

November 15, 2018

The Honorable Tim Walz  
321 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Congressman Walz,

Congratulations on becoming Governor-elect of Minnesota! We very much look forward to working with your administration and bipartisan members of the Legislature to address two pressing crises facing Minnesotans:

These two problems are intertwined and must be addressed together. Both crises have profound implications for our children, communities and economy, and require immediate action before they grow even worse.

Over the past few months, broad groups of organizations ranging from advocacy organizations, business interests, child care providers and other organizations, have been meeting as a Crisis Work Group to identify recommendations for addressing both of these crises. The various organizations come to the issue with different motivations, but we share a common commitment to addressing the crises and keeping Minnesota moving forward.

This memo summarizes the Crisis Work Group's recommendations for program/policy changes under the direct control of your administrative agencies. In coming weeks, we will

**Improve Early Learning Scholarship (ELS) and Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) administration efficiency to ensure eligible children receive the full benefits available to support their access to high quality ECE.**

The Administration could change current policy so that the waiting list of families seeking BSF is maintained and managed at the state level. This would mean counties and Regional Administrators would no longer have to take on the financial risk of moving a family off the waiting list, especially toward the end of the fiscal year. Outreach and enrollment for both programs should continue to be done at the local level, but fiscal administration of ELS and BSF could be done at the state level. The agency administering BSF for a county must spend 90% or more of the county's allocation before the end of the fiscal year. If they do so, any unspent funds may be rolled

Similarly, for Early Learning Scholarships, smaller counties/regions also have a much smaller scale and do not have much flexibility to make new Scholarship awards to families on the waiting list, especially toward the end of the year.

Another administrative policy that would help both families and program administrators seeking to fully spend appropriations on their intended use would be for MDE to lift the

**Improve coordination and efficiency in child care licensing to support child care business and protect**

Child care providers statewide have been clear that the current system of licensing and oversight by various branches of DHS results in frustration, inconsistency, and likely less than desirable ability to achieve our

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## Begin immediate implementation of all recommendations from the OLA Early Childhood Program

A number of the recommendations included in this memo are also encompassed in the 2018 Evaluation Report on Early Childhood Programs prepared by the Office of the Legislative Auditor. We fully support all of the OLA recommendations and would call out the following recommendations not encompassed above as worthy of immediate action to build a foundation of accountability and improvement and to allow your administration and other interested policy makers to ask and answer critical policy questions:

- » Identify and use a universal identification number for children participating in publicly funded ECE programs.
- » Collect attendance rates/dates of participation for children receiving services from publicly funded ECE programs.

Our colleagues and we are excited about the opportunities presented by your administration, given your commitment to children and families. We are available to discuss these proposals and support your efforts in any way we can.

Again, congratulations, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Close Gaps by 5  
First Children's Finance  
Minnesota Business Partnership  
New Horizon Academy

EdAllies  
Little Learners Child Care Center (Ada, MN)  
Minnesota Child Care Association  
Phyllis Wheatley CommD 15 C.sn-5 Minnesota Child Care Association