

# AN OPEN LETTER TO STATE GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Dear State Government Leaders:

We the undersigned are early educators who are teaching Minnesota children from birth to age five. As a leader in state government, the single most powerful thing you can do to improve Minnesota's future is to invest in our early education system to close Minnesota's achievement gaps and alleviate Minnesota's serious child care shortage.

As you probably know, achievement gaps are differences in learning measured between various racial, ethnic or income categories. Minnesota has some of the worst achievement gaps in the nation. Achievement gaps often lead to school dropouts, which harms Minnesota's economy and communities.

In Minnesota, about 35,000 low-income children are unable to access quality early learning programs. Until Minnesota closes these early learning "opportunity gaps," we will never close Minnesota's achievement gaps.

Early Learning Scholarships (Pathway I type), coupled with the Parent Aware quality rating and improvement system, are a proven tool for addressing achievement gaps. Scholarships start early in life, reach the most vulnerable children, demand the use of kindergarten-readiness best practices and are flexible and portable for parents.

Funding Scholarships for those 35,000 left-behind children not only will help address opportunity and achievement gaps, it also will strengthen and grow Minnesota's child care sector as families struggle to find child care in the midst of serious shortage in many parts of the state.

Beyond those significant advantages, Early Learning Scholarships are simply more fair to early educators. They are inclusive of *all* types of quality early educators. Parents can choose to use their Scholarships at programs based in schools, centers, homes, and non-profit organizations, as long as the program is proving that they are using kindergarten-readiness best practices, as measured by the Parent Aware Ratings.

Scholarships are a much more fair, inclusive and flexible approach than the Universal Pre-K model (UPK), known as Voluntary Pre-K in Minnesota. UPK unnecessarily and unfairly excludes quality early education programs, and forces parents into a rigid one-type-fits-all approach.

Thank you for listening to us. As early educators who are proud to be teaching Minnesota children in centers, religious organizations, nonprofit organizations and homes, we aren't asking you for political earmarks or special treatment. But we are asking you to invest limited state funds in Scholarships, so that **all types of early educators have an equal opportunity** to serve Scholarship families as we work to close Minnesota's dangerous worst-in-the-nation achievement gaps.

Sincerely,

**Nicole High**

Little Jackets Child Care  
8 children served  
Cambridge

**Alena Boklep**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Alison Petri**

New Horizon Academy  
Plymouth

**Allison Stephens**

Allison's Little Hands Learning Center  
8 children served  
Blaine

**Allison VanLoon**

Acorn Academy  
64 children served  
Ham Lake

**Amanda Reker**

New Horizon Academy  
34 children served  
Arden Hills

**Amber Hammers**

Center Based  
150 children served  
Eden Prairie

**Amber VanSlyke**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
72 schools in Minnesota

**Amy Brower**

Little Learners Academy, LLC  
110 children served  
Alexandria

**Andrea Vorderbruggen**

Children's Discovery Academy  
134 children served  
Vadnais Heights

**Angela Nierengarten**

New Horizon Academy  
160 children served  
Elk River

**Angelique Bruggeman**

Angelique's Little Angeles licensed family  
child care  
14 children served  
Savage

**Angie Omelianchuk**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000+ children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Anita Brandenburg**

Cobber Kids Concordia College  
54 children served  
Moorhead

**Anita Heidelberg**

Lil' Dreamers In Home Child Care  
10 children served  
Braham

**Ann Hotz**

Whittier Wildflowers Preschool  
40 children served  
Minneapolis

**Ann Zenor**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Anne Scheller**

Anne's Adventures  
10 children served  
St.Paul

**Annette Cliff**

New Horizon Acadmey  
125 children served  
Lakeville

**April Guba**

Kinderberry Hill Edina  
132 children served  
Edina

**April Phoat**

April's Angels  
6 children served  
Rochester

**Ariane Bromberg**

Ariane's Child Care  
8 children served  
Rochester

**Asanka Perera**

Asanka Perera  
8 children served  
Richfield

**Ashley Broughton**

Bethlehem Lutheran Early Childcare  
Center  
40 children served  
Saint Cloud

**Barb Kylo**

Barb Kylo's home childcare  
8 children served  
Byron

**Barb Murphy**

Grace Neighborhood Nursery School  
96 children served  
Minneapolis

**Barbara Luxford**

Small Friends  
12 children served  
Maple Grove

**Becky Hurst**

New Horizon Academy  
116 children served  
Eagan

**Beth**

Precious Years Learning Center  
60 children served  
Nisswa

**Beverly Bauman**

New Horizon Academy  
8,000 children served  
Metro

**Brenda Johnson**

Home Away From Home Daycare  
14 children served  
Zimmerman

**Brenda L Beckman**

B's Loving Kare Daycare  
12 children served  
Caledonia

**Brooke Thrall**

ENTHRALLED MOMENTS HOME  
CHILDCARE  
8 children served  
Oakdale

**Cara Johnson-Bader**

New Horizon Academy  
Plymouth

**Caren Hoffman**

A Child's Delight Too, Inc.  
100 children served  
Faribault

**Carol Posch**

Giggles Galore Daycare & Preschool  
12 children served  
Royalton

**Catherine Jones**

Extended Family Child Care  
9 children served  
Richfield

**Chad Dunkley**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
72 schools in Minnesota

**Charlotte Todd**

Noah's Ark Preschool  
140 children served  
Circle Pines

**Chelsea Pfeifer**

New Horizon Academy  
145 children served  
Rogers

**Cheryl Amundson**

New Horizon Academy  
185 children served  
Blaine

**Cheryl Bennerotte**

Cheryl's Cheerful Children  
8 children served  
Woodbury

**Christa Mostoller**

Christa's Kids Child Care  
16 children served  
Grand Rapids

**Christine Hallett**

Christine's Playhouse  
7 children served  
Byron

**Christine Leonard**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Christine Rodriguez**

New Horizon  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Christine Waverek**

