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March 15, 2021

RE: Responding to COVID-related learning loss via the K-12 Education Tax Credit

Dear Chair Marquart and Members of the House Tax Committee,

The learning loss caused by the shift to distance learning because of COVID-19 is only further widening our state's shocking opportunity gap, and the state must take urgent action to mitigate its impact. **Updating the income limit for the K-12 Education Tax Credit** is one tool the state could easily leverage to ensure equitable access to academic enrichment opportunities that will be essential for ensuring low-income students do not get left behind.

Despite the often heroic work of our state's educators, there is no denying the impact caused by distance learning that disproportionately affects our state's students of color and low-income learners. A recent report by McKinsey & Company finds that students could lose the equivalent of a full year of learning by June 2021. Equally alarming are findings like more than one-third of classes taken by high schoolers in St. Paul Public Schools this fall resulted in no credit, a trend seen in districts across the state. More affluent families can afford tutoring and other academic enrichment opportunities to keep their students from falling behind or catch them up if they do. Low-income families do not have this privilege.

Youthprise and its Minnesota Afterschool Advance program is using the K-12 Education Tax Credit to provide low-income families with a 75% discount on out-of-school time academic enrichment programs. Demand for assistance is off the charts with applications to the program growing 2600% in 2020! Families can also use this Tax Credit for other learning essentials like computers and school supplies.

However, the Tax Credit's utility suffers from the fact that the income limit for the maximum credit (\$33,500 regardless of household size) has not changed since 1997. Updating the K-12 Education Tax Credit income limit to allow all families who meet the income guidelines for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program to qualify would benefit 50,000+ low-income families this year and ensure they have the resources to get their children the academic enrichment they need in summer and afterschool hours.

There are many meritorious ideas for addressing these concerns, but updating the income limit for the **K-12 Education Tax Credit** is one that has bipartisan support and can be implemented immediately.

Minnesota's low-income learners are counting on you. The educational gaps between low-income students and their more affluent peers is one of the state's most significant challenges, and the undersigned organizations believe we cannot lose more ground in that battle because of a pandemic or politics.

Sincerely,

Youthprise

30,000 Feet

Anoka Hennepin Driver Education

Asian Media Access

Banyan Community

Brainerd Family YMCA

Breakthrough Twin Cities

Brooklyn Center Community Schools

Center for School Change

Centro Tyrone Guzman

Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota

City Building and Development Group

City of Brooklyn Park

Community Ambassadors Initiative

Community Education ISD 861 (Winona Area Public Schools)

Community Integration Center

ComMUSICation

Connecting Kids

Drama Kids

Duluth YMCA Out of School Time Programs

East African Integration Center

Mathnasium of Champlin Park

Mathnasium of Mankato

Mathnasium of Stillwater

MiGIZI

Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board

Minnesota Asset Building Coalition

Minnesota Community Education Association

Minnesota Parent Union

Model Cities

National Youth Leadership Council

New American Development Center

New Vision Foundation

Northfield Public Schools

Park Avenue Youth & Family Services

PCs for People

Proctor and Hermantown Community Education

REM5 Virtual Reality Laboratory

Saint Paul Children's Collaborative

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood

Saint Paul Public Schools - Community Education

Smart Minds LLC dba Mathnasium of Bloomington West

EdAllies	Somali American Social Service Association
Education Partnerships Coalition	Somali Community Resettlement Services
Faribault Public Schools	South Sudanese Foundation
Faribault Youth Investment	Sprockets
Great Expectations, a partnership anchored by The Orono and Wayzata School Districts and Interfaith Outreach	St. Joseph's School of Music
Great Minds Learning Center	St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium
GREAT Theatre	Sundance Family Foundation
Greater Twin Cities United Way	The Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth
Growth & Justice	The JK Movement
Headwaters School of Music and the Arts	The Loft Literary Center
Healthy Community Initiative	The Minneapolis Foundation
Huntington Learning Center	The Northside Achievement Zone
Ignite Afterschool	United Way of Central Minnesota - Partner for Student Success
IMPACT LIVING Christian Center	UpTurnships
Independent School District 281 (Robbinsdale Area Schools)	Venn Foundation
ISD 318 Grand Rapids/Bigfork	Walker West Music Academy
Itasca Strings Program	We IMPACT!
KOOTASCA Community Action	World Savvy
Literacy Action Network	Young Minds LLC dba Mathnasium of Chanhassen West
Literacy Minnesota	Young Minds LLC dba Mathnasium of Minnetonka
MacPhail Center for Music	Youth Advantage
MacRostie Art Center	Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA)
Mankato Community Education & Recreation Dept.	