



# JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Rep. Jessie Rodriguez

June 5, 2015  
(608) 266-0610

## **Rep. Rodriguez Addresses Students and Family at Early Childhood Education Ceremony**

MADISON – Surrounded by church staff and eager students clad in hardhats with shovels in tow, state Representative Jessie Rodriguez (R-Franklin) spoke to a group on Friday morning for the groundbreaking of the early education program at St. James School in Madison. The program for children ages 3-4 is expected to prepare the students for elementary school.

Before students began digging up sod, symbolic of the groundbreaking event, Rep. Rodriguez spoke to the importance of early childhood education.

“Early childhood education is quickly becoming one of the most profound ways to help prepare our children for education,” said Rodriguez. “It is tremendous to see schools like St. James putting children on a pathway to success.”

Recent research conducted through the University of Wisconsin suggests that participation in early childhood education, such as preschool and pre-kindergarten programs, leads to a number of benefits for both participants and the general public. Children enrolled in early childhood are more likely to succeed in education, develop stronger social skills, and are more financially stable.

“This research has created awareness that early childhood education plays an important role throughout the life of a child,” said Rodriguez. “We can see that through the evolution of these programs, that early childhood education gives children more tools to succeed in every aspect of life.”

The research indicates that while there are costs associated with the implementation of early childhood education programs the return on investment outweighs the initial cost. According to a study performed through the University of Wisconsin Chancellor’s Office, for every \$1 spent on early childhood education the return to participants and taxpayers ranges from \$4 to \$16.

St. James School has been part of the Madison community for the past 110 years. The school is home to a large minority student population, 47 percent non-white with many bilingual and multi-lingual children. Early childhood education programs increase graduation rates for minority students.

“Currently we see a gap in graduation rates with fewer minority students graduating than non-

Page 1 of 2



# JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

---

minority students in some of our communities throughout the state,” said Rodriguez. “We need to eliminate that gap. Early childhood education will increase the chances that all our children throughout Wisconsin will earn a high school diploma.”

St. James School began developing the early childhood education program several years ago. The new early care program is scheduled to begin fall 2015.

###