Building Blocks Family Daycare  
10 children served  
Saint Joseph

**Christy Colpitts**

New Horizon Academy  
102 children served  
Maple Grove

**Cindy Cunningham**

Wee Little Bobbins  
9 children served  
Ramsey

**Clare Sanford**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Clarissa Johnston**

Rainbow Kids Family Child Care  
12 children served  
Mounds View

**Cliss Loescher**

Building Blocks for Life Preschool  
16 children served  
Cambridge

**Crystal Born**

Bright Beginnings  
10 children served  
Mankato

**Cynthia Giuliani**

6 children served  
Duluth

**D Maske**

Darla's Daycare Inc  
12 children served  
St. Michael

**Danette Allrich-Osano**

Holding Hands Childcare  
12 children served  
Saint Paul

**Darcy Hoops**

Darcy's Daycare  
9 children served  
Duluth

**Debbie Wells**

New Horizon Academy  
80 children served  
Maplewood

**Deborah Kopitzke**

Growing Beautiful Minds Child Care  
4 children served  
Saint Michael

**Debra Archer**

Kickstart Preschool and Childcare  
70 children served  
Two Harbors

**Desiree Culhane**

New Horizon Academy  
200 children served  
Apple Valley

**Destiny Rock**

Edina Morningside Preschool  
28 children served  
Edina

**Don & Asanka Perera**

Achcha's Daycare  
8 children served  
Richfield

**Donna Kent**

White Earth Childcare  
20 children served  
White Earth

**Doreen**

Burks Family Childcare  
14 children served  
Hutchinson

**Doris Wald**

Family Childcare  
12 children served  
Woodbury

**Eagle Lee**

New Horizon Academy  
120 children served  
Roseville

**Ellen Weil**

Kinderberry Hill Child Development  
Centers  
130 children served  
Roseville

**Emma Chiles**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Esther Lenartz**

Montessori Day  
10 children served  
Cottage Grove

**Gail Bookey**

C.A.P.E. Child Care Center  
14 children served  
Anoka

**Gail Ebert**

Gails Childcare  
13 children served  
Brooklyn Center

**Heather Freese**

Campus Playhouse Child Care Center  
110 children served  
St. Cloud

**Heather Marquez**

Sunshine child care  
9 children served  
Rosemount

**Heidilynn Johnson**

Discovery Corner Daycare  
13 children served  
North Branch

**Helen Hudgens**

Arden Place Child Care  
10 children served  
Arden Hills

**Holly Kløver**

New Horizon Academy  
129 children served  
Maplewood

**Jackie Harrington**

First Five Years Family Child Care  
7 children served  
Rochester

**Jaiden Vogt**

New Horizon Academy  
123 children served  
Arden Hills

**Jami Lessard**

New Horizon Academy-Penn Ave  
190 children served  
Minneapolis

**Jane Reichstadt**

New Horizon Academy  
167 children served  
Eagan

**Janell Gronholz**

Bright Beginnings  
9 children served  
Alexandria

**Janelle Coleman**

Wood City Preschool  
45 children served  
Cloquet, MN

**Janet Poissant**

Country Tot-Lot Child Care  
12 children served  
Brainerd

**Jean Smykalski**

Busy Bodies Childcare  
12 children served  
Walker

**Jeanette Knutson**

11 children served  
Cottage Grove

**Jeanine Hill**

Headstart Preschool  
5 children served  
Circle Pines

**Jenelle Remick**

Jenelle's Daycare  
14 children served  
Red Lake Falls

**Jenni Haas**

New Horizon Academy  
Plymouth

**Jennifer Bestgen**

Best Jen's Childcare  
12 children served  
Rochester

**Jennifer Braam**

Creative Corner Childcare  
12 children served  
Mankato

**Jennifer Nellis**

Room For Growing  
290 children served  
Forest Lake

**Jennifer Woehrle**

Noah's Ark Preschool  
160 children served  
Circle Pines

**Jessica Hamilton**

Jessica's Jumpin' Joy Daycare  
6 children served  
Apple Valley

**Jessica Tukua**

Jessica's Family Child Care  
10 children served  
Rochester

**Jessics Rogers**

13 children served  
Brooklyn center

**Jill Dunkley**

Center based child care  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Joanna Rada**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Jody Brinks**

