



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Assemblyman Kevin McCarty Receives Early Learning Champion Award**

*McCarty Honored for Leadership on Behalf of California's Young Children*

**West Sacramento, CA** – Early Edge California today presented Assemblyman Kevin McCarty (*D-Sacramento*) with the 2015 Early Learning Champion Award for championing early childhood education budget investments and policies. The event commenced with a preschool tour at the Washington Unified School District (WUSD) Early Childhood Education Program at Stonegate Elementary School, followed by an onsite community celebration with West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon, preschoolers, educators, administrators, and early childhood advocates.

"I am honored to receive the Early Learning Champion Award," said Assemblymember Kevin McCarty. "I look forward to continuing to build on the recent progress in California to ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education."

Thanks to leaders like Assemblyman McCarty, chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee 2 on Education Finance, the 2015-16 State Budget makes a historic \$300 million investment providing over 16,000 additional children with preschool and child care, gives working families the support they need to participate in our recovering economy, and sets the stage for greater progress in 2016. In addition, as author of AB 47 - the Preschool for All Act of 2015 this year, Assemblyman McCarty stood by California's promise of preschool for all low-income 4 year olds and mobilized a broad bipartisan coalition of support that highlights the continued need for quality early education programs.

"Early Edge California is honored to recognize Assemblyman Kevin McCarty with the 2015 Early Learning Champion Award," said Deborah Kong, president of Early Edge California. "McCarty is a longtime early education supporter who ardently continues to prioritize quality early learning opportunities in the Legislature to help California's young children reach their full potential in school."

"I'm thrilled to be a part of today to honor our community's representative, great friend, and tremendous advocate, Assemblyman Kevin McCarty for his great leadership on what is the most important work that we've done in our city," said West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon. "[Universal Preschool for West Sacramento] has made dramatic gains, particularly for English learner families, in terms of their readiness for kindergarten and closing the gap. Now it's a source of inspiration for the community in so many ways."

"Preschool age children and parents of California are fortunate to have Assemblymember McCarty at the Capitol," said Yolo County Superintendent of Schools Jesse Ortiz. "His commitment and passion for all children to start school having the reading ability to be successful is a must."

"Today's gathering is a celebration of our investment in all early learners," said Washington Unified Superintendent Linda C. Luna. "All children deserve access to high-quality early education that provides our 4 year olds the experiences, skills and development they need to be successful in their K-12 educational journey."

"California's children have more than an articulate advocate in Assemblymember Kevin McCarty," said Erin Gabel, deputy director of external and governmental affairs at First 5 California. "They have a knowledgeable, driven, and focused champion who will not stop until all our children have access to the quality early learning experiences necessary to thrive."

The Early Learning Champion Awards are presented annually by Early Edge California. This year, Early Edge California also recognized Senator Ricardo Lara (*D-Bell Gardens*) with a 2015 Early Learning Champion Award and Christian Griffith, chief consultant of the Assembly Budget Committee, with a 2015 Legislative Staffer of the Year Award.

[\*\*View photos from the event here.\*\*](#)

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#### **About Assemblyman Kevin McCarty**

Assemblymember Kevin McCarty was elected to the California State Assembly in November, 2014 to represent Assembly District 7, which includes the communities of Sacramento, West Sacramento, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Antelope. Learn more at: <http://asmdc.org/members/a07/>

#### **About Early Edge California**

Early Edge California is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to ensure all children have the early experiences necessary to be successful learners by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, setting them on a path to college and career readiness. Learn more at: [www.earlyedgecalifornia.org](http://www.earlyedgecalifornia.org)

#### **About Washington Unified School District**

Washington Unified School District serves an ethnically diverse and growing population of 7,421 students, with a staff of 400 certificated employees and 350 classified employees. The district currently operates seven elementary schools (six K-8 schools and one Transitional Kindergarten-5 school), a comprehensive high school, an alternative high school, an independent study program, and an adult education program. At least one additional elementary school is planned for the future to accommodate growth.

In addition to a quality K-12 education program, Washington Unified School District offers a variety of additional educational opportunities to meet the needs of our student population. These additional programs include preschool programs, English as a second language education, special education, a Gifted and Talented Educational (GATE) program, an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, and an opportunity program. Learn more at: <http://www.wusd.k12.ca.us/>