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Fund early childhood ed

Blueprint Louisiana applauds the Aug. 13 American Press editorial, "Pre-K funding cuts deserve dunce cap," and wholeheartedly believes all students deserve a strong foundation of early childhood education.

As it stands, Louisiana's ultra-successful LA 4 Early Childhood Program is state-funded for children whose families qualify for free or reduced lunch (at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level guideline). Despite Louisiana's recent fiscal challenges, we commend the administration and lawmakers who have preserved LA 4 funding levels in these difficult times. However, the budget difficulties have prevented implementing Act 876 of the 2008 regular legislative session to make LA 4 available to all four-year-olds regardless of income.

While that's understandable, studies continue to show we can enhance the achievement of children immediately and throughout their academic career by increasing access to early childhood education. And as the editorial stated, investments in high-quality pre-school pay for themselves and then some.

So as the budget challenges linger for the foreseeable future, Blueprint strongly encourages protecting early childhood education funding as well as doing everything possible to try to find a few more dollars to provide greater access to this proven educational endeavor.

WILLIAM J. DORE

President, Dore Energy Corporation

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