






### Public Sector To-Do List

MELF Blueprint Recommendations	2014 Progress Report	Minnesota's Grade, So Far
<b>OVERALL GRADE</b>		<b>C+</b>
√ <b>EXPAND PARENT AWARE STATEWIDE.</b> Make the Parent Aware Ratings available to all Minnesota parents, providers and children within three years.	Statewide recruitment began 7/1/2014. Currently, more than 2,000 providers are participating in the system.	<b>A</b>
√ <b>KEEP PARENT AWARE RATINGS SIMPLE.</b> Make Parent Aware simple and easily accessible for parents.	A new PASR-funded website ( <a href="http://www.ParentAware.org">www.ParentAware.org</a> ) launched in August. The site—which is more simple, user-friendly and comprehensive than any previous iteration—has been wildly successful. In just the first 90 days, we've seen more than 28,000 highly engaged users.	<b>A</b>
√ <b>MAKE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SIMPLE.</b> Make the quality improvement system simple and easily accessible for providers.	Time, experience, and technical assistance is making quality improvement easier for providers, but we need to keep looking for ways to make quality improvement as feasible as possible.	<b>C</b>
√ <b>LINK RATINGS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.</b> Link the new scholarships to the Parent Aware Ratings.	New state scholarships and federal Race-to-the-Top grant scholarships can only be used with child care providers who can prove, through the Parent Aware Ratings, that they are using the best practices for preparing children for Kindergarten.	<b>A+</b>



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<b>OVERALL GRADE</b>		<b>C+</b>
<p>✓ <b>MAKE SCHOLARSHIPS EASY TO USE.</b> Make the new scholarships simple and accessible for parents and providers.</p>	<p>On the positive side, the Legislature passed legislation to lift the per scholarship cap, though not until 2016. On the negative side, half of the new scholarships are being administered in a way that doesn't give parents the level of choice, empowerment and portability that was available with MELF-piloted scholarships.</p>	<p><b>D</b> Needs improvement</p> 
<p>✓ <b>IMPROVE RATINGS STANDARDS.</b> Strengthen Parent Aware Ratings standards whenever research supports stronger standards.</p>	<p>Post-MELF pilot, the state took steps to strengthen standards based on the MELF-funded evaluation. Not all of the changes were winners, but a genuine effort was made. State actors also have a continuous improvement plan in place. PASR will continue to evaluate the Ratings standards, and make recommendations as needed.</p>	<p><b>A-</b> Trending in a positive direction</p>
<p>✓ <b>REFORM PRE-MELF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS.</b> Make the current government child care programs much more streamlined (for parents and providers), accountable and focused on school readiness.</p>	<p>A Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) reimbursement rate bonus for 3- and 4-star programs was implemented in March 2014. However, a CCAP reform plan, that would require CCAP recipients to have Ratings by 2018 and was supported by both the Dayton Administration and a bipartisan group of legislators, fizzled in the Legislature. A DHS-led group is meeting to outline the details of how such CCAP reform could work.</p>	<p><b>C-</b> Incomplete</p> 
<p>✓ <b>ACCELERATE EARLY ED REFORMS WITH FEDERAL HELP.</b> Seek federal Race to the Top grant to fund an acceleration of reforms.</p>	<p>This was done, through a collaborative community effort. Minnesota was awarded a \$45 million federal grant that substantially integrated MELF reforms, such as a) funding scholarships, b) integrating Parent Aware with scholarships, c) increasingly aligning state quality improvement investments with Parent Aware, and e) implementing a data system to better track child progress and long-term outcomes. This has been a major impetus to accelerate the reforms measured in this Report Card.</p>	<p><b>A+</b></p>
<p>✓ <b>IMPROVE EARLY ED QUALITY THROUGH NEW TAX CREDITS.</b> Enact the three tax credits MELF proposed in 2011 to reward quality improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For child care providers who volunteer for to enter Parent Aware</li> <li>• For child care workers who improve their education and stay on the job at rated programs</li> <li>• For private donors supporting quality improvement efforts and/or scholarships.</li> </ul>	<p>None of the three tax credits to incent quality improvements were approved, or even considered, by the Minnesota Legislature. In order to ensure that quality improvement rewards are sufficient, more work needs to be done to attract private investment in this area.</p>	<p><b>F</b> Trending stagnant</p>
<p>✓ <b>HELP POOR KIDS ACCESS HIGH QUALITY EARLY ED.</b> After quality improvement reforms are in place, invest in improving low-income kids' access to quality.</p>	<p>The 2014 Legislature increased the scholarship funding available for low-income children. The \$28 million now available is still much less than the \$150 million per year that is needed. This will provide 1,000 more partial scholarships. While that represents progress, it remains disturbing that at least 15,000 low-income children still cannot access the high quality programming they need to prepare for school. To "move the needle" on school readiness and Minnesota's shameful education achievement gap, Minnesota must get all low-income children off of waiting lists and into high quality early education as soon as possible.</p>	<p><b>D</b> Incomplete</p> 

