

Senator Mary Kunesch  
Chair, Education Finance Committee  
Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 29, 2023

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Start Early Funders Coalition, we would like to share our appreciation the inclusion of early learning scholarships in SF 2684 before your committee. Our vision as a Coalition is that every child in Minnesota is physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared for school and lifelong success. Our coalition is committed to supporting policies that will benefit low-income, rural and Black, Indigenous and children of color and their families; and the programs that serve them.

The inclusion of early learning scholarships in SF 2684 demonstrates the great need facing our state to support our youngest children and their families. We know that investment into these critical programs, like early learning scholarships, is necessary to prepare our children for educational and life success and stabilize our families. Flexible Early Learning Scholarships provide greater access to quality care and education for our children and their families with the greatest economic need. We know that these investments can ease the early childhood care and education shortage, support parents to get back to work, particularly in rural communities and is a key strategy for achieving more equitable outcomes for young children. Minnesota's economy relies on access to quality, affordable child care and early learning and parents, businesses and communities cannot thrive without an adequately supported early learning system. We must ensure all children birth to kindergarten from low-income families have access to these programs.

We support a robust early childhood system that gives children and families access to a continuum of high-quality child care and early learning programs. We must maintain and continue to grow equitable investments in critical early childhood programs based on ongoing community feedback and guidance.

Sincerely,

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Start Early Funders  
Coalition Coordinator

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