Little Pioneers  
12 children served  
Jackson

**JoNelle Heins**

Little Acorns Learning Center  
83 children served  
Orono

**Juliana Winter**

Little Bear Playschool  
7 children served  
Arlington

**Julie Amundson**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Julie Ellefson**

Southside Family Nurturing Center  
28 children served  
Minneapolis

**Julie Slade-Kamatchus**

Julie's Creative Kids4  
4 children served  
Mankato

**Karen griffith**

Karen Little Care Bears LLC  
10 children served  
Mountain Lake

**Karlene Dunaisky**

The Backyard Playschool  
20 children served  
Wrenshall

**Katherine Crandall**

Katie's Little Darlings  
13 children served  
Shafer

**Kathleen Church**

Creative Center Daycare  
11 children served  
Cass Lake

**Kathryn Hopkins**

Crocus Hill Preschool  
45 children served  
St. Paul

**Katie Kantor**

New Horizon Academy  
140 children served  
Elk River

**Katie Wolter**

Katie Wolter  
9 children served  
Breckenridge

**Kayla Smith**

Kaylas We Care Daycare  
12 children served  
Bemidji

**Kelli Olson**

Bethlehem Lutheran Early Childhood  
Center  
52 children served  
St. Cloud

**Kelly Martini**

Kelly's Daycare (Family Child Care)  
10 children served  
Avon Township

**Kimberly Meyer**

Tutor Time of Andover  
102 children served  
Andover

**Kimberly Oloughlin**

Kids r Us Childcare  
17 children served  
International falls

**Kimberly Walz**

Kimberly Walz Childcare  
10 children served  
St. Cloud

**Kjersta Hoffman**

Kuddles with Kjer  
9 children served  
Shakopee

**Kris Hemingsen**

New Horizon Academy  
123 children served  
Burnsville

**Kristen**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Elk River

**Kristin Jaquith**

Stay N Play Child Care Center Inc  
250 children served  
Litchfield & Willmar

**Kristine Larson**

Kris Larson's Family Childcare  
15 children served  
White Bear Lake

**Laura Whittaker**

Wind Ridge Schoolhouse  
19 children served  
Duluth

**Laurie Lyons**

Little blessings  
18 children served  
Barnum

**Leslie Irrthum**

Leslie's Daycare  
12 children served  
Eagan

**Lily Crooks**

Seward Child Care Center  
37 children served  
Minneapolis

**Linda Bartos King**

Center-based child development center  
95 children served  
Circle Pines

**Linda Schesso**

Linda's Child Care  
7 children served  
Shakopee

**Linnea Otto**

Allstar  
145 children served  
Milaca

**Lisa**

New Horizon Academy  
172 children served  
St. Michael

**Lisa Durst**

Sandcastle Child Care  
194 children served  
St Paul

**Lisa Lindboe**

Happy Hearts Rock  
10 children served  
Fridley

**Lisa S Athey**

Lisa's child care  
9 children served  
Mora

**Liz Bourke**

New Horizon Academy  
167 children served  
Saint Paul

**Lois Sheppard**

Wee Care Christian Child Care  
8 children served  
Woodbury

**Lori Loehrer**

New Horizon Academy in Sartell  
154 children served  
Sartell

**Lori Rittmiller**

Kiddleywinks Daycare and Preschool  
8 children served  
Columbia Heights

**Lorie M Hellquist**

Lories Land Of Little Hands  
8 children served  
Ham Lake

**Lynn Case**

Bright Beginnings  
9 children served  
Bemidji

**Lynne DeVallier**

Lynne's Little Ones Family Childcare  
12 children served  
St Paul

**Maggie Flynn**

New Horizon Academy  
85 children served  
Minnetonka

**MaKayla Jellema**

Lil' Pumpkin's Play School  
10 children served  
Mountain Lake

**Margaret (Peggy) Elsasser OTR**

Little Helpers Child Care  
12 children served  
Woodbury

**Margie Bragg**

Northeast Child Development Center  
60 children served  
Minneapolis

**Marie Strain**

Center-based Preschool  
132 children served  
Burnsville

**Marlene Marohn**

Marlene Marohn's Childcare  
14 children served  
Mora

**Martha Welch**

Children's Discovery Academy  
242 children served  
Little Canada and Vadnais Heights

**Mary Borrell**

New Horizon Acadey  
121 children served  
Champlin

**Mary Braunwarth**

Mary's Little Lambs  
7 children served  
Rosemount

**Mary Christensen**

Kountry Kyds Daycare  
12 children served  
Lake Park

**Mary Z. Terrass**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Across Minnesota

**Maureen M. Marple**

Learning Can B Fun 2 Child Care  
14 children served  
Duluth

**Meghan Larsen**

New Horizon Academy  
90 children served  
Eden Prairie

**Melanie Corey**

Mel's lil Munchkins  
11 children served  
Lake City

**Michele Conda**

Michele's Daycare LLC  
10 children served  
Prior Lake

**Michele Hofmann Grams**

Kinderberry Hill  
150 children served  
Edina

**Michele Kerley**

Kerleys Day care  
9 children served  
Winona

**Michelle Bisek**

Michelle's Daycare  
12 children served  
Jordan

**Michelle Duren**

Tiny Tot Preschool & Childcare  
8 children served  
Lakeville

**Michelle Gerlach**

Little Dreamers Daycare  
8 children served  
Champlin

**Michelle Goodwin**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Saint Paul

**Michelle Herzog**

Adventure Land Child Care  
12 children served  
Jordan

**Michelle Painschab**

Wee Little One's Child Care  
5 children served  
Maple Lake

**Michelle Walters**

Family Childcare by Michelle  
15 children served  
Pine Island

**Molly Hughes**

Molly's Munchkins FCC  
8 children served  
Coon Rapids

**Monique Stumon**

School-Readiness Learning Academy  
38 children served  
Minneapolis

**Moretta Marks**

New Horizon  
10,000 children served  
Apple Valley

**Mrs. Sarah Holliday**

Sarah's Development Child Care  
Preschool  
9 children served  
Hennpin

**Nancy Holladay**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Nancy Reing**

Little Beginnings preschool  
42 children served  
Cook

**Naomi Kolodziejczyk**

New Horizon Academy  
125 children served  
Coon Rapids - Andover

**Nicole Alexiuk**

Little Monkeys Childcare  
8 children served  
Roseau

**Nicole Higgs**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Nicole Martin**

Pitter Patter Child Care  
17 children served  
Farmington

**Patsy Cordes**

Praise+Play Preschool  
20 children served  
Spicer

**Paula Boucher**

MAMMA MIA CARE  
11 children served  
Hawley

**Peggy Blackmon**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Peggy Elsasser**

Little Helpers Child Care  
10 children served  
Woodbury

**Peggy Ruiz**

All About Kids  
10 children served  
Cottage Grove

**Penny Allen**

New Horizon  
10,000 children served  
Across Minnesota

**Rachel Buchin**

Rachel Buchin Family Child Care  
12 children served  
St. Cloud

**Rebecca Knutson**

Becca's Busy Bees Child Care  
12 children served  
Dodge Center

**Rebecca Strauch**

New Horizon Academy  
157 children served  
Woodbury

**Rena Loth-Birch**

300 children served  
Rochester

**Renee Olsen**

Little B's Child Care Center  
80 children served  
Barnum

**Rev. Connie L. McCallister**

SonShine Learning Center  
84 children served  
Mendota Heights

**Rhonda Nordin**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Robin Hills**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Apple Valley

