it turns out that while kids in poverty have high failure rates and high dropout rates, one in 10 middle income kids will fail a grade and be held back; one in 10 middle income kids will drop out of school. So if you want to solve the school failure problem in the United States and you focus on poor kids, you will miss most of the problem. And I also think it creates a kind of us-them dialogue that is unhelpful politically and unhelpful programmatically. And we have a history of 50 years of targeted programs that I think is a history of 50 years of failure. Why do I say 50 years of failure? Well, so we have a problem. We have some solutions. Part of the solution is high quality preschool programs. The evidence is quite clear; they can produce substantive gains. And that if those gains are large enough to start with they can produce persistent gains. And they produce persistent gains far up the economic continuum, not just up to the poverty line or even the low income line, which by the way, at this point 200 percent of poverty covers 50 percent of American preschoolers. So preschoolers as a group are not doing particularly well on the income continuum.

So you have a problem, you have a solution, and we've been trying for 50 years to do this with a targeted model. And yet today, most low income kids do not have access to preschool. Most low income kids do not have access to quality preschool. Now, that's partly because most kids, as the secretary and Roberto said, most kids don't have access to even a good preschool. So about a third of preschool classrooms based on actual

observation qualify as good or better.

But a lot of kids don't go to preschool. So if you look at the percentage of kids enrolled in a good preschool, if your parents have graduate degrees it's almost a third. If your parents are high school dropouts, it's one in 10. So that's exactly backwards under a policy regime for 50 years focused on targeting. So targeting doesn't do a very good job of reaching the kids it's supposed to reach. Half the kids in Head Start by the end of the four-year-old year are not poor, so it's not just that they don't serve enough kids, it's also that targeting doesn't work very well in part because we target by income and income moves. That's a good thing, but it means that it's not a very practical policy for reaching the kids that we want to reach.

And then added to that there's a substantial body of evidence that kids don't just learn from their teachers, they learn from each other, particularly in the areas of language and literacy, so low income kids actually gain more from programs where they're not the only kids in the program. And if you ask most parents what their preference would be for sending their kids to a preschool program, they would pick a program that was open to all kids and not just a program for poor kids. And that's just as true for poor families as it is for anybody else.

If we look around the globe, we don't see, as far as I know of, any examples of countries that adopted targeted programs and have successfully enrolled all of the kids that they're targeting. We do see a lot of programs that are universal that pretty much enroll all of the low income kids. And outside the



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

United States the benefits of those programs are not as lopsidedly in favor of low income kids in part because I think they're higher quality. And you have to have a higher quality program to benefit a kid from a higher income family. So if we have lousy programs they mostly just help poor kids. Not very much but at least they help those kids.

So to me the administration's proposal has a tremendous number of advantages. It is a systems change proposal. It isn't just about changing programs for four-year-olds, but for programs for four-year-olds it is insistent that they be high quality which is where we get a payoff. It is insistent that it be a program that's open at least to 200 percent of poverty and it incentivizes enrolling all kids, which again I think is the right direction in terms of impacts and politics. And it emphasizes full day. And one of the things we haven't talked about are that there are childcare benefits. And this is a way of getting benefits to families that you don't have to wait 40 years for. They're modest but they're perhaps big enough certainly for low income families to justify the expenditure in the program themselves. And one of the things that the economic analyses do tell us is that even if these programs only produce modest gains for kids, modest gains for kids and families translate into very large economic benefits proportional to cost.

Thanks very much.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you, Steve.

Linda Martin.

MS. MARTIN: I'm from South Carolina, and as opposed to most of the folks that you've just listened to who are kind of looking at things from up

here, the aerial view of what childcare looks like, I'm looking at it from the ground looking up. And it looks a lot more tangled when you're looking from the ground up.

South Carolina is a small state. It's a very rural state. And I'm not supposed to say it's a poor state, but it is. My governor told me to say that we didn't have as much revenue. (Laughter) It's a lot easier just to say we're a poor state because we are. And there isn't nearly enough money in South Carolina to cover the kids who need to be in preschool or to be in child care. We estimate that we cover about 20 percent of the kids in South Carolina who are eligible for childcare services. So 80 percent of the people who would meet the eligibility requirements, the children, don't get the services that they need. And that's a real problem for us because it's a problem in a number of ways.

There's a huge income gap in South Carolina. Very large income gap, and there's -- even more important than that there's a huge gap in the skills that people need for jobs. So we have most of the jobs available in South Carolina need skilled labor or very skilled labor. Most of the workers in South Carolina have no skills, very low skills. So there's a big mismatch between the kinds of folks we need to raise that tax revenue so we're not a poor state and the kinds of folks that we have in South Carolina. And so much of what is wrong, so much of what builds that gap has to do with preschool and with early childhood education. Whenever I get an opportunity in South Carolina, whenever I'm asked -- and I should say I work for the Department of Social Services and I have for a long time -- whenever I get asked to say what would you do, what's the one thing

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

you would do to make things better in South Carolina, generally what I say is I would provide enough high quality childcare for everybody who needs it so that instead of having lots and lots of people complain about the number of folks who are on welfare and food stamps in South Carolina, we could allow those same people to take jobs and know that their children are safe, are in an environment where they're getting the skills they need to be competitive. It's a very bad mistake we make when we don't do that.

In my agency I have the childcare block grant and I have the Social Services block grant. I have the childcare licensing responsibilities. I have responsibility for developing curriculum for childcare agencies. I have the childcare -- I have the Head Start collaborative office. I have the Child and Adult Care food programs that provide snacks to childcare centers, and I have the summer food program. And it's taken a while but I've gradually been able to mush -- mush is a technical word -- to mush all those things together into one division. And I've got one person who is coordinating all that because we have discovered that it matters so much that things not be siloed. When there's not enough money, you need it all in one place and you need it all available to you so you can provide it where you get the most bang for the buck, where you get the most out of what you have. And that's what we're trying to do within our agency in South Carolina.

I'm extraordinarily pleased that there will be more money available to states, especially states like South Carolina, for childcare efforts for what we need in order to build that workforce that isn't so lopsided on where the jobs are

and where the skills are. And my only caution is to please, please think about the view when you're lying down on the ground and you're looking up at the trees and the vines and the leaves and how tangled it looks from the ground up as compared to that aerial view, and please keep it as untangled as possible for those of us on the ground.

MS. HASKINS: Thank you very much. And thank you to the panel for these good opening comments.

I'd like to deal with something first that I think we can maybe shed some light on. If I were not a researcher I would be very confused by the media coverage so far. We get articles by very well known people like Charles Murray that say that the evidence on preschool is really extremely checkered and that we really shouldn't count on big benefits from this big investment that Obama is going to make. And then we read things from NEAR, which doesn't have the circulation of *The Wall Street Journal*, but that there are all these very good evidence. Steve has done -- he didn't mention it but he's done a meta-analysis that shows a pretty substantial impact going all the way up to kids over eight years of age. And if they are high quality programs you get even bigger impacts.

Help me resolve this. What could we say to the American public that says either both sides are right and here's the explanation about how they're right or one of them is wrong. What is the real -- what did we learn from research about the possibility that if we spend \$75 billion we're going to get a big payback?

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, can I use the technical term "mush"?

MR. HASKINS: Yes.

MR. WHITEHURST: The more you mush the research together, and it's different studies with different methodologies of different programs, the more you get an answer that's not relevant to any particular program that you might want to consider. So we have, for example, a large-scale national Head Start Impact Study that found some benefits at the end of the Head Start year but no benefits that lasted into elementary school. So I think it's better to talk about that research when we're talking about Head Start than to mush together findings. When we're talking about state pre-K and its likely impact, I think we need to look at research on state pre-K and not research on something else. So it's a broad topic, and depending on how you slice and dice it and how you mush it together, you can get a different answer. And the answer is not necessarily the wrong answer given what's been mushed in, but it may not be the answer that's most relevant to the policy decision that's on the table.

MR. HASKINS: So what is most relevant to a proposal like the one the president is supporting?

MR. WHITEHURST: Again, you know, I think we have a lot of variation among the states in terms of having state pre-K and participation levels in state pre-K and I think looking at that it remains simply correlational data is relevant or I wouldn't have done it as the exercise to help here. So I think looking at state programs widely implemented is probably the best evidence on what we're likely to get if we extend and expand such programs.

MR. HASKINS: Steve, what do you think?

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

MR. BARNETT: For the most part I agree with Russ, that there is a huge variation. There are state pre-K programs that are not nearly as good as Head Start, and I'm sure they don't even get gains out of the box. And I think on the other side of it there are programs that are more -- I mean, New Jersey's program cost about 13,000 bucks per kid and almost all that money goes into the classroom. So there's a much greater resource focus on educating those kids than in most other programs. So I think you get bigger outcomes. If we look at the meta-analysis, programs that had a focus on intentional teaching produced bigger cognitive gains. Programs that had --

MR. HASKINS: So you're unmushing now?

MR. BARNETT: Yeah. So you're unmushing and you're saying, you know, individualization one-on-one, small group, that produces bigger gains for kids.

These are not shocking, right, that if you put more of your resources into the classroom focused on educating kids, that you get bigger educational gains. But state preschool programs are all over the place. They're not -- and it may well be true. I mean, Head Start is probably more uniform but I suspect also there's considerable diversity there as well. But so when you look at just increasing quantity of state pre-K, I think you'd get very modest impacts which is why the emphasis and the administration's proposal on a small number of quality standards I think is important with adequate resources.

So it's not so much the credential of the teacher that's important; it's paying a teacher an adequate salary. And as long as you're doing that you

might as well require them to have decent qualification, right? Because the reason people don't require it is because they don't want to pay for it.

MR. HASKINS: Right.

MR. BARNETT: And I think in New Jersey we have what I think of as a test case. So 70 percent of the kids in our most disadvantaged cities were in preschool. We were under court order to within five years give them high quality preschool. And we can show that the quality went from mediocre to poor, to good to excellent, over less than a decade. And we got results for kids in terms of increasing achievement.

MR. HASKINS: And how far into the public schools can you show that there are impacts?

MR. BARNETT: We followed them through fifth grade, and I think the meta-analysis suggests that if you get results at fifth grade they're not going away later. All right? If they go away they go away pretty rapidly. And they're probably about half what the initial impacts were as a kind of rule of thumb, which means you've got to have really, really big -- and we shouldn't kid ourselves that you can produce really small impacts to begin with and you're going to get something great in the long run. That just doesn't happen.

MR. HASKINS: Jenni, were you -- you looked like you were itching to say something.

MS. OWEN: I think it's another great opportunity to bring up Home Visiting as an example of anything doesn't go. And so within some continuum the administration has decided to invest in Home Visiting. But it's not

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

get the funds and do whatever you want with it. And I think when we use the phrase pre-K, we could all -- however many people are in this room, we could have that many different pictures in our mind of real programs that are pre-K without necessarily or in some cases having standards attached. So I think part of it is about what counts as pre-K. When you talk about what counts as Home Visiting, now there are things that count and things that don't count. And if you don't count you don't get the funding. And it seems to me that that's the direction. You know, quality-focused direction is the direction that this is headed in.

MR. HASKINS: Let me clarify this and then you can jump in whoever wants to.

So the way this works is the administration basically hired a think tank, a research firm, Mathematica, to review the literature and determine what program models actually have solid evidence, usually meaning from random assigned studied, that they produce an impact. And now the administration gives away Home Visiting funds only to states that are going to use the money in these kinds of programs. This is not unlike the kind of thing you were talking about, Steve. So, and presumably that's what they'll do with this 15 billion of Home Visiting. But in preschool we don't have such a thing. We have a zillion curriculums, right? I mean, you may have your favorite, and I've talked to 15 people who have their own favorites, but we don't -- and we're not discussing putting anything like that. We talk about quality standards but they are so kind of broad.



So would it work to do this in preschool? Could we do something to develop programs that if implemented faithfully as the Home Visiting programs are, that we will have a very high chance that we'll produce serious impacts on kids' development?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, let me just interject here as well, Ron, just to clarify our administration's proposal as we continue the conversation. I think it's a really good one to have. I've worked on education policy for a long time. There are vigorous debates on every education policy issue and research on both sides.

Our clear read of the research here is that quality matters tremendously and I think particularly when you parse out results. Steve has done work but there are hosts of other meta-analyses by the Federal Reserve Bank, by others that show that the return on high quality programs is particularly strong. You know, return varies depending on the program you look at -- \$3, \$7, beyond, but quality matters greatly and this has been a driving principle for the development of our own proposal. I mean, I think it's helpful and I appreciate Russ's sentiment of support for pre-K and particularly his contribution to the work here from a research perspective. I do think we need to look at the correlation not just of the current state of our state pre-K programs to the NAPE, but actually correlation of high quality early childhood. And again, the majority of states out there are delivering pre-K but many of those states are not delivering the level of quality pre-K that we know returns on investment. So we've said we want to be a partner in that as a federal government. We want to ask you when you come in

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

to do three things: to show that you have quality standards and some level of early learning standards; to show that you have some level of staff qualifications; and to show that you have some ability to link your preschool system and data system to the broader K-12 system. Beyond that moving forward, we want to ask you to do some pretty specific things with respect to the federal investment that would be made. And that is to make sure that you have staff ratios that are going to be adequate to make sure that you're getting a high quality environment for children. Make sure you're delivering a full day of service. Make sure that you're compensating your pre-K workforce at an adequate level comparable to the early grades in your school districts; to make sure that you're implementing an evidence-based pre-K curriculum. And again, we're not going to make that determination but there are plenty of folks out there that have looked at the curricula across these programs and know what is real teaching and learning from what is babysitting in certain perspectives; to make sure that we're doing more to provide comprehensive levels of services for our low income children in pre-K, right? Because we know that the vision, the health, the screening, the social and emotional investments matter greatly as well and contribute to learning. And there are several other standards on top of that. Those are the types of standards we'd ask states to implement moving forward with our investment, and we provide a set aside of our investment to states to improve the quality of their existing slots, of their existing programs that are currently reaching children.

MR. HASKINS: So let me borrow the question then from one of --

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

we're going to say there are eight curriculums and you have to use one of those to something much broader which is all the requirements that you're putting in in order to get the money -- state standards, standards for teachers, and so forth -- will that work? Is that going to increase the average quality of child care?

First, audience, I think there's no question. Every study that's ever been done shows this huge range of quality. And I would say the most reasonable interpretation of the national Head Start findings that Russ summarized so nicely, is that the programs are just incredibly diverse. Some of them are probably very good and others aren't, and they wash out on average. So it's hard to bring up a whole network of programs throughout the whole country. Is what the administration is proposing going to do it?

MR. BARNETT: Well, New Jersey did it, right? With 50,000 kids under court order. And I think that you talked about implementation. There is a lot that we don't know. The things that are in the administration's plan I think are probably necessary but not sufficient. And that's why the coaching piece of this - all right, so they didn't forget about it has to be well implemented. That's really important. And having a continuous improvement system in place which we did in New Jersey where you track the quality. Is it getting better year by year? Is it getting better in language and literacy, in math, in science? Not just in one particular area. Are we supporting children's social and emotional development? And personally I'm not against tracking the kids' test scores at kindergarten entry as a way to keep not testing every kid but tracking how our system is performing based on children's performance on standardized assessments as part of it and

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

using that information together with the rest of the information to figure out what do we need to do to make sure it really is quality and we're not just having high standards and spending money.

MR. HASKINS: So we spent \$75 billion and you're feeling we're moving in the right direction, this is the right thing to do but it's not enough yet? Do you agree with that Russ and Jenni?

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, look, I developed a high degree of caution and skepticism about evidence, about efforts from Washington, to take what people think is known from science and drive that into program implementation around the country. We saw that famously with a No Child Left Behind program called Reading First that I think was based on the best evidence at the time on what children needed to get ready to read and had so far as we could determine no positive impact on reading achievement at fourth grade.

