

The First Five Years

Nebraska's Early Childhood Business Roundtable



February 4, 2014

Senator Kate Sullivan, Chair
Education Committee

Senator Sullivan and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in support of LB 984 on behalf of Nebraska's Early Childhood Business Roundtable. We thank you for your consideration of this measure.

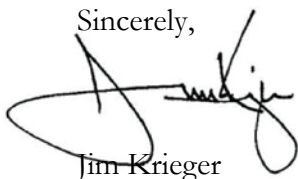
The Business Roundtable is a growing group of statewide business leaders that believes early childhood education needs to be a top priority for our state. And while there are many reasons why this should be the case, our main interests include economic development, workforce development, and return on investment.

Nationally, the average employee misses 8-9 days per year due to child-related absences costing employers \$3 billion per year, 20 percent of today's workforce is functionally illiterate, and 50 percent of kindergarteners start behind in school and typically stay behind. And with today's economic research indicating that we can achieve up to a 10 percent rate of return on investment when we reach kids most in need with quality early education we feel compelled to raise awareness of this important issue and participate in a solution.

In addition to permitting lottery funds previously committed to the early childhood education preschool grant program and the early childhood education endowment cash fund (known as Sixpence) to remain in place, LB 984 makes a significant, one-time appropriation of \$4.6 million to the early childhood preschool grant program. This would make an impact in our efforts to expand quality early childhood programs throughout the state and has proven to be an accountable method by which we can achieve the return on investment we all seek.

Great potential in our state exists surrounding the issue of early childhood education between the efforts of state government, the legislature, the business community, the University, the philanthropic community, and various other entities and providers. We hope you'll consider advancing LB 984 to continue our momentum.

Sincerely,



Jim Krieger
CFO and Vice-Chair, Gallup
Chairman, Nebraska's Early Childhood Business Roundtable