## Private Sector To-Do List

MELF Blueprint Recommendations	2013 Progress Report	Minnesota's Grade, So Far
<b>OVERALL GRADE</b>		<b>B-</b>
✓ <b>ORGANIZE TO PUSH EARLY ED REFORMS.</b> Form non-governmental group to promote and protect the Parent Aware Ratings.	Done. Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR) was officially formed in the summer of 2012, is actively fundraising, is marketing and advertising to parents and is protecting the Ratings from weakening. While this was a major 2012 achievement, much more private fundraising is needed to achieve PASR goals.	<b>A</b>
✓ <b>RAISE PRIVATE MONEY TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT PARENT AWARE.</b> Raise non-governmental money to adequately fund PASR work.	Since its formation in 2012, PASR has raised approximately \$3 million for use in accomplishing its mission. PASR is in the final push to raise \$3 million before it sunsets itself at the end of 2016.	<b>C+</b> Trending in a positive direction
✓ <b>BUILD AN EFFECTIVE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN.</b> Through PASR, fund parent-targeted advertising and promotions to empower parents and create market rewards for rated providers.	In the areas where Parent Aware is being introduced, PASR has developed a) neighborhood-level marketing kits for providers and b) a radio, TV and digital ad campaign aimed at parents. While budget constraints limit the campaign, an evaluation shows that the campaign drives parental interest whenever and wherever it is running.	<b>B+</b> Trending in a positive direction
✓ <b>PUSH IMPROVEMENTS INFORMED BY EVALUATIONS.</b> Through PASR, use evaluation results to recommend continuous improvement of the rating system.	A new evaluation report was issued in March 2014, and is being used to inform proposed improvements in the rating system.	<b>A</b> Trending in a positive direction
✓ <b>PROTECT RATINGS STANDARDS.</b> Fight any efforts to weaken Rating standards.	While the Parent Aware Ratings have always been designed to measure kindergarten readiness exclusively, some leaders have suggested having the Ratings measure things other than k-readiness. So far, such efforts have been successfully discouraged.	<b>A</b> Incomplete
✓ <b>ENCOURAGE HOME ASSESSMENTS.</b> Through employers, encourage parents to focus at home on their child's school readiness, including use of the PASR-supported www.IsYourChildReady.com.	The www.isyourchildready.com quiz now will be featured prominently on the new, heavily promoted and visited www.parentaware.org search site. This will give the quiz a bigger parental audience than it has ever had in the past.	<b>B</b> Incomplete
✓ <b>EXPAND BUSINESS COALITION.</b> Expand the size and level of commitment of the business coalition supporting early education reforms.	While PASR involves the Minnesota Business Partnership and the Minnesota Chamber in its efforts to educate lawmakers, efforts to expand business involvement stagnated in 2014.	<b>C-</b> Incomplete



# Private Sector To-Do List

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OVERALL GRADE		B-
<p>√ <b>LOBBY FOR FURTHER REFORMS.</b>            Speak out in favor of MELF reforms: a) reform existing government programs; and b) Enact the three tax credits MELF proposed in 2011 to reward quality improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For child care providers who volunteer for to enter Parent Aware</li> <li>• For child care workers who improve their education and stay on the job at rated programs</li> <li>• For private donors supporting quality improvements efforts and/or scholarships.</li> </ul>	<p>As noted in updates (above) on expanding scholarships, keeping scholarships flexible and portable, reforming CCAP, and tying the Ratings to new scholarships, PASR's policy agenda had a mixed record in 2014.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"> <b>C-</b> Incomplete</p>
<p>√ <b>SPEAK OUT FOR POOR KIDS WHO CAN'T ACCESS HIGH QUALITY EARLY ED.</b> After quality improvement reforms are in place, invest in improving low-income kids' access to quality.</p>	<p>PASR was extremely active speaking out about accessibility issues, and hired a contract lobbyist to assist with those efforts. PASR often was advocating for reform-oriented positions that no other organizations were pushing. However, PASR's efforts to expand the availability of scholarships fell far short, leaving at least 15,000 low-income children unable to access high quality early education. Its effort to ensure quality for CCAP-served children also fell short. Finally, its efforts to keep scholarships as flexible, portable and empowering as they were in the MELF pilots were also only partially successful, with only half of the new scholarships adopting the proven MELF-piloted model.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"> <b>C-</b> Incomplete</p>