

An Open Letter *from* **Concerned Citizens**

Dear Governor Pawlenty and Minnesota State Legislature,

We believe that providing Minnesota's youngest children with a strong start in life is crucial to our state's future. Economists have shown that wise investments in quality early learning lead to better performance in school, better jobs, less crime and public assistance, and a stronger civic fabric for our society.

We believe that it is unacceptable that nearly one half of entering kindergartners are not fully prepared to succeed in school. We are especially concerned that children from disadvantaged backgrounds start school already behind. We know Minnesota can do better than that. We can make Minnesota a national model for quality early care and education, and we should.

We therefore respectfully request you to make access to high quality, cost-effective early childhood experiences a much higher priority than it has been in the past, and to maintain a sustained commitment to greatly improved school readiness, so that in the future, all of our children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

Sincerely,

DOUG BAKER, *President & CEO, Ecolab, Inc.*

DR. MARK W. BANKS, *President & CEO, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN*

ART COLLINS, *Chairman & CEO, Medtronic, Inc.*

RICHARD DAVIS, *President & CEO, US Bancorp*

WARREN STALEY, *Chairman & CEO, Cargill, Inc.*

JEAN TAYLOR, *President & CEO, Taylor Corporation*

JAMES BACKSTROM, *Dakota County Attorney*

GREG BROLSMA, *Fairmont Chief of Police*

ROBERT CARLSON, *Lester Prairie Chief of Police*

TIMOTHY DOLAN, *Minneapolis Chief of Police*

SCOTT ERICKSON, *Chisholm Chief of Police*

MIKE FREEMAN, *Hennepin County Attorney*

SUSAN GAERTNER, *Ramsey County Attorney*

JOHN HARRINGTON, *St. Paul Chief of Police*

DOUG JOHNSON, *Washington County Attorney*

DAVID LANGE, *Nicollet County Sheriff*

TIM SLETTEN, *Red Wing Chief of Police*

ERVIN WEINKAUF, *New Ulm Chief of Police*

RABBI AARON BRUSSO, *Adath Jeshurun Congregation*

REV. PEG CEMBERLIN, *Executive Director, Minnesota Council of Churches*

BISHOP SALLY DYCK, *Resident Bishop of Minnesota, The United Methodist Church*

BISHOP CRAIG JOHNSON, *Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA*

CHRISTOPHER LEIFELD, *Executive Director, Minnesota Catholic Conference*

REV. PHILLIP LUND, *Lifespan Program Director, Prairie Star District-UUA*

CARL H. NELSON, *President, Greater Minnesota Association of Evangelicals*

REV. GARY B. REIERSON, *President, Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches*

BISHOP ROLF WANGBERG, *Northwest Minnesota Synod, ELCA*



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