I'd be much more comfortable here that we would get where we all want to go. If what the federal government would do is not provide 10 things the states have to do to get this money, but rather require states, if they accept the money, to carefully monitor progress and demonstrate that kids are showing up in kindergarten and first and second grade in much better shape than they were prior to the receipt of the money and provide all the technical assistance that is possible to help states to help themselves to do a better job. I think that's politically viable and is in the end more likely to work because once the federal government starts mucking around in this stuff and makes a mistake, it's very difficult to fix it. And so allowing you know variation at the state level, more

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

options to proceed, accountability for results but not accountability for process is the better way to go, in my view.

MR. HASKINS: So I'd call that radically different than what the administration is proposing.

MR. WHITEHURST: In terms of the means but not the ends. I think we very much agree.

MR. BARNETT: I would say we do need to have accountability for results and I agree with that. You know, you heard our secretary say, and this is his mantra across the panoply of programs that we administer, "Tight on goals, loose on means." You know, as I said earlier, we don't want a "one size fits all" approach here because we have a diversity in approach across the states that we feel is informative and important and our approach here and our perspective is to be an accelerate with the states in reaching additional children and bringing them into a level of high quality service.

I think we need to be focused on results and we would require monitoring of programs closely, but we need to have some guideposts along the way there that make sure that our investment is not a block grant. You know, we have a block grant in early childhood education. It's the childcare block grant, and we're not reaching the number of children we need with that block grant, and we're also not -- we're struggling, you know, at a billion dollars a year in investment there in raising the quality of that system. So, you know, and so we believe we need to strike an appropriate balance here of codifying the right standards that we know research and science has shown is highly correlated to

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

quality environments for children, but providing flexibility in terms of how to implement those standards and focusing on the outcomes, particularly at that kindergarten entry point.

MR. HASKINS: So, Linda, are you going to run this if it passes? Are they going to send you all this money? Does this sound good to you?

MS. MARTIN: It sounds good to me. Any time you give money --

MR. HASKINS: What about the standards?

MS. MARTIN: The standards are going to be a problem, and I know that they are going to be -- I don't think it's -- I don't think any program is worth its weight if it doesn't have some sort of standard, but it's going to be a push. We're going to get pushback from providers. We know that. And that's traditionally been what happens when you try to raise quality standards. They argue then that their costs are going to go up. We've had a five-year plan for lowering the child-to-staff ratio in childcare centers and we're doing it in like five little rungs or we got to rung three and we've been stalled there for three years. So, you know, it really is going to be a problem.

MR. BARNETT: I should say South Carolina's preschool program, which is a partnership between Education and Human Services, talking about looking at it from the ground up, people say, well, Education does this and Human Services does that. And I've been there. The kids in the Human Services and the Education program are sitting on the same carpet square in the same classroom. They're not really different. That program would meet all of the requirements except perhaps for the one on teacher salary. And I don't know the

answer to that.

MS. MARTIN: I don't know either --

MR. BARNETT: But on all of the other standards, your state already has in place.

MR. HASKINS: So let's draw a very quick parallel to Race to the Top where the administration set some requirements and some states had to change their laws to meet the requirements. I saw something recently that estimated that only a very small number of states today would meet what the administration is requiring to get their share of the money, so they're going to have to do some things before they even qualify for the money. First, do you agree with that? And then secondly, is that a good way to go? Say yes.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, listen. You know, we believe strongly in Race to the Top. We designed this program. Nineteen criteria. And we scored states based on their -- not only what they applied for but also their demonstrated commitment to these criteria. We had teams come in to Washington, D.C., of state commissioners and folk -- educators from around the state to say, "We agree and this is the plan we're putting forward for Race to the Top."

So we're excited about Race to the Top. Race to the Top Early Learning. We're in 14 states. We're trying to develop and build a system that's focused on quality and outcomes and a results-oriented approach to reform and early childhood education. So we're going to continue with that approach. We believe it's the right thing to do. This is different than that. You know, this is about providing, beginning with our children at 200 percent of poverty, but

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

moving across to our middle income families, providing a universal level of access to high quality preschool. And we believe that we have a responsibility as a country to do that, not just in 14 states but across all 50 states. You know, we'd expect we'd have about a third of states that would be ready to come into the program were Congress to enact it this year and then another third in the next year and further going forward. And we want to work with states. This is why the bar for entry is not nearly as high as Race to the Top or as involved in terms of a competition, but moving forward we do want to see some assurances from states around some of the standards that I mentioned.

