

AMSD Position on Early Childhood Education

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts believes the State should provide funding to ensure all 3 and 4 year olds have access to quality early childhood programs, or grant levy authority to local school boards to implement such programs.

AMSD BELIEVES

- Early childhood education programs increase school readiness.
- Early childhood programs have been proven to help close or even eliminate the achievement gap.
- Investments in early childhood produce benefits to the state, such as increased incentive for businesses to locate in Minnesota, as well as benefits to individual students.

BACKGROUND

In 2003 the legislature enacted cuts to early childhood family education (ECFE) programs, Head Start, and childcare. The 2005 E-12 Omnibus Bill restored the Head Start cuts and approximately two-thirds of the ECFE cuts, but did not to restore funding for childcare.

RESEARCH

Research shows that participation in quality early childhood programs is linked to higher graduation rates, increased earnings, and a reduced chance of being on welfare. Research also shows that early childhood education can serve as an economic development incentive for companies to locate in certain communities.

- Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank Economists Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald evaluated four longitudinal studies of early childhood programs including the Perry Preschool program which showed a benefit-cost ratio of \$16 to \$1.¹ The total annual rate of return was 18% and the public rate of return was 16%. Specific findings from the Perry study showed that students receiving quality early childhood education programming were more likely to be literate by sixth grade, get a job and stay off

welfare. In addition, the crime rate was 50% lower than the control group.²

- Children who participate in high quality early education develop better language skills, score higher in school readiness tests and have better social skills and fewer behavioral problems once they enter school.³

- Children with high quality early learning experiences are 40% less likely to need special education or be held back a grade.⁴

- Children from low-income families who participate in high quality early education programs show the greatest magnitude of benefits – they repeat fewer grades and have higher test scores.⁵

- The RAND Corporation, known for its defense and business research, has identified early childhood programs as cost-effective measures for averting future social problems and costs, with returns to society as well as the individual.⁶

- James J. Heckman, a Nobel prize winning economist, connects early childhood investments to boosting a state's economy. His research shows a 5% increase in male high school graduation rates saves \$379 million in incarceration costs and crime related expenditures.⁷



Association of Metropolitan School Districts
1667 Snelling Ave. N
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-999-7325 fax 651-999-7328

¹ Rob Grunewald and Art Rolnick, "The Economic Case for Investments in Young Children."

² Mark Sniderman, "Stop Investing in Stadiums...Start Investing in Kids-An Interview with Art Rolnick."

³ Ready 4 K "Guide for Policy Makers"

⁴ Ready 4 K "Guide for Policy Makers"

⁵ Ready 4 K "Guide for Policy Makers"

⁶ "Early Learning Left Out: Public Spending on Children in Minnesota." Ready 4 K

⁷ James J. Heckman, "Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy."