

Jeana Ross at the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation

Jeana Ross is a lifelong educator and, like the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation, believes that early childhood education is a key component of a strong economy at the state and national levels.

From 2012-2020, Ms. Ross was Secretary of Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education. Alabama's state Pre-K and early education program continues to be a valuable guide for local and regional leaders as they look to build high-quality programs in their own states. Under her leadership:

- Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education was consistently ranked number one for its First Class Pre-K program, based on the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality benchmarks and Essential Elements for High Quality Pre-K.
- The state's pre-K program saw the largest growth in its history, expanding from 217 to 1,250 classrooms, serving each of the state's 67 counties.
- Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education received federal grant awards totaling more than 100 million dollars, which Secretary Ross led her department in writing and receiving.
- The state served children and families with the highest levels of transparency and accountability, creating a standard for childhood education programs in other states.

Jeana Ross recently joined the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation as its Strategic Advisor on Early Education Policy & Practice. With 36 gubernatorial elections taking place in the months ahead, 2022 has the potential to bring sweeping progress toward increased investment in early learning in states across our nation. The Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation and Jeana Ross are joining forces to help make this goal a reality.

In order to help advance this work in communities across the nation, Jeana Ross is traveling to states — in person and virtually — to consult on the development of early education programs, from supporting planning for pilot programs, to key improvements of long-standing initiatives.

Do you have any upcoming events or meetings that would benefit from hearing about Alabama's Pre-K program, and the overall importance of investing in early education? Contact Staci Jasin at the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation — staci@saulzaentzfoundation.org — to learn more and schedule Jeana Ross at your event.

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Invest in your teachers and provide them what they need to be a true early childhood teacher who is responsive and sensitive to children.

- Jeana Ross,

Strategic Advisor on Early Education Policy & Practice

