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Contact: Katie Kelly, 216-224-9554, kkelly@groundworkohio.org

GOVERNOR SUPPORTS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor emphasizes comprehensive early childhood programs to focus on whole child and child development

COLUMBUS—January 29, 2009—Governor Strickland highlighted the Ohio early care and education system in yesterday’s State of the State Address, saying that Ohio needs to move towards a comprehensive system that is aligned from prekindergarten through higher education. In an effort to promote a P-16 education system, the Governor plans to unite all early childhood education development programs and resources into the Department of Education.

Also included in Governor Strickland’s education proposal was the implementation of mandatory full-day kindergarten for every child in Ohio. Currently, slightly more than half of Ohio’s children participate in a full-day program.

“Giving children access to high-quality early education experiences gives them a fair chance to succeed,” said Katie Kelly, groundWork Director. “Governor Strickland understands that. Many members of the legislature understand that. Now it’s time for our elected officials to demonstrate that support by investing in our state’s youngest children during the budget process.”

Research shows that children benefit greatly from all-day kindergarten. A study completed in Streetsboro, Ohio, showed standardized test scores jumped 11% in one year when students who attended full-day kindergarten reached the third grade. In addition, research has shown that full-day kindergarten can reduce grade retention by 26 percent. This would represent a significant cost savings for Ohio’s K-12 system, which spent \$43 million in 2006 on grade retention for students in kindergarten through third grade alone.

groundWork is a coalition early care and education leaders, parents, service professionals, business leaders, and organizations across the state who have come together to promote state investments and policies that will address the needs of Ohio’s youngest children, including voluntary access to high-quality early care and education programs, assessment, screening, and treatment for social and emotional problems, increased access to health services and supports, and voluntary access to full-day kindergarten.

To learn more about groundWork, please visit www.groundworkohio.org

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