MR. BARNETT: I don't know that that would be clear to everyone. My understanding is what that means is states don't have to have all this stuff in place --

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's absolutely right.

MR. BARNETT: To get started taking the federal money. They have to have goals to reach these.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: And a trajectory to reach that.

MR. BARNETT: Right.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: So the question is for South Carolina and for other states and, you know, the good thing is you know Steve has a yearbook and NEAR has a yearbook that actually maps some of the states according to these standards. So if you're curious about where your state is you should go and look at that yearbook.

MR. HASKINS: So audience --



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

MR. RODRIGUEZ: But there's time to get there, right, and I think that's an important point as well. You know, you don't want to say overnight you have to implement you know these types of salary standards, for instance, because that takes time for states to be able to adjust and work with.

MR. HASKINS: So let's have some good questions. Right here.  
Dr. Craig Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you, Ron. This has been a wonderful seminar in the complexity of development of human competence. And I'm happy to see that we might put Health and Human Services and Education to some arrangement where they are talking to one another.

It strikes me that the policy issues always get chipped off and dealt with without much thoughtful connection to what is the fundamental building block of our society, which I believe is families. And getting the House to support this legislation I think is going to be a difficult chore. But it strikes me that one area that this is dealing with, the gradient that Steve described, which we have underestimated the steepness of that gradient for generations, that if we solve these programs as family strengthening mechanisms, some of which are aimed toward preschool children, some of which are aimed to help people move into the paid labor force, but it's the family as a whole that stands to benefit. And we know from research the intergenerational benefits that accrue in part as a result of some of these early services, if not family strengthening, the question is where do you perceive there is likely to be a conceptual grounding point that will allow the Democrats and the Republicans to say grace over this bill?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good question, Craig.

You know, I think you point out the importance of strengthening families and parents, and we know that that's critical particularly in these early years. I think a lot of the evidence of success of our Home Visiting efforts, for instance, speak directly to that fact. So I think there's a lot in this proposal and in this initiative that speaks to that piece. There's also a strong return on investment. I mean, there's a reason governors across both sides of the aisle, you know, regardless of their stripe, have invested in this reform in their states and it's because it pays a return on investment. We know that.

But ultimately, our ability to move this forward in Congress, we are going to appeal to the interests in Congress of all the benefits of this work on a policy basis. But ultimately, I think it hinges on what happens at the local level. You know, today we received a letter from over 300 business leaders and military leaders from across the country that support early education and support greater investment in early education and in Home Visitation. And we know that there is support at the local level, you know, from business leaders, from folks in the military, from our education corners, from local municipalities who have passed bond measures to deliver this type of pre-K opportunity in their respective communities. So it's those voices that are going to compel Congress to act.

MR. HASKINS: Well, guess what? There's a test right now. There's no question. This is the time. There's not going to be another proposal like this in our lifetime. And if these business groups and military leaders and so forth are really committed, they'd better get to work in the House pretty damn

quick.

Next question. Here on the aisle.

MS. ROBINSON: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you for hosting this, Ron, and this wonderful panel, and the panel before.

I'm Adele Robinson from NAEYC and this is a question for Roberto. And it's something that Dr. Owen and Dr. Barnett touched on but we didn't really explore, which is, and I want to start with NAEYC is in favor of standards. We are a standards center for high quality conditions for learning and for teacher preparation standards across B.A., A.A., and the like.

You touched on this field being very low income and being very undereducated, so Roberto, we are asking in both the pre-K and the Early Head Start childcare partnership, if we are really going to meet children where they're being served across all the settings and provide high quality, will the administration be favorable to using some of those funds to invest in the workforce, much like they did in New Jersey in Abbott in the scholarships, the release time, the substitutes, and then the higher pay so that we can both attract and retain those better teachers throughout the continuum?

MR. BARNETT: The answer to that is yes. But I'd like other panelists to also reflect on this. You know, I think we touched on this earlier about the importance of the workforce. We're not going to get to quality if we don't make the investments we need in preparation and continuous development of teachers and of our early educators and make sure that we're also having a system in place. We can't rest that entire imperative on this pre-K proposal. You

know, there are a set of dollars that states currently use that need to be leveraged toward that end, too.

MR. HASKINS: So let me ask the rest of the panel, what are your ideas about a better workforce, better prepared teachers? Do they all need to have a B.A.? What should we do to upgrade the talent out there that's teaching the kids?

Jenni.

MS. OWEN: Well, for one thing I think these two questions are really related. So, you know, as I was trying to make the point earlier, similar to what you're talking about, that the workforce in many cases are the parents of the kids. Understand that we're not interested I think in a poor kids' program. This has been said. But are the kids of many of the lowest income kids who will presumably be in these high quality programs. So I think thinking of the workforce as being connected to the children directly, not just as their caretakers but actually as their parents is critical.

I also would hope -- I'm not sitting where Roberto is but I would hope that some of the flexibility would be in that area, so I think this question of parameters, standards, and flexibility will really demonstrate whether South Carolina, for example, could choose -- you mentioned teacher salaries as an area of question that you're not quite sure about -- whether the states would have flexibility in that area as well as some of the other areas of meeting standards.

MR. WHITEHURST: We know a little bit about how to improve the skills and effectiveness of preschool teachers, and there are interventions out

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

there that work. They typically focus on particular skill sets, how to more effectively share a book with a young child or how to deal with behavioral problems in the classroom. And I think certainly that's the place to start. There has to be funding for those kind of professional development activities. We also had pretty good research that shows that a B.A. degree is not a predictor of effectiveness in the classroom, and we also know the general skill level is pretty low. And so an argument can be made that requiring the B.A. and paying at the teacher level at least assures a level of verbal skills that is probably higher than the typical workforce has today, but it's a very expensive way to get to that goal.

I mean, the other reality here is as you drive up the cost, even if they are correlated with quality, you will at least at the outset drive down access. You know, a typical state pre-K program is spending maybe \$3,000 a child, whereas K-12 is eight to -- so you do the math.

MR. HASKINS: Abbott is 12.

MR. WHITEHURST: No, I know that. I know that. But I'm just saying the reality across the nation is that if you relatively rapidly ratchet up the cost of provision of the service, the provision will go down. And remember, the Obama administration has proposed a \$75 billion federal investment, but it's a partnership with states. And over the 10-year plan, the state load exceeds the federal load. And so states will have to come into this thinking about what their costs are going to be and how they balance the cost against the need for quality but also the need for access. All of those things are important.

I mean, to the earlier question that Dr. Ramey had about the

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

politics of all this, I would wonder, and this is maybe a question to Roberto, were there conversations -- what would I want if I were a poor parent and needed preschool access? What I would want is a nice voucher from the federal government that I could spend at the preschool program of my choice. It would not bother me if the voucher rate were tied to the quality of the preschool as rated by the state. But I'd like to be able to make that choice for myself. And it's a very different model from the top-down model we've heard here. Either it's the federal government top-down or the states top-down. The parent is sort of left out of this except as the recipient of wisdom from on high. So I think choice, vouchers, and good information on the quality of centers is another way to get to this that Republicans in the House would warm to considerably.

MS. MARTIN: I --

MR. HASKINS: Go ahead.

MS. MARTIN: I was just going to say that choice needs to come with an awful lot of education --

MR. WHITEHURST: Oh, sure.

MS. MARTIN: -- of the parents because I've seen in too many instances parents take their kids out of very high quality centers where the co-payment is a little bit of money and put them with someone who has basically got six cots in a circle and you sit on it because the co-pay is much less. So it really matters.

MR. HASKINS: Because the parent can't make the co-payment?

