



STRONG PRAISE FOR ‘SMART INVESTMENTS IN MINNESOTA’S STUDENTS’

Growth & Justice’s already solid reputation for high-quality research and policy work got another big boost at the “Smart Investments in Minnesota’s Students” education summit held at the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul last fall.

The kudos are still coming in and we’re working to build momentum from that good will to advance a set of recommendations for proven investments that improve educational outcomes.



Angie Eilers

The Nov. 12 event, attended by more than 200 education stakeholders, legislators, and staff showcased the most effective and cost-effective interventions from birth to college that correlate with Growth & Justice’s strategic aim of increasing post-secondary attainment rates by 50 percent.

Research and Policy Director Angie Eilers said that evaluations and comments made during and after the education summit seemed to slake a thirst for best practices and cost-effective practices in education.

“It was the scholars’ thorough review of the most effective practices, coupled with the cost analysis of those practices that the participants found gratifying,” Eilers said. “We heard from some of the nation’s most pre-eminent scholars about effective interventions, but we also learned how Minnesota can get the best bang for our education buck. That is welcomed information when there is competition for scarce state resources.”

Early childhood researchers Arthur Reynolds, Art Rolnick, and Rob Grunewald reported that high quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds shows a high level of cost-effective-

continued on page 3

GROWTH & JUSTICE EXPLORES SMART INVESTMENTS IN MINNESOTA’S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Growth & Justice will embark on a major project starting in early 2008 to explore smart investment strategies for Minnesota’s transportation system. In keeping with the focus of Growth & Justice’s Invest for Real Prosperity efforts and its current initiative for Smart Investments in Minnesota’s Students, the transportation project will identify progressive, cost-effective approaches to public-sector investment that will lead to growth for Minnesota and expanded economic opportunity for Minnesota’s people and places.

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GROWTH & JUSTICE PLANS SECOND ‘WORST POLITICAL ADVERTISING IN AMERICA AWARDS’

In May 2004, Growth & Justice brought more than 600 people together for the “Worst Political Advertising in America Awards” show. Masterminded by Growth & Justice board member and former advertising executive Lee Lynch, the show was a big hit, gainged lots of laughs, and it brought us many new friends and long-term supporters. So we’re going to do it again in May 2008, with the “Second Quadrennial Worst Political Advertising in America Awards.”

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GROWTH & JUSTICE is a progressive economic think tank committed to making Minnesota's economy simultaneously more prosperous, fair and environmentally sustainable. We combine independent, fact-based research with citizen engagement to develop innovative, strategic policy proposals and frameworks and communicate them broadly.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Dane Smith

Right around noon, the gavels fall in the Senate and House with a crisp, wooden tock-tock-tock. The leaders' amplified voices, calling for order, reverberate through the marble halls. And the big ornate dome fills with a dull roar, arising from chattering lobbyists, shouting schoolchildren and sign-waving protesters in the rotunda.

Ahhh, the sounds and sights of a Minnesota legislative session opener.

I've been there for the last 21 opening day ceremonies for legislative sessions. And I'm looking forward to my 22nd, the Feb. 12 opener of the 2008 session, with a zeal borne of a new perspective. After a career as an observer and newspaper reporter, I'm eagerly plunging in as a participant, advancing our foundational work for Growth & Justice and our imminently sensible prescriptions for improving the state's economy and the real lives and prosperity of all Minnesotans.

Building on the sound policy principles and good relationships already established by board chairman Joel Kramer and Lori Schaefer, we're poised at Growth & Justice in 2008 to have more impact than ever before. We're committed to becoming an increasingly influential force in 2008, in the even more important budget-setting 2009 session, and beyond.

We'll be going in this month with an agenda. It won't be a litany of yes-no positions on specific bills but rather a statement of fundamental policy principles.

We'll spell out our essential framework: more, smarter, and innovative investment in education, transportation, health-care, and a sustainable environment; increased revenue from a fairer tax structure; and expectation of more accountability and effectiveness from government.

We know that the obstacles to imple-

menting our vision of investment for broader prosperity remain daunting, and that big victories aren't likely in an off-budget year and in the midst of yet another revenue shortage. We're in it for the long haul.

Doors are open

Success begets success and we're already finding ready access to legislators and staff. It's actually better than that. We're experiencing keen interest and demand for our research and expertise.

Research and Policy Director Angie Eilers, coming off our highly regarded Nov. 12 summit presenting research on what really works to improve public-school outcomes, is meeting often with key committee leaders and staff. And she's being asked to testify at hearings.

Policy Fellow for Infrastructure & Economic Development, Matt Kane will be playing a strong role on that front as well, and we will get our oar in the water on transportation with an analysis of the scale of our historic disinvestment early in the session.

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Ellen M. Perrault, who joined us in November, has more than 10 years of experience as a legislative staffer (evenly divided between House and Senate), and her knowledge and relationships are proving to be most valuable. We are communicating daily with legislative leaders, responding to requests for information, forwarding pertinent blogposts and op-eds and generally working hard to make ourselves as useful and influential as possible.

Meanwhile, we are playing a leadership role in revitalizing an already existing ad hoc "revenue coalition" with other progressive leaders - representing non-profits, religious groups and labor unions - to coordinate our message, develop a strategy and build grassroots pressure at key points during the 2008 session. Watch for more developments and news on that initiative.

ness. Universally, early interventions in a child's life provide the greatest rate of return. Reynolds reported that Minnesota greatly under-invests in early education, and relative to those states that provide pre-kindergarten access for four year olds, Minnesota ranks 37th out of 38 states. Clearly, Minnesota can do better. Rolnick said that the early childhood investment proposal that he and Grunewald have authored, which is an endowed fund for scholarships and calls for mentoring from birth to age five, would fund every at-risk child in the state in perpetuity. It totals \$1.5 to \$2 billion. That is the cost, he reminded the audience, of two stadiums.

Drs. Henry Levin and Clive Belfield, co-directors of the Center for Cost-Benefit Studies in Education at Columbia University, reported that the search for effective interventions that raise high school graduation rates in a cost-effective manner is challenging. Few interventions have been rigorously evaluated. Also, most interventions do not easily identify their cost ingredients. Nonetheless, after an extensive review, Levin and Belfield forwarded several K-12 education reforms that have demonstrated effectiveness in raising the graduation rate in a cost-effective way.

The experiences of students during their out-of-school time, such as after school and summer months, also seem to be improved by mentoring relationships and supportive services.

Dr. Megan Beckett of RAND Corporation reported that there is a dearth of rigorous research in out-of-school time programs, but of those that do show an effect on student achievement the shared features seem to be based on mentoring relationships formed with adults or comprehensive "case management" services.

As for successfully transitioning students from secondary to post-secondary education, even fewer cost-effectiveness studies exist at this end of the education pathway. Professor Laura Perna of the University of Pennsylvania explained that effects studies require random assignment of students to intervention treatment and control groups.

Each of the scholars pointed out the relative scarcity of rigorous evaluations and cost-effectiveness studies. (The scholars' papers are available at www.growthandjustice.org.) Nonetheless, they cautioned against policy paralysis. There are many proven practices and even more promising practices that provide guidance in making smart investments in Minnesota's students.

The goal of Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students is to formulate a proposal to the Legislature that suggests getting the best return on the education dollar. This research successfully moves this undertaking to the final phase of work: a consensus on what are the smart investments.

GROWTH & JUSTICE

receives high praise for

Smart
INVESTMENTS

IN MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS

education summit.

"I wanted to let you know that yesterday's event was probably the best I have been to in many years. Angie, Dane, and all involved should be extremely proud. Given the audience you targeted, and the fact that the auditorium was standing room only at the beginning and retention was great to the end, I think we are at a point where the political environment will allow us to make some great advances in how we think about education in this state, how we evaluate public policies, and ultimately how we improve what we do in Minnesota."

—Scott

"A perfect event! Well, done. Your evidence-based approach has attracted all the major players into the room; just what Growth & Justice needs to move the sticks."

—Jim

"I got a call from the University of Texas about the education summit, a state senator, the House DFL leader [Speaker of the House Margaret Anderson Kelliher] as well as Todd Otis. Your success has certainly caused a buzz."

—Lee

"Overall it was a great event! Your [Dane] leadership along with Angie is making a difference on catching the attention of legislators and the media alike on critical education issues."

—Rep. Nora Slawik

TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS *continued from page 1*

For Smart Investments in Minnesota's Transportation Infrastructure, Growth & Justice staff will work with a diverse group of progressive-minded leaders, stakeholders and advisors to weigh issues and frame key policy questions about investments in Minnesota's transportation infrastructure. