



How to Make *Smart* INVESTMENTSSM IN MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS

A strong Minnesota economy will require new investment in Minnesota's students. We can do it wisely and cost-effectively.

Minnesota faces major economic shifts that challenge our long-term prosperity. To meet the demand for skilled workers — and to ensure families can enjoy a decent standard of living — we should, by 2020, increase by 50 percent the rate of Minnesota students who finish some post-secondary education.

To reach that goal, we must invest in solutions now. Each year 10,000 high school students drop out, costing the state economy \$10 billion over their lifetimes.

Most agree that an educated workforce is good for business and families. Surveys show that a majority of Minnesotans would invest more in public education — if they believed the money would have the desired impact.

But with limited state resources and different ideas about reforming education, how do we decide what will work best for all students?

Smart InvestmentsSM in Minnesota's Students provides a fresh way to think about investing new education dollars for better results. It shows how to:

Invest in the whole student from birth to college following four principles of smart investment.

Choose approaches proven to “work best for less” based on evidence of outcomes and economic analysis.

Raise enough money fairly using a progressive reform of the current tax structure — to cost-effectively support students all the way to post-secondary success.

Research and analysis sponsored by Growth & Justice indicates that an annual \$1 billion investment in human capital would more than pay for itself — through higher earnings for each additional graduate, greater state tax revenue from higher wages and economic growth, and lower social costs paid by taxpayers.

WHAT ARE SMART INVESTMENTSSM?

Current educational investments tend to be driven by the system's needs. *Smart InvestmentsSM in Minnesota's Students* proposes a new way of thinking about investment by focusing on the student, following four principles:

1. Smart investments aim for compound effects.

Comprehensive programs that address the whole student's needs — social support, academic preparation, and improved access to early childhood and post-secondary learning opportunity — are more effective than any single component program.

2. Smart investments accumulate capital.

Educational success depends on students being ready for school, continually ready to learn, and ultimately, ready for life.

3. Smart investments address real disparities. The greatest returns on investment come from addressing the greatest disparities in opportunity and achievement.

4. Smart investments are made with accountability for results. Investments should be chosen based on evidence through a transparent process that measures and reports the outcomes.

Visit www.growthandjustice.org/education_report.html
to download the full *Smart InvestmentsSM in Minnesota's Students* report.

MAKING PROGRESS FROM BIRTH TO COLLEGE

As students progress along the path to college, they reach five key points where their readiness for the next level can be measured. Smart investments in proven programs can prepare students academically and socially for these gateways to post-secondary success.

BIRTH TO AGE 3

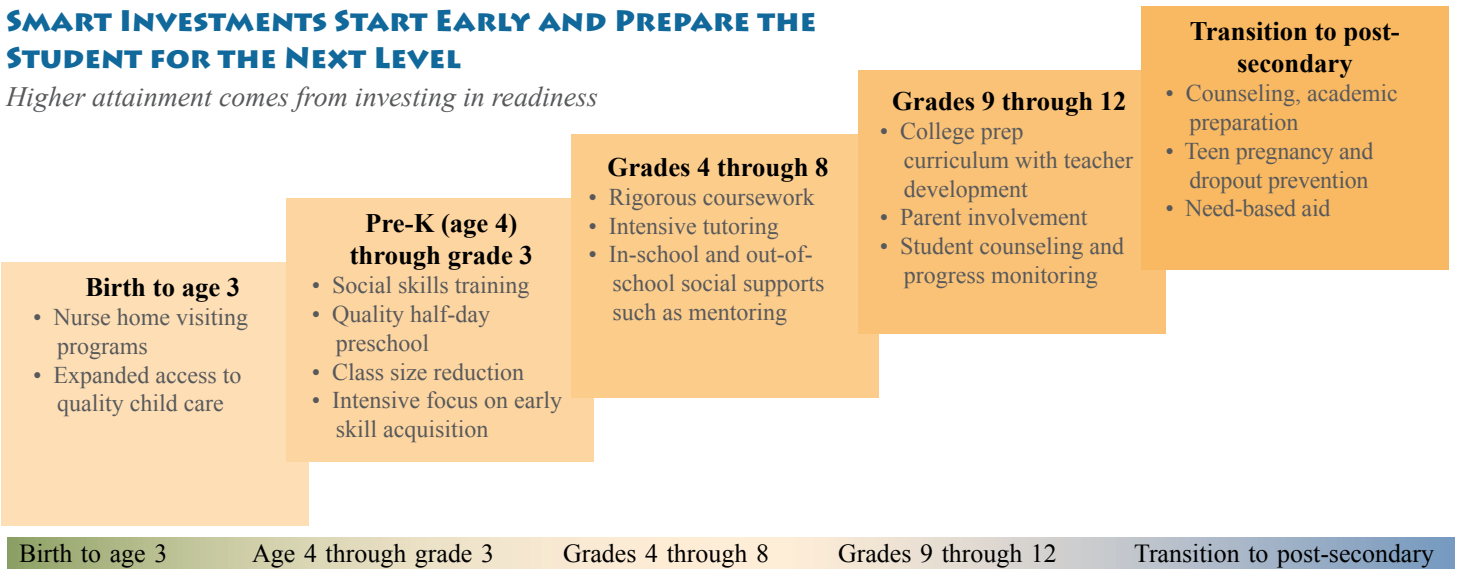
Good prenatal care and quality early childhood experiences ready a child for elementary school learning.

PRE-K (AGE 4) THROUGH GRADE 3

Students ready for kindergarten acquire and grow language and math skills earlier, leading to success on 4th grade national skills tests.

SMART INVESTMENTS START EARLY AND PREPARE THE STUDENT FOR THE NEXT LEVEL

Higher attainment comes from investing in readiness



HOW TO CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

Instead of focusing on funding the “system,” we need a new conversation about what works best to prepare more students to complete post-secondary education. With a fact-based consensus, we can invest more wisely to achieve that outcome.

Here’s how you can contribute to a stronger economy and better quality of life for more Minnesotans.

1. Learn more. Attend a public forum. Invite us to speak at a meeting or event. Read more about the research findings at www.growthandjustice.org.

2. Adopt the *Smart InvestmentsSM in Minnesota’s Students* framework. Advocate smart policies that invest in evidence-based, cost-effective solutions that prepare more students for post-secondary success.

GRADES 4 THROUGH 8

Keeping students proficient in basic skills during these years makes them more likely to graduate from high school.

GRADES 9 THROUGH 12

Arriving in high school ready for rigorous coursework, students become more prepared to enroll and succeed in post-secondary education, and sustain higher-level learning with social support.

TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY

Students who have good academic preparation, social support, and access to aid or loans have a greater likelihood of completing their degrees on schedule.

3. Show support. Contact your state legislator and show your support for smart investment reform efforts and legislation aimed at measurably increasing the numbers of students who finish post-secondary education.

4. Support our work. Your financial contribution will advance our Smart InvestmentsSM work, which aims to strengthen our economy so that it works for more Minnesotans.

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