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Watch Contest Video Here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vMMi_jGDpc

Coy Bowles to visit Georgia's Pre-K Program Classes in Dallas and Athens

Grammy Winning Guitarist and Author from Zac Brown Band will read his new children's book "Behind the Little Red Door"

ATLANTA, Ga., (March 23, 2018) – Grammy-award winning Guitarist Coy Bowles from the Zac Brown Band will visit Georgia's Pre-K Program classes in Dallas and Athens next week to read his new children's book "Behind the Little Red Door." Leigh Chauvin's class at Childcare Network #309 in Dallas will welcome Bowles, DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs, and CALi, the agency's official "spokes puppy" on **Monday, March 26, 2018**, at 10:00 AM. Emily Paxson's class at Timothy Elementary School in Athens will welcome Bowles, Georgia's Pre-K Program Director Faith Duncan, and CALi on **Wednesday, March 28, 2018**, at 10:00 AM. At both visits, Bowles is expected to read his new book, play the guitar, and take photos with teachers and children.

DECAL is partnering with Bowles to publish the book "Behind the Little Red Door" as part of this year's celebration of the 25th birthday of Georgia's Pre-K Program. Both schools are the winners in a classroom contest promoting the new book. The contest asked Pre-K classes to demonstrate what they think is behind the little red door through a variety of video and art projects. Close to 200 entries were received. Ms. Paxson's class won the video contest and Ms. Chauvin's class won the art project contest. Both winning entries have been posted on the Bright from the Start Facebook page.

As part of the 25th birthday celebration, all Georgia Pre-K students will receive a free copy of the book “Behind the Little Red Door,” along with a copy for their classroom. The book is also available for purchase at www.coybowles.com.

This school year approximately 84,000 four year olds attend Georgia’s Pre-K Program. The voluntary, lottery-funded Pre-K program has been recognized as one of the top programs in the nation, based on quality standards, teacher qualifications, and enrollment. Georgia’s Pre-K Program is universal – meaning that any age eligible child residing in Georgia may attend the program regardless of family income. Georgia’s model for providing the Pre-K program is unique in that it is offered through a public-private partnership in local school systems, in private child care centers, and in other facilities.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages *Quality Rated*, Georgia’s community powered child care rating system.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.state.ga.us.