



STATE OF MINNESOTA
L'Étoile du Nord

Office of Governor Mark Dayton & Lt. Governor Tina Smith

What Minnesotans Are Saying About Voluntary PreKindergarten

"Now we don't have to charge tuition; it's free. Park Rapids was one of 74 towns in the state that got it. We were very lucky we got it. I just think it's so great that everyone can have equal preschool education for all 4-year-olds in Park Rapids. It's a great option for families."

--- Jill Dickinson, Community Education Director for Park Rapids Public Schools

"We are proud to offer families high-quality, affordable preschool. This is the best investment we can make, and my staff are proud to offer this wonderful program. We cannot imagine our district without it, and we must continue to provide this essential option to our community."

--- Tom Umhoefer, Director of Community Education at Burnsville Public Schools

"Voluntary Pre-K will not work the way it was intended when funding is continually at risk. To implement anything well we need time and assurances that what we start won't stop from year to year. We need reliable, stable funding so we can create and provide the best education for all students."

--- Jessica Cabeen, Principal of the Woodson Kindergarten Center in Austin and Member of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

"It was like Christmas in August when we were able to tell them no tuition this year. We had parents hug us and cry. They were so excited."

--- Amy Baskin, Director of Austin Public Schools' Community Education

"Every family wants to do what's best for their children. It breaks my heart when a four-year-old shows up at our school with their backpack loaded up and ready to learn and we have to turn them away. I wish we could help every child, but right now, we can't."

--- Cindy Stolp, Director of Community Education and Early Childhood for Pine City Schools

[Preschool teacher Debbie] Farnham said when families learned of the opportunity at Piedmont's open house, many became emotional. They no longer had to worry about how to pay for preschool, she said. "I didn't know how they were going to react to going five days a week," she said, because many preschool programs aren't daily. "But they were in tears."

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