The 501(c)(3) endowment will be administered through the South Dakota Community Foundation. Eligible preschools may apply for funds from the endowment. The funds to be distributed will come from 4.5% of the interest accrued from the principal. Preschools receiving funds may use the money to serve a greater number of students, for teacher training, or to purchase supplies.

Initially, facilities which serve those children who are among the neediest and most vulnerable would receive priority consideration. Applications would be submitted to a board of early childhood professionals affiliated with the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has established very high standards which include an oversight component. The South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC) and the “Levels of Excellence” program closely adhere to those national standards.

I believe it is very important for our state to encourage the growth and development of quality preschools. Not only is it an educational issue, but it is a social, humanitarian and workforce issue as well. Every child should have the opportunity to receive a quality preschool education, especially those children who are among the neediest in our society.

After all, our children are our future. They should be our priority.

If you wish to make a contribution, you may do so in one of the following ways:

1. Make a check out to the South Dakota Community Foundation (or SDCF). On the memo line, write SDAEYC Fund.
   Mail it to:
   P.O. Box 296
   Pierre, SD 57501
   The tax id number is 46-0371120

2. Online: https://sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-donors/

Thank you for your consideration.
Former Representative Tom Holmes
District 14
South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Tom Holmes and I am formerly a state representative from District 14. I come with a request for funds. Last year there were 1,000 children in South Dakota who qualified for the Head Start program but were unable to participate due to a lack of federal funding. I have established a privately funded and privately administered endowment that would allow schools and other high quality preschool facilities an opportunity to include more children in their pre-kindergarten programs.

Studies show that the return on investment for education is greatest during the preschool years. According to Nobel Laureate James J. Heckman, quality programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% per year return on investment. Research has found that when tested at ages 8, 10, and 14, children from disadvantaged backgrounds who were enrolled in quality pre-kindergarten programs achieved at higher levels than those who weren’t. Former preschool students graduate from high school at significantly higher rates than non-participants and they earn more in later life.

Specifically, children who are enrolled in quality preschool programs are less likely to spend time in special education classes, drop out of school, get in trouble with the law, and go on welfare. It has been shown that poverty has a profound impact on learning and development.

South Dakota is one of seven states that does not have a statewide preschool program. With the assistance of early childhood professionals, I have established a 501(c)(3) endowment that will be administered by a board of early childhood professionals and other interested parties. In order to qualify for funding, a program must meet the standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start, or by the School Administrators of South Dakota (SASD) “Levels of Excellence” program. Those funds could then be utilized to incorporate additional children into an existing pre-kindergarten program.

Contributors will be recognized by the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children (SDAEYC) in their newsletter and on their website.

I am asking you to consider a generous donation to support the education of some of our neediest children. I sincerely appreciate your consideration.

“It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Citations
1. “There’s More to Gain by Taking a Comprehensive Approach to Early Childhood Development”: www.heckmanequation.org
3. SASD.ORG “Preschool Levels of Excellence”
4. “Fight Crime. Invest in Kids” (law enforcement site)