

AN OPEN LETTER FROM MINNESOTA BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Dear Minnesota Leaders:

Twenty years ago, Minnesota business and community leaders formed a non-profit foundation that raised private funding to research, develop, pilot, and evaluate an effort to improve access to high quality early care and education. That initiative resulted in the creation of Minnesota Early Learning Scholarships. To varying extents, we are all part of this on-going initiative.

These flexible, targeted Scholarships quickly earned strong bipartisan support. As a result, Scholarships have been steadily expanded statewide. That has allowed tens of thousands of Minnesota's most vulnerable children to benefit from high-quality early learning programs.

However, if action isn't taken by the Legislature and Governor this year, Scholarships will be cut by half. Cutting Scholarships now will cost all of us more later in higher government costs. And with our child care system currently facing an urgent crisis, we need more Scholarships not fewer.

Children who receive quality early care and education via programs like Scholarships not only are more likely to be ready for kindergarten, but they are less likely to need special education services and more likely to graduate high school. They are also more likely to attend post-high school training or college, work in higher skilled jobs, earn more income, and have better health outcomes.

Scholarships are efficient and effective. Expanding Scholarship availability will help address the tragic child care closures that are happening in all parts of the state. It will empower parents to work, if they so choose, easing the severe labor shortage limiting employers. It will help Minnesota's economy flourish.

With the longest waiting lists in the history of the program, more Scholarships are needed as soon as possible. They have the strong bipartisan support necessary during a time of closely divided state government.

Let's work together to get this done this year!

Sincerely,

Allison Gettings
President and CEO
Red Wing Shoe Company

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Close Gaps by 5

Ken Powell
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