



White Bear Lake Area Public Schools  
Independent School District 624

Michael J. Lovett, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

4855 Bloom Avenue  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-2731  
(651) 407-7563 • Fax (651) 407-7566

March 23, 2016

Representative Jenifer Loon, Chair  
House of Representatives Education Finance Committee  
449 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Loon,

We are providing the attached information to your committee in support of our testimony today on House File 2910, which pertains to the White Bear Lake Area Community Achievement Center. The center would be built in the White Bear Lake Area School District in cooperation with public and non-profit partners to serve the needs of families with young children throughout the Northeast Metropolitan Area.

The attached materials furnished to the Senate Investment Committee on December 1, 2015, include a cover letter, letters of support and endorsement from partners, and slides from the presentation used with the Senate Capital Investment Committee at their site visit. Since December 1, 2015 we have continued to work with our partners.

Today you will hear from Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Chair of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, who will describe the county's support for the project.

In addition, with the help of community leaders we have identified a potential location for the Achievement Center, centrally located within our community close to existing and proposed lines of public transportation.

We believe this project offers a compelling strategy for all Northeast Metro families to have access to the public and non-profit services so critical to ensure that families and children get off to a strong start in our school systems. In addition, this allows us to align our education services, county services, medical and dental support, and other services to dramatically improve the success of all students. This is a bold new way to address challenges posed by pervasive gaps in access, opportunity and achievement.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Lovett, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



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December 1, 2015

Senator LeRoy Stumpf, Chair  
Senate Capital Investment Committee  
519 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Stumpf,

We welcome you and the members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee to the White Bear Lake Area Schools.

Today you will hear more about our proposal for a **Community Achievement Center**. This comprehensive early childhood and family center is a bold new idea to address Minnesota's pervasive gaps in access, opportunity, and achievement.

Together with our cities and municipalities, county government, the medical sector, and community non-profits, we propose a center designed to welcome all families with young children to make the biggest possible difference in lifelong learning, family stability, and success.

The Community Achievement Center is an **exemplary early childhood center**, providing the best in preschool and early education, where children and families come to school and teachers travel out to meet with families.

The Community Achievement Center is also an **educational center** where the range of services provided through the schools, including parent/child education, family education, adult classes, and adult English classes are all available at this one site.

***But to successfully address pervasive gaps in access, opportunity, and achievement, in addition to services aligned with the mission of public schools***, the Community Achievement Center will be a **comprehensive service center** integrating services which are currently delivered at different sites inside or outside our communities. Among these will be:

- **Medical and dental services** for young children, including preventative medical care, school immunizations, eye checks, and dental care;
- Co-location of **county human services** currently provided at distant and often difficult to access sites;
- Other **family support services** including access to emergency food shelf, mental health services, and other community supports.

## Community Endorsements and Support

Our school district encompasses all or part of ten different municipalities, including Birchwood, Gem Lake, Hugo, Lino Lakes, Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake and White Bear Township. We serve students and families from three counties: Ramsey, Washington, and Anoka.

Our proposal grows out of many years of close cooperation with our community partners and recognized successful partnerships.

In the materials you are provided today, we have included letters of support and endorsement from some of our partners, including:

- **Health Partners** from Donna Zimmerman, Senior Vice President, Government and Community Relations;
- **Ramsey County** from Meghan Kelley Mohs, Deputy County Manager for Community Human Services;
- **Northeast Youth & Family Services** from Jerry Hromatka, President & CEO; and
- **White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf** from Andrea Kish-Bailey, Executive Director;

We look forward to ongoing discussions with you and our community partners to design, build, and operate this innovative strategy to address the issues of opportunity, access, and achievement in an immediate and sustainable way.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Lovett, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

MJL:jr

November 19, 2015

White Bear Lake Area Schools  
4855 Bloom Avenue  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

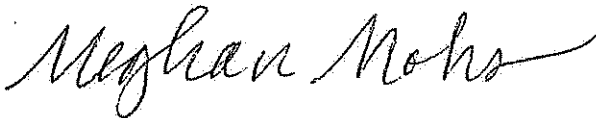
Dear White Bear Lake Cabinet Members and School Board Members:

It is my understanding that the White Bear Lake Area Schools #624 is interested in establishing a Community Achievement Center designed to help eliminate the achievement gap and address the needs of our youngest learners, birth to five years old, and their parents/guardians by providing a holistic, innovative approach to early childhood family education.

