

s a m p l e

We encourage you to use your own letterhead and request that you customize the text, rather than using it verbatim. Thank you.

Month, day, 2006

Dear REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR _____,

As a member of the *Ready for School* Leaders Panel, I am deeply concerned about the number of Oregon children starting school behind and the impact on their future and our future workforce and economy. Oregon's Head Start Pre-K (OPK) program has a proven track record of preparing children for school success, yet thousands of eligible children are on the waiting list.

Oregon was once a leader in expanding access to early learning opportunities for at-risk children. In recent years, we have been surpassed by many other states, including our neighbors to the north and south.

We can take a significant step forward in expanding access to high quality pre-kindergarten by fully funding Oregon's Head Start Pre-K program. Many economists, including Nobel Laureate James Heckman, have argued that there is no better economic development strategy than investing in early education.

A growing coalition of business and civic leaders are supporting this action step through the *Ready for School* Campaign. We urge you to help make this critical investment in Oregon's economic future a reality by supporting an additional \$40 million in funding for OPK during the 2007-2009 biennium. The additional funding will ensure that all eligible kids will have access to a program proven to narrow the achievement gap and prepare them for kindergarten. This investment will more than pay for itself in reduced special education costs, lower rates of incarceration, reduced lifetime cost for social services and increased tax revenue from well-educated workers with higher earnings.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that all of Oregon's children arrive at kindergarten ready for school.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME