



For Immediate Release

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Statewide Celebration of Early Learning Draws Influential Group of Leaders, Sponsors

ATLANTA, (Sept. 24, 2015) – Leaders from around the state will show their support for early childhood education by visiting early learning classrooms as part of this year’s Georgia Pre-K Week Oct. 5-9, 2015.

Launched five years ago, Pre-K Week’s support from government, business and community leaders grows every year. This year, the Georgia School Boards Association joins as a Pre-K Week partner, and Georgia Power, Synovus and Scholastic return as corporate sponsors. Additional key supporters include Gov. Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal.

“Sandra and I believe that engaging Georgia’s children and encouraging our educators is essential to preparing students for future success,” said Gov. Deal. “Ensuring that Georgia’s youngest scholars continue to benefit from the Pre-K program is a top priority of my administration. By making strategic investments in Georgia’s Pre-K program, we hope to provide each student with a strong learning foundation.”

“The support of such influential public and private organizations is a powerful statement about the value of children’s education and learning in the early years,” said Emily Pelton, Executive Director of Voices for Georgia’s Children, the child advocacy organization that organizes Pre-K Week each year, along with its partners. “Investment in early childhood education creates the foundation necessary for a child to succeed in nearly every phase of life, from learning to read successfully by third grade to graduating high school and entering the workforce.”

During the state’s official Pre-K Week Oct. 5-9, hundreds of state, business and community leaders will visit Pre-K centers across the state to witness early learning in action and engage children and educators. Many will read a favorite children’s book to young learners. The statewide celebration, which includes all

159 counties, draws attention to early learning, including Pre-K, a hallmark program that was pioneered in Georgia 22 years ago.

According to DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, “DECAL readily acknowledges that Georgia Pre-K Week, like the Pre-K program itself, would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of our public and private partners. We appreciate how more and more individuals and organizations clearly understand how important quality early education is to the future of our children and our state.”

Georgia Pre-K Week is developed with the support of Scholastic and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Joining Voices for Georgia’s Children as partners on Georgia Pre-K Week are Black Child Development Institute Atlanta, First Foundation for Childhood Literacy, Georgia Child Care Association, Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Georgia Public Library Service, Georgia Vision Project, Multiple Junior League Chapters, Quality Care for Children, United Way of Greater Atlanta, and YMCA of Metro Atlanta.

About Voices for Georgia’s Children

Established in 2003, Voices for Georgia’s Children (www.georgiavoices.org) is a nonprofit child policy and advocacy organization that envisions a Georgia where children are safe, healthy, educated, employable, and connected to their family and community. Our mission is to be a powerful, unifying voice for a public agenda that ensures the well being of all Georgia’s children.

About Georgia Power:

Georgia Power’s commitment to education spans its more than 100-year history and is emphasized companywide. Ongoing efforts include the company’s Learning Power program, which features Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) lessons highlighting energy basics such as simple circuits and energy efficiency, as well as activities to help students understand how energy is made and distributed from generation facilities to their homes. The Learning Power program has reached more than 250,000 students since its launch in 2011. For more information about how the company is working to advance education and build the highly skilled workforce of tomorrow, visit www.georgiapower.com/community

About Synovus:

Synovus Bank is a Georgia-chartered, FDIC-insured bank. Synovus Bank, together with its affiliates, provides commercial and retail banking, investment, mortgage services to customers through 28 locally-branded divisions, 258

branches, and 341 ATMs in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee. Synovus Bank was named one of America's Most Reputable Banks by American Banker and the Reputation Institute in 2015. See Synovus Bank on the web at www.synovus.com, on Twitter @synovus, and on LinkedIn. Equal Housing Lender.

About Georgia School Boards Association:

Since 1951, GSBA has served as a leader in Georgia's public education system by advocating for local control of public education, and by offering programs and assistance to local boards of education and school systems. GSBA's services have evolved from a professional development program and general "meeting ground" for school board members into a full service association. For more information, visit <http://www.gsba.com>.