The vision for the Center includes co-located partnerships with the local food shelf, a community based health care provider, a mental health care provider, adult basic education, and, potentially, Ramsey County Human Services. The Center would provide a continuum of wrap-around supports for families including prenatal care, kindergarten readiness, and support for caregivers and families.

This letter is to confirm our interest in exploring a partnership with White Bear Lake Area Schools on their exciting proposal. The County views itself as an important entity to assist families as they navigate complex systems to secure needed services. Having access to County support, which is co-located with a variety of services on a public transportation route, is significantly needed in the northeast suburban area. We are excited to further our conversation around this vision.

Sincerely,



Meghan Kelley Mohs  
Deputy County Manager  
651-266-4417

HealthPartners  
8170 33rd Avenue South  
Bloomington, MN 55425

healthpartners.com

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 1309  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1309



November 25, 2015

Kathleen Daniels  
Director of Special Services  
White Bear Lake Area Schools  
4855 Bloom Ave.  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Dear Kathleen,

Thanks for our meeting today to discuss the potential to design and build a new Community Achievement Center in White Bear Lake, and bring together services for children and their families. The design is looking to co-locate needed services, including education, mental health and health care services with the goal to improve health and well-being, and to close the achievement gap.

As you know, HealthPartners works very closely with White Bear Lake Area Schools in partnership as your health insurance provider and through our Bear Power collaborative, bringing health activities into the school and community for children. We also have a strong presence in the White Bear area with our primary and urgent care clinics and services. We are very supportive to the ideas to improve health for young children in the area and would be interested in further discussions as the proposal moves forward.

Thanks again, and we look forward to our continued partnership to serve children and families. Please let me know how we can continue to engage in this effort!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Zimmerman".

Donna Zimmerman  
Senior Vice President, Government and Community Relations

White Bear Lake Area Schools  
4855 Bloom Avenue  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

December 1, 2015

Dear White Bear Lake Cabinet Members and School Board Members:

This letter is to confirm our interest in exploring a partnership with White Bear Lake Area Schools on your proposal to establish a Community Achievement Center. A center to help address the needs of families fits with our commitment to provide community based mental health services to children and families in the northeast metro area.

We are excited about White Bear Lake Area Schools intent to focus on the achievement gap by addressing the needs of children and their parents/guardians. From our understanding the Center would provide a continuum of co-located wrap-around supports for families including prenatal care, kindergarten readiness, support for caregivers and adult basic education.

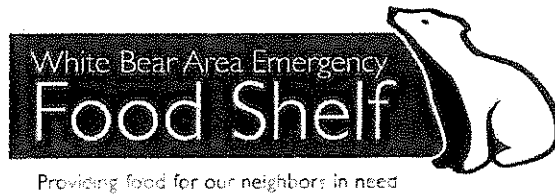
White Bear Lake Area Schools should be commended for your vision to address an issue that from our experience extends beyond the classroom. We believe this holistic approach has the potential to address a growing need in our community.

Sincerely,



Jerry Hromatka  
President & CEO

November 24, 2015



To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as a formal commitment of the White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf (WBAEFS) to partner with the White Bear Area Schools and the creation of the White Bear Area Early Childhood Achievement Center.

The WBAEFS has been serving the White Bear Area since 1977 with the mission of providing food and support to our neighbors in need in partnership with the communities of the White Bear area. The WBAEFS provides access to healthy food by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, milk, eggs, and pantry items on a weekly and monthly basis. Between our weekly and monthly food programs we serve, on average, 500 households a month. This is an increase of 25% over 2014.


This commitment furthers the partnership already established between the White Bear Area Schools and the WBAEFS. With the establishment of a Community Resource Program at the WBAEFS in 2013 together we have made significant strides in reducing the gap between the demand for food and the inability to access food. Together we provide and distribute over 350 KID Pack bags of food for children who may go without over the weekends.

The growth in hunger in our area mirrors the larger trend of poverty rates in Ramsey County Suburbs. Since 2000 suburban Ramsey County has seen an increase of 9,840 living in poverty (2013). This is on par with the exponential growth of poverty in the metro area since 2000. As of 2013 those living in poverty in the suburbs has increased from 100,000 individuals to well over 200,000. In the White Bear Area we have over 5000 households that are considered food insecure (Census Data).

The impact of hunger and poverty is profound and it can be devastating for the most vulnerable – children. The effects of hunger on children range from increased illness, fatigue, and obesity. Food insecure households also have children that are more likely to have brain and developmental delays, apathy or aggression, difficulty paying attention and reduced cognitive capacities. All of which impair academic success.

Increased access to a food pantry at the Achievement Center would make great strides toward closing the achievement gap caused by food insecurity. This partnership would also provide support to families by assisting families in connecting to other local resources. In 2015 Bridge to Benefits is piloting its first local version of the screening tool. The White Bear Area specific Bridge to Benefits will connect families to SNAP, WIC, health care as well as local resources such as ourselves, the YMCA, the Workforce Center, and Northeast Youth and Family mental health services.

We have confidence in this partnership since it has proven successful and reaping positive results in suburban locations such as Blaine (CEAP) and Bloomington (VEAP). We also have successfully launched a food pantry at Century College that now has over 1000 visits a school year. The potential of this project and partnership will be a valuable investment for our community and is a significant step towards closing the achievement gap in the White Bear Area.

Sincerely, 

Andréa Kish-Bailey, Executive Director

1884 Whitaker Street | White Bear Lake, MN 55110 | [www.whitebearfoodshelf.org](http://www.whitebearfoodshelf.org) | [info@whitebearfoodshelf.org](mailto:info@whitebearfoodshelf.org)

## White Bear Lake Area Community Achievement Center Project

### Project Narrative--White Bear Lake Area Schools (ISD #624)

*(Submitted online through the Capital Budget System on October 16, 2015 by  
Dr. Wayne A. Kazmierczak, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations)*

#### Project Description

The proposed White Bear Lake Area Community Achievement Center is a facility located in White Bear Lake that will house programs designed to eliminate the achievement gap by ensuring that all students are ready for kindergarten by providing a holistic, innovative approach to early childhood and family education. Centrally located in a densely populated portion of the school district and on an existing bus line, the facility will provide a comprehensive early childhood experience for students ages birth to five years old and their parents/guardians. A state appropriation of \$15 million is required for site acquisition and preparation, building design, and construction.

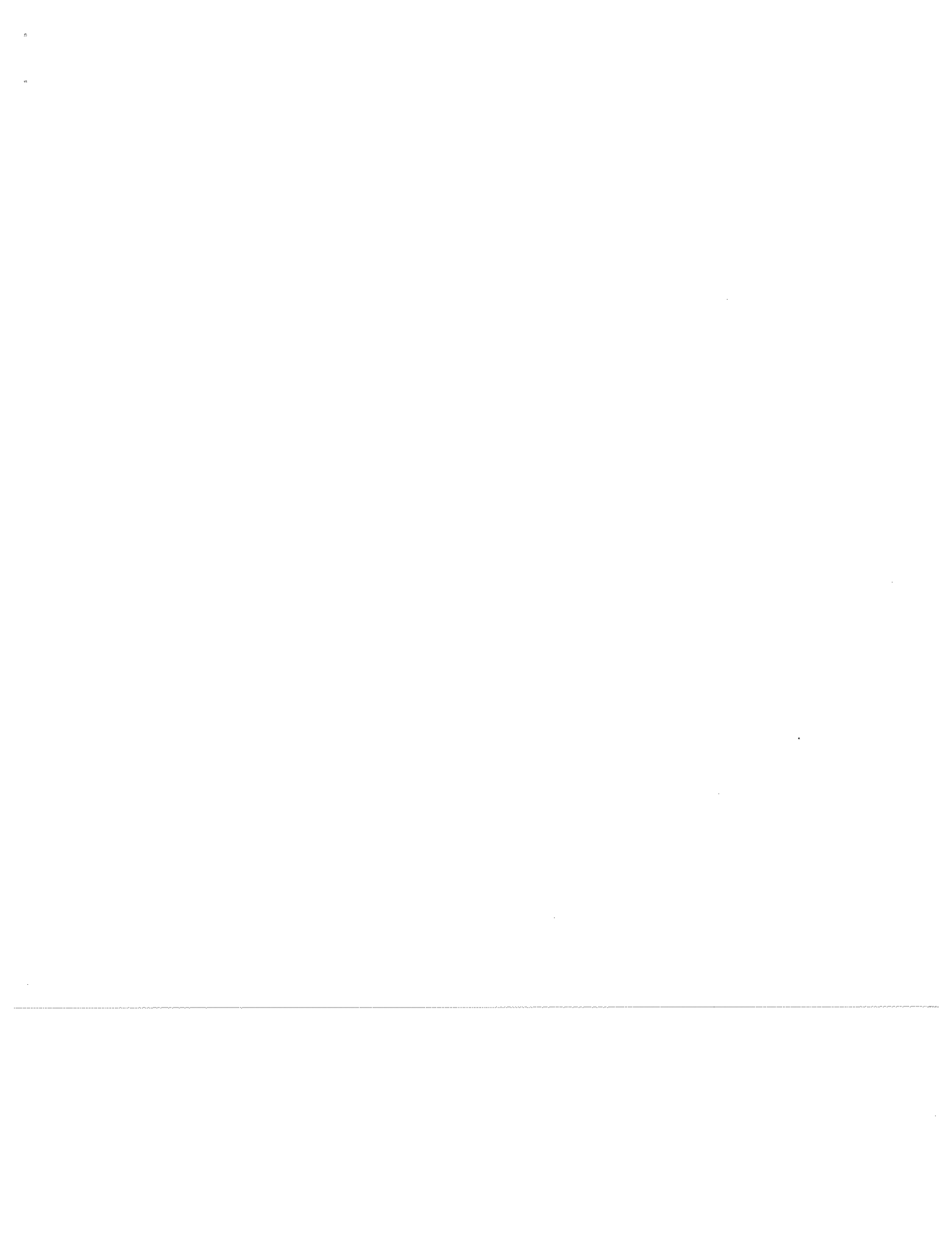
By combining existing school district programs including school readiness, screening, early childhood family education, early childhood special education, adult English language and adult basic education with services provided by community partners, the center would provide a hub for families in need. The proposal would include the local food shelf, healthcare providers for basic health care, immunizations, prenatal care, dental care and co-located mental health supports. The vision for this site also includes county supports for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), child care assistance, a Bridges for Benefits help desk, interpreters and other support programs for families and children.

#### Project Rationale

It is the vision of the participating entities to create a community school that addresses the needs of children and families in such a way that will allow White Bear Lake Area Schools to eliminate the achievement gap for students entering kindergarten. The center would provide a continuum of wrap-around supports for families including prenatal care, kindergarten readiness and support for caregivers to decrease barriers for families.

The State of Minnesota has recently increased funding for preschool education, a strong indication that policy makers understand the importance of preschool education. Access to high quality programming will become increasingly important. The concept of an inclusive early education model is critical to ensure that students of all abilities are prepared for kindergarten. The State of Minnesota expects school districts and communities to align services to meet the needs of all students to be ready for kindergarten. The proposed building and the services provided align with the philosophy of a community school.







# Background and Rationale for Community Achievement Center

Comprehensive Early Childhood  
and Family Center

White Bear Lake Area Schools  
December 2015



# White Bear Lake Area Schools



# White Bear Lake Area Schools



# Our Mission

The mission of the White Bear Lake Area School District, a leader in innovative education and community partnerships, is to ensure our students

- develop a love for learning,
- excel academically,
- are inspired to realize their dreams, and
- become engaged citizens with a global understanding

by challenging each student within a dynamic, respectful and inclusive environment that nurtures the unique talents and abilities of every student.



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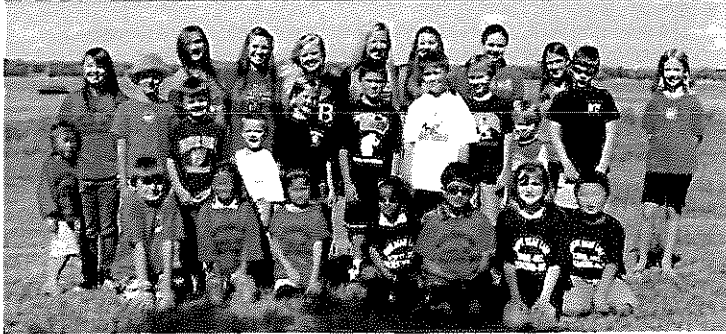
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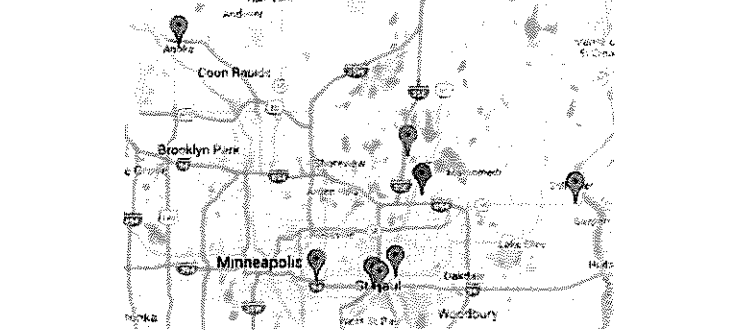
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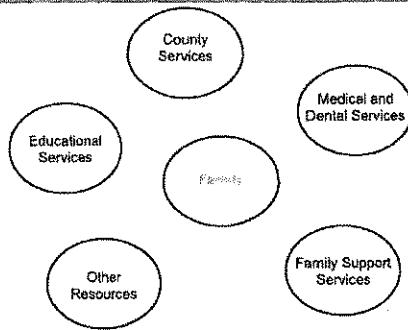
# White Bear Lake Area Schools



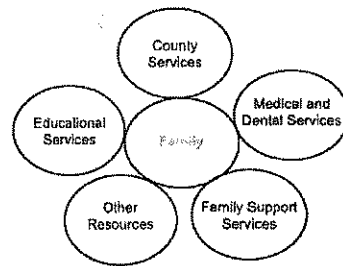
# The Case for the Proposal



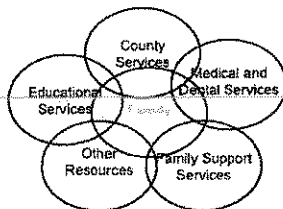
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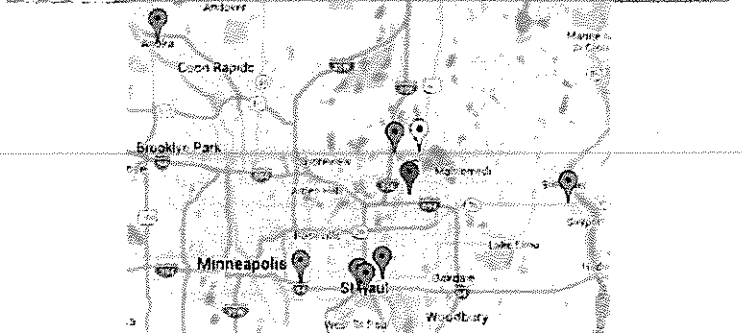
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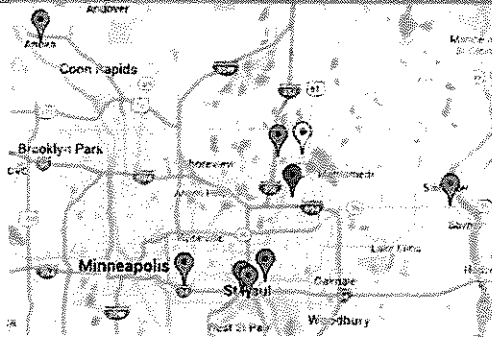
# The Case for the Proposal





## The Case for the Proposal

- Accessible
- One Location
- Comprehensive
- Innovative
- Equitable



## What is the Proposal

The proposed White Bear Lake Area Community Achievement Center is a facility located in White Bear Lake that will house programs designed to eliminate the achievement gap by ensuring that all students are ready for kindergarten by providing a holistic, innovative approach to early childhood and family education. Centrally located in a densely populated portion of the school district and on an existing bus line, the facility will provide a comprehensive early childhood experience for students ages birth to five years old and their parents/guardians. A state appropriation of \$15 million is required for site acquisition and preparation, building design, and construction.



## What is the Proposal

- Comprehensive
- Centrally located
- Space for partners

*"Health Partners works very closely with White Bear Lake Area Schools.. We are very supportive to the ideas to improve health for young children in the area..."*

*Donna Zimmerman, Health Partners*



## What is the Proposal

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*"Having access to County support... co-located... on a public transportation route, is significantly needed in the northeast suburban area."*

*Meghan Kelley Mohs, Ramsey County*



## What is the Proposal

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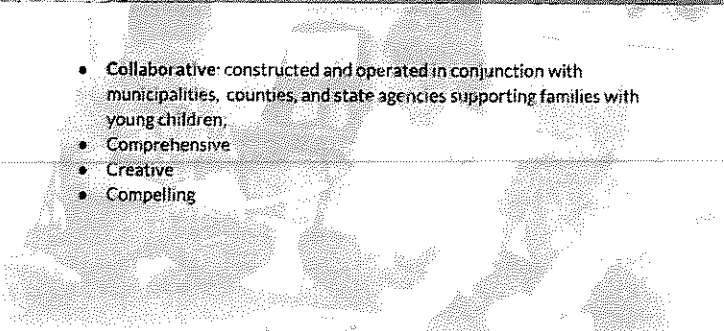
*"The White Bear Lake Area Schools should be commended for your vision to address an issue that from our experience extends beyond the classroom. We believe this holistic approach has the potential to address a growing need in our community."*

*Jerry Hromatka, Northeast Youth and Family Services*



## The Proposal's Merit

- Collaborative: constructed and operated in conjunction with municipalities, counties, and state agencies supporting families with young children,
- Comprehensive
- Creative
- Compelling





## The Proposal's Merit

- Collaborative
- **Comprehensive:** An innovative approach to assuring that all children gain the skills needed to be ready for success in kindergarten and throughout their school careers; parents learn and practice supporting literacy and school preparedness, and families have access to other support services in one site;
- Creative
- Compelling



## The Proposal's Merit

- Collaborative
- Comprehensive
- **Creative:** A single site under the auspices of the school district that draws from the best practice nationally and internationally to provide support for young children and families;
- Compelling



## The Proposal's Merit

- Collaborative
- Comprehensive
- Creative
- **Compelling:** An opportunity to raise expectations and success for all students and eliminate the present predictable achievement gaps in school performance based on culture, color, and family income level.



## White Bear Lake Area Schools



