



Press Release

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Contact: Katie Kelly, PRE4CLE Director
216-224-9554
kkelly@pre4cle.org

WHITE HOUSE VISITS CLEVELAND, APPLAUDS PRE4CLE'S EFFORTS TO ENROLL MORE CHILDREN IN HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL

Cabinet member visit convenes local leaders on investing in early childhood education

CLEVELAND, OHIO – As the White House continues to promote the importance of early childhood education around the nation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julián Castro and Roberto J. Rodríguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education, came to Cleveland today to applaud PRE4CLE's efforts to enroll more children in high-quality preschool and to preview a new national campaign that will focus on early education.

"Expanding access to high-quality preschool is the single most important thing we can do to ensure our children grow up ready to succeed, and it's a top priority for President Obama," Secretary Castro said. "Cleveland's PRE4CLE initiative is a national model for how a public and private partnership can work together to ensure our youngest citizens have access to high-quality preschool and come to kindergarten ready to succeed,"

This morning, PRE4CLE hosted a roundtable discussion that brought together the White House and Ohio leaders in philanthropy, business and the public sector to discuss the importance of investing in early education initiatives, like PRE4CLE, that ensure all children and families have the opportunity to succeed in school and life.

Secretary Castro led San Antonio's universal pre-k initiative when he was Mayor in 2011. After the roundtable, he went to Bingham Early Learning Center in Cleveland's Central neighborhood, a HUD Choice Neighborhood, to see the great work that is being done in Cleveland and to applaud PRE4CLE on its' progress.

This visit comes shortly after the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a grant application to states for a substantial federal investment in high-quality early childhood education. The State of Ohio submitted an application for a \$80 million federal investment across the state under this grant earlier this month, and specifically named Cleveland, and PRE4CLE, as

one of the communities who is ready to expand high quality early education to its' children.

Cleveland is one of several cities to be visited by members of President Obama's Cabinet and was selected because of the community's investment in expanding high-quality early childhood education through PRE4CLE.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson thanked Secretary Castro for the important role Federal investment in Cleveland's children has played in galvanizing even more local private and public support to educate Cleveland's preschoolers.

"These investments ensure Cleveland's families and their youngest children can choose a high-quality preschool if they want that for their children," Jackson said. "Because of the work that's being done through PRE4CLE, Cleveland's children will grow up in strong communities, so they have the tools they need to succeed in school, and in life."

Billie Osborne-Fears, executive director of Starting Point, which connects families to high-quality public and private preschools and is a partner in PRE4CLE, said she looks forward to continuing discussions with the White House on how PRE4CLE can work with the Obama Administration to find meaningful, sustainable approaches to increase access to high-quality early learning.

"Cleveland's high-quality early childhood providers , including public preschool classrooms, exemplify the high impact work that is under way in our community to more powerfully engage, empower, and inspire families to make the very best decisions they can regarding high quality education for their children," she said. "We want to see that continue so we can reach all preschool children in Cleveland."

PRE4CLE is a plan to expand access to high-quality preschool programs to children in the City of Cleveland and is a major next step in implementing Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools. Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, PRE4CLE will increase the number of high quality preschool spaces available for four year olds in the City of Cleveland whose families want them to attend high-quality preschool. The plan will be rolled out to three year olds at a later date. For more information, visit www.pre4cle.org.

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