



February 10, 2020

Senator Matt Hansen, Chair  
Members of the Business and Labor Committee  
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB1160

Chairman Hansen and Members of the Business and Labor Committee,

I represent First Five Nebraska, and our focus is on effective policies that close the achievement gap for young children facing risk factors that threaten their success in school and later in life. I also serve as co-chair of the Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition, a chartered organization of public and private stakeholders with the shared goal of developing an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) in Nebraska. On behalf of First Five Nebraska, I write this letter in support of LB1160.

Demonstrating the return on investment of Nebraska's early childhood programs, is hindered by the lack of integrated data across programs and across time. Development of a plan for the Nebraska Workforce and Education Reporting System is a necessary and strategic next step to provide policymakers and other stakeholders with the information they need to improve outcomes for our citizens and to ensure the economic prosperity of our state.

Connecting the ECIDS to the proposed Nebraska Workforce and Education Reporting System will allow us to identify the long-term return on investment from Nebraska's early education programs and services. Studies nationally and in other states demonstrate that high-quality early childhood programs result in a return on investment of up to 13% per year through better outcomes in education, health, economic productivity and reduced crime.

As research about the importance of the early years continues to grow, it's becoming increasingly necessary that Nebraska stakeholders have access to early care and education data to help them make decisions about how best to prepare our young children for success. A fully functioning ECIDS connects data both horizontally (a child receiving multiple services at the same time) and vertically (integrating data from early childhood programs to K-12, postsecondary and labor).

Through the efforts of the Early Childhood Data Coalition, Nebraska is making progress toward developing an ECIDS that will connect and maintain information from a variety of early childhood programs and services, allowing stakeholders to answer key questions about the effectiveness of our publicly funded efforts.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Baumfalk".

Benjamin Baumfalk  
Policy Research Analyst, First Five Nebraska  
Co-Chair, Nebraska Early Childhood Data Coalition