



Center for Development and Learning recognizes Sen. Mack “Bodi” White as Literacy Champion in the Louisiana Senate

METAIRIE – May 6, 2021 Mack “Bodi” White was recognized as the Senator of the Year for Louisiana as part of The Center for Development and Learning’s Literacy Day held at the Capitol today.

During the 2020 sessions, which included the regular and a number of special sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senator White worked with the Center for Development and Learning and stakeholders to secure funding for a literacy coach pilot program that provided intensive support and interventions for 13 high need schools in Louisiana.



After time ran out on the effort in the regular session, Senator White revitalized the effort during a special session to provide the funding needed to create the pilot.

“Senator White’s leadership as Chair of Senate Finance provided resources needed to implement this important pilot program to provide literacy coaches,” remarked CEO Dr. John Wyble. “The Senator’s commitment to Louisiana’s children is well documented and we appreciate his willingness to prioritize this program for funding at a time of such uncertainty.”

Louisiana ranks 49th in literacy among the nation with only 1 out of every 4 fourth graders reading proficiently, according to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The pilot program is widely regarded as an important first step toward implementing comprehensive reforms modeled after the state of Mississippi, which currently leads the nation in student growth for literacy.

In January 2020, the Early Literacy Commission released a report of recommendations that urged the legislature to commit recurring funding specifically for literacy. The Early Literacy Commission was legislatively created in 2019, led by the efforts of the Center for Development and Learning in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education.

As part of Literacy Day, the Center for Development and Learning provided every member of the Louisiana legislature with a children’s book written by

a Louisiana author and/or with a focus on Louisiana. Also, various partners and stakeholders were invited to provide information to legislators, stakeholders, and the general public through various displays occupying the Capitol Rotunda for the day.

About the Center for Development and Learning:

Founded in 1992, the Center for Development and Learning's mission is to improve the life chances of all children by increasing school success. CDL's work is focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing teacher effectiveness. Visit CDL's website www.cdl.org for more information.