MS. MARTIN: Yes. They don't know the difference. They can't

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

see immediately the difference in good childcare.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, and there's a total lack of information. If you're shopping for preschool services -- and this is really across the range of educational levels of parents. You don't know what you're getting. You talk with other parents in the supermarket. You know, what is it like there? There's just an absence of information for one of the most important choices that a parent is going to make about his or her child, and this is certainly something the federal government could have a very active role in, is making information available to support parents in the choices they have to make.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: We can agree, Russ and I, I think on the point of the parents needing greater access to information, and greater information about the outcomes and the quality of their programs. You know, this is one of the driving elements behind our Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, is to have states really establish rating systems around the entirety of their childcare programs and other early learning programs and provide parents clear, concise, understandable information about where their children are going so that they can make the decisions they need. That's important.

But choice -- I want to be clear. Choice is not the driving principle of our pre-K program and Preschool for All program, and it's not because I think there's plenty of evidence that shows that the marketplace right now, particularly for our poor and vulnerable parents, does not, you know, choice is not delivering a high quality environment for their children. You know, there's not a supply of high quality early learning for our children that's needed particularly in a high

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

poverty community. So, you know, our approach is a bit different in that we want to make sure that there is, on a voluntary basis for the parents who want to take advantage of it, access to free public high quality pre-K for their children. And you can't do that through a voucher program. I mean, we can't do that through a CCDBG childcare block grant-like program.

MR. HASKINS: Steve, do you want to --

MR. BARNETT: Yeah. I think the risk we have here in moving toward a compromise is that people will want to cheap out. And if we cheap out, we're going to end up spending money and not getting a return on our investment. You know, putting in a highly qualified teacher probably adds in the neighborhood of \$1,000 per child to the cost. That's nothing like what you lose by not having a good teacher in the classroom. B.A. isn't correlated with success as a teacher in part because the loose standards for what constitutes a B.A., and in part because there's lots of other things that can go wrong besides teacher qualification. But if you then ask the question, well, how many programs have produced these results that we're looking for with poorly paid teachers with lower qualifications, the answer is none. Right, so we don't have an example of where that model worked. So by all means, let's not do something that has not worked. And we have lots of examples of it not working. So why would we want to do that again?

The voucher model I think has two weaknesses. One is that you have parents spending somebody else's money for, let's face it, part of the reason we're interested in doing this is because the benefit is to the rest of us,



PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

not just for their kids, and they have no incentive from purely economic perspective to take those into account, in particular when they're spending somebody else's money. And then that there is, I think, a tendency to then underfund that with the implicit -- implicit in that higher income folk will essentially supplement that and they'll be okay, but poor people are the ones in Florida stuck with the \$2,400 preschool voucher. So we've got models of this. It's not just the childcare voucher program, which may actually endanger kids, but we have examples of this in preschool.

MR. HASKINS: You'd better not testify in the House and say that parent choice endangers kids because they'll run you out of the place.

One last question. Over here.

MS. KEYS: Good afternoon. My name is Almeta Keys, and I'm an executive director here in Washington, D.C., at the Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center which is a Head Start -- Early Head Start program. And I've been hearing about the benefits and investments and all of the dialogue has been very good. Thank you for inviting me.

But I want to stand up today as an example of the investment and as an example of the return because I'm a former Head Start parent. And I want to say that when you put the right supports in place for families, that families -- and I can answer what families -- what poor families want, because I was there. Families want to first of all believe that you're coming to them with a program that is real, that you really care, and that you're thinking about the comprehensive services that they need to address the needs of their children. Parents want their

PRESCHOOL-2013/05/29

children to read. They want to work. They want to go to school, and they want to be empowered to go back and turn around their communities. Parents want to run for public office, they want to be able to be some of the decision-makers at the table, and all of this can be done if we put the right supports in place.

I stand in support of the president's proposal, and I just hope that we continue to strengthen the comprehensive services that we're offering to families and when we think in terms of parent engagement or parent involvement, that we think about parent empowerment and parent engagement. And it's more than just reading stories to your children or being able to help them with their homework, but it's about going back into the local communities and making a difference in your local communities.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. HASKINS: We're going to close on a statement, not a question, from the audience. But eloquently stated. I hope no one does that at our next event.

Please join me in thanking the members of the panel, and good day.

(Applause)

\* \* \* \* \*

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2016