

## Scholarships Have Bipartisan, Bicameral Support

Over the years, getting sufficient help to the 31,000 low-income Minnesota children under age five who can't access quality early learning programs has proven challenging. For that reason, it's important to consider which early learning funding stream has strong bipartisan and bicameral support.

**Scholarships Have Bipartisan Support.** Since efforts to expand Scholarships began in the 2011 Legislative Session, Minnesota's Early Learning Scholarships have enjoyed support from both major political parties in both chambers. The following are just some of the leaders who have expressed support for Scholarships over the years (Note: Some of those listed support more than one early ed approach).

- **Republicans Support Scholarships.** Sen. Carla Nelson, Rep. Kurt Daudt, Sen. Eric Pratt, Rep. Ron Kresha, Sen. Jerry Relph, Rep. Sondra Erickson, Sen. Paul Anderson, Rep. Tama Theis, Sen. Jim Abeler, Rep. Peggy Bennett, Sen. Justin Eichorn, former Rep. Jen Loon, former Sen. Geoff Michel, former GOP gubernatorial nominee Jeff Johnson, former Sen. Dave Durenberger, former Sen. Duane Benson, former Rep. Charlie Weaver, and former Gov. Tim Pawlenty.
- **DFLers Support Scholarships.** Rep. Ryan Winkler, Sen. Melisa Franzen, Rep. Melissa Hortman, Sen. Patricia Torres Ray, Rep. Dave Pinto, Sen. Chuck Wiger, Rep. Rena Moran, Sen. Dick Cohen, Rep. Carlos Mariani, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, former Rep. Paul Thissen, former Sen. Terri Bonoff, former Rep. Nora Slawik, former Sen. Linda Berglin, former St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, former DFL Chair Rep. Todd Otis, former Sen. Roger Moe, and former Gov. Mark Dayton.
- **Overwhelming Bi-partisan Popular Support.** According to a March 2018 Morris Leatherman survey, an overwhelming 84% of Minnesota voters agree that "we should help the children most likely to fall into achievement gaps early in life, to prevent them from falling behind."

**Scholarships Have Bicameral Support.** In the 2019 session, the Early Learning Scholarships program was the only early care approach that was included in both the GOP-controlled Senate's bill and the DFL-controlled House's bill.

Minnesota has divided government, with a DFL Governor, GOP-controlled House, and DFL-controlled Senate, so polarizing approaches aren't politically feasible. Uniquely among early learning funding streams, the Scholarships approach has the necessary bipartisan, bicameral appeal to appeal to all three parts of Minnesota government, which is what is necessary to bring desperately needed help to Minnesota's 31,000 low-income, left-behind children.