

AN OPEN LETTER TO STATE GOVERNMENT LEADERS

May 8, 2017

Dear Minnesota Leaders:

Thank you for your support for high quality early education investment. We represent some of the nearly 3,000 Minnesota early education programs that have volunteered to adopt school-readiness best practices, as measured by the Parent Aware Ratings. We look forward to partnering with you to close Minnesota's achievement gaps.

As you decide how to invest in early education, we respectfully urge you to invest wisely:

- **Start Early in Life.** Please invest as early in life as possible. Because achievement gaps can be measured by about 18 months of age, the longer we wait to help the most at-risk children, the more difficult it is to help them to catch up. For the most vulnerable children, waiting until they're four-years old to expose them to high quality early education is a tragic mistake.
- **Treat All Programs Equally.** Please treat all high quality programs equally. High quality early education is being delivered in Minnesota centers, homes, schools, churches and nonprofit organizations, so please don't mandate a schools-only approach that excludes thousands of Minnesota's most experienced and accomplished early educators.
- **Give Parents Flexibility.** Please give parents full-day, full-year options, because limiting families to a two- to three-hour per day school-based program that is closed in the summer months simply doesn't meet the needs of working parents and their children.

The well-intentioned schools-only, part-day, part-year universal pre-k approach is insufficient for vulnerable children, inflexible for parents, and unfair to high quality early educators that are not based in school buildings.

We respectfully urge you to invest in Early Learning Scholarships, because Scholarships start early, treat all types of high quality programs equally and give parents and children the flexibility they need.

Thank you for listening to us. We look forward to partnering with you!