



## **Houston Education Council Features Early Education Advocate, Dr. Bob Sanborn**

President and CEO of CHILDREN AT RISK, Dr. Bob Sanborn, spoke as the special guest at the Partnership's Education Council on Tuesday, April 12. CHILDREN AT RISK is a nonprofit organization that serves as a catalyst for change for children through research, education and influencing public policy makers on the importance of improving the lives of children. Dr. Sanborn presented the current landscape of education and other issues concerning Houston and Texas children.

Dr. Sanborn dove into his presentation with the CHILDREN AT RISK's annual statewide School and District Rankings, which serves as a guide on the performance of local schools and sparks important community dialogue on the quality of public education in Texas. The organization, along with the Partnership, worked to pass House Bill 2804 to give an A-F rating to every school, so parents understand if their child's school is performing well. The rating system will be implemented during the 2017-2018 school year. Dr. Sanborn also shared insight on the characteristics of schools that received high ratings and were named "top performing" schools. Those higher-ranked schools shared the common thread of offering high-quality pre-k programs. Dr. Sanborn stressed the importance of early childhood education, a top priority for the Partnership through its work with the Early Matters coalition.

"If I can leave you with one thing today, I would say: talk to your local legislators," said Dr. Sanborn. "Early education is the single most important factor in turning around education in Texas. It is the best way to prevent high school drop-outs and create a skilled workforce and has to continue to be a focus for the business community."

Dr. Sanborn earned his undergraduate degree at Florida State University and his doctorate at Columbia University. Before entering the nonprofit sector, he had a distinguished career in higher education at Rice University and Hampshire College. He is also the host of the popular radio program, *Growing Up in America*, on the Pacifica Radio Network. He continues to work to end poverty at a systemic level through advocacy with community organizations and an increased awareness among public officials and the media.