



## Center for Development and Learning recognizes Rep. Royce Duplessis as its House Literacy Champion

**METAIRIE – May 7, 2021** New Orleans area Representative Royce Duplessis was recognized as the Legislator of the Year in the Louisiana House as part of The Center for Development and Learning’s Literacy Day held at the Capitol yesterday.

Representative Duplessis, despite the uncertainties of the 2020 regular session in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, championed efforts to create an early literacy pilot program focused on engaging literacy coaches to work with identified schools in need of intensive support. Through his work on this effort, which were based on recommendations from a 2020 report of the Early Literacy Commission, Representative Duplessis opened the door for many of the literacy reforms moving through the legislative process during the current regular session, which ends June 10.



“We are extremely grateful for Representative Duplessis’ leadership and tenacity in serving as a champion for early literacy in Louisiana,” offered President and CEO Dr. John Wyble. “His ability to create bipartisan support for literacy initiatives like the early literacy pilot will have a profound impact on student learning for a very long time.”

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.

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**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](http://www.cdl.org) for more information.