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## **THRIVE BY FIVE WASHINGTON CEO ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION**

**SEATTLE** – Dr. Graciela Italiano Thomas, President and CEO of Thrive by Five Washington, announced today her plans to leave the organization at the end of the month.

Established in 2006, Thrive by Five Washington is a public-private partnership championing positive early learning opportunities for every child, from birth to age five, so that they are ready to succeed in school and thrive in life. Italiano-Thomas, who became Thrive's first CEO in January 2007, credits the efforts of the organization's board of directors, staff and other early learning partners with the many successes that have been realized to date and said that this is an excellent time for the organization to select a new leader.

"It's been a wonderful experience for me to come to Washington and help establish this organization," said Italiano-Thomas. "Thrive is a very special organization that has not only launched a number of programs to support children and all who champion them, but also one that is committed to raising the bar for all of us who endeavor to help children achieve their full potential."

Before coming to Thrive by Five Washington, Italiano-Thomas served as the CEO of several other early learning organizations in the United States, including the Los Angeles Universal Preschool. She now looks forward to completing a nonfiction book on her work in early learning and to having the opportunity to respond to the many speaking requests she receives to present on the subject nationally and internationally.

Gov. Christine Gregoire and William Gates, Sr. serve as co-chairs of the Thrive by Five Washington Board of Directors.

"From the very beginning, she has demonstrated a passion and tenacity for bringing attention to the educational needs of our state's youngest citizens," Gates said. "Most significantly, Dr. Italiano-Thomas worked with Thrive's board, funders and partners to develop a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy for promoting and demonstrating the importance of high-quality early learning opportunities for every child in Washington. She is an accomplished and experienced champion of this cause who has helped this organization get off to a strong start."

A successor to the position of CEO of Thrive by Five Washington has not yet been named.

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***Thrive by Five Washington***

*Thrive by Five partners with parents, early learning professionals, communities, philanthropic organizations, businesses and government to develop a sustainable system for statewide early learning improvement. [www.thrivebyfivewa.org](http://www.thrivebyfivewa.org)*

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