

From: Tiffany Scott Knox <tiffany.scottknox@wilder.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 6:13 PM
To: Nelsie Yang <Nelsie.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Early Learning Resolution Note of Support -- Saint Paul Promise
Importance: High

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Dear Councilmember Yang,

I am delighted to see the Saint Paul City Council take up a resolution to place dedicated funding for early care and education on the ballot in 2024. As the Director of [Saint Paul Promise](#), I see daily the impact of families' lack of access to quality early childhood care and education across our city - especially in the Promise Neighborhood in Ward One.

Saint Paul Promise is an educational partnership that puts children in the Frogtown, Rondo, and Summit-University neighborhoods of Saint Paul on the pathway to college and career success. Housed at the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, we take a proactive and preventive approach to the education opportunity gap by focusing early in a child's life. By partnering with parents and caregivers, early learning providers, four elementary schools, and many community-based organizations located in the Promise Neighborhood, we deliver programming to change the odds for a generation of our scholars and their families.

According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data, 41% of Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood households make less than \$35,000 annually, and just over 26% have an income below the federal poverty level. Almost 38% of households below the poverty level include children under age 18, emphasizing the need for affordable early childhood and K-12 options, including out-of-school time and child care.

Recognizing 90% of brain development occurs in the first five years, our programs focus early in a child's life and consider the conditions of their whole family and community. Working in partnership with parents and caregivers, we address economic and developmental factors contributing to their children's academic success to help minimize or even remove barriers to overall family success - thus, allowing our scholars the opportunity to show up in school ready to learn and succeed.

Knowing what is good for our families is good for our scholars, Saint Paul Promise supports the creation of a locally-governed child care and early learning program to be primarily funded through a new, dedicated, public revenue source. We support this approach as families like ours with the highest needs encounter the most barriers to accessing and affording quality early learning and care.

Our families often share how they cannot keep up with the rising costs of caring for and educating their children. They seek out programs to help shoulder the costs, such as the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Early Learning Scholarships, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Saint Paul Public Schools Pre-K. However, some run into long waitlists that their children age out of before they can access programming because the current need is so great. Even our families who can access programs and receive support to cover some costs still share how the copayments add up quickly, alongside other bills and daily living

expenses, leaving them having to make less-than-ideal financial decisions to get their babies off to a strong start.

We know these barriers are not unique to the families we serve but are signs of broader systemic issues made clear by our city's racial disparities, from families living in poverty to our third graders struggling to read in school. But now, we can change the odds for a generation of these families and scholars by investing in their potential to thrive.

On behalf of our Promise Neighborhood families, scholars, and staff, we thank you for considering the proposed resolution to provide equitable educational access from the start to our city's littlest learners so that - together - we can deliver on the promise of opportunity.

Best,

Tiffany Scott Knox

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood

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