**Robin Riley**

Robins Little Lambs Daycare  
10 children served  
Minneapolis

**Robyn Tieman**

Tieman's Learn and Care  
6 children served  
West St. Paul

**Safia Khan**

Young Scholars Montessori School  
12 children served  
Blaine

**Sally Hofmeister**

New Horizon Academy  
10,000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Samantha Schmalz**

New Horizon Academy  
90 children served  
Eden Prairie

**Sametra Bell**

Rising Star Academy Inc  
7 children served  
Nokomis Area

**Sara Mulso**

Woodbury Lutheran Preschool  
144 children served  
Woodbury

**Sarah Brahy**

New Horizon Academy  
106 children served  
Stillwater

**Sarah Dupont**

New Horizon  
150 children served  
Brooklyn Park

**Sarah L. Holliday**

Sarah's Development Child Care  
Preschool  
10 children served  
Hennipin

**Sarah Linner**

Redwood Gardens Preschool and  
Daycare  
14 children served  
Burnsville

**Shawn Mattson**

Room2Grow  
15 children served  
Brooklyn Park

**Sheila Burfield**

Precious Is the Child Preschool  
27 children served  
Rochester

**Shelby**

New Horizon Academy  
105 children served  
Minneapolis

**Shelley Harrington**

Buttons and Bows Child Care  
12 children served  
St. Paul

**Shelly Vanneste**

Mesabi Preschool Academy LLC  
78 children served  
Proctor

**Shermayne Cross**

Peace Lutheran Preschool  
74 children served  
Faribault

**Sherry Tiegs**

Sherry Tiegs Family Childcare &  
Playschool  
16 children served  
Morris

**Sommer Lucas**

Sunshine Kids Care  
10 children served  
Big Lake

**Sophia McCusker**

Kids Cottage  
14 children served  
Northfield

**Stacie Penn**

Carol Matheys Center for Children and  
Families  
64 children served  
Oakdale

**Stacy Nelson**

Little Ducklings  
9 children served  
Deer Creek



**Stacy Nelson**

Nelson's Daycare  
8 children served  
Northfield

**Stephanie Klasi**

Stephanie Klasi  
6 children served  
Edina

**Stephanie Litkey**

Little Hands Big Hearts Child Care  
11 children served  
Blaine

**Stephanie Ponticas**

Hearts & Minds Preschool  
25 children served  
Ham Lake

**Stephanie Reuss**

Stephanie Reuss - Licensed Family Child  
Care  
8 children served  
Owatonna

**Sue Dunkley**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Sue Kunzer**

Sue's Daycare  
10 children served  
Lino Lakes

**Sue Murphy**

Sunrise Center for Children and Families  
43 children served  
Crookston

**Susan Zackery**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Throughout Minnesota

**Susie Felt**

Susie Felt  
12 children served  
Detroit Lakes

**Svitlana Uniyat**

Sunshine Family Child Care  
11 children served  
Minneapolis

**Tamara**

New Horizon Academy  
76 children served  
Saint Paul

**Tammy Malmquist**

Wunder Years  
14 children served  
Lake Elmo

**Tamara Strecker**

Family child care  
12 children served  
East Bethel

**Tammy Harris**

Tammy's Childcare  
12 children served  
Hawley

**Terry Peterson**

Kid's Haven Child Care and Preschool  
611 children served  
Buffalo

**Tanya Haugen**

Precious Years Learning Center  
52 children served  
Nisswa

**Terry Ewuakye**

Teeskidz childcare  
8 children served  
Farmington

**Traci McChesney**

Traci McChesney  
10 children served  
Russell

**Tiffany Kimble**

New Horizon Academy  
10000 children served  
Saint Paul

**Tonya Radel**

Kinderberry Hill  
500 children served  
Throughout the Twin Cities

**Veronica Oliva-Clour**

Little House Preschool  
18 children served  
Sauk Rapids

**Valerie Weyer**

Bethlehem Lutheran Early Childhood  
Center  
41 children served  
St. Cloud

**Venessa Baker**

Baker Family Daycare  
12 children served  
Savage

**Wendy Prokosch**

Lil Pro Family Childcare  
10 children served  
Brooklyn Park