



Legislation Text

File #: RES 22-1183, **Version:** 1

Committing to strengthening families, education, and the workforce through the exploration of early care and education accessibility for all Saint Paul families via an advisory committee.

WHEREAS, Saint Paul families with young children face an inequitable and often unsolvable crisis in finding quality and affordable early care and education programs; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota is the fourth-most expensive state for child care, putting a strain on Saint Paul families and sometimes forcing parents out of the workforce; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that equitable and accessible early care and education programs are critical to addressing racial inequities and providing greater short- and long-term economic opportunity for communities of color; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 3 of Saint Paul's 3 and 4-year-olds lives below the Federal Poverty Line; and

WHEREAS, early care and education encourages early brain development, eliminates opportunity and educational inequities, and decreases the poverty rate by making it possible for parents to participate in the workforce; and

WHEREAS, children who do not receive the critical early care and education they need to show up ready for kindergarten continue to struggle academically throughout their educational careers, exacerbating Minnesota's worst-in-the-nation educational opportunity gap; and

WHEREAS, without options for care, many Saint Paul parents are forced to make hard decisions about work, whether it's leaving the workforce or being unable to build long-term careers; and

WHEREAS, our education systems have been historically underfunded by state and federal governments and a lack of readiness for kindergarten is a major contributor to the fact that St. Paul Public Schools spent \$42 million more than it received in 2018 to fund special education programs; and

WHEREAS, American businesses lose an estimated \$12.7 billion annually because of their employees' child care challenges and nationally, the cost of lost earnings, productivity and revenue due to child care challenges totals an estimated \$57 billion each year; and

WHEREAS, targeted early care and education investments have been shown to return up to \$16 for every dollar spent; and

WHEREAS, investments in early care and education can alleviate the burden on other public expenditures that increase when early care and education is not adequately funded, such as medical and public assistance

programs, special education programs, and unemployment, in addition to keeping more families in the workforce; and

WHEREAS, all families deserve quality, culturally responsive early care and education options that are right for them and early care and education shouldn't be a luxury only available to wealthy families; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council recognizes the benefits of a city with accessible early care and education available to every child; and

WHEREAS the Saint Paul City Council recognizes the important role of the city in ensuring access to affordable early care and education for all Saint Paul children, including the nearly 5,000 three and four year olds living in or near poverty in the city; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council hereby commits to establish, no later than September 28, 2022, an Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee that will work with the City Council specifically, and the City generally to: 1) evaluate a locally governed program to ensure universal and equitable access to early care and education for all Saint Paul children (the "Program"); and 2) to explore public funding, and any other relevant funding options, for the Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee shall be empowered to make recommendations to the City Council on the potential design and implementation of the Program and, if appropriate, to propose legislation that would effectuate and codify the Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee shall present its recommendations and any related draft legislation to the City Council no later than March 26th, 2023.

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council recognizes the benefits of a city with accessible early care and education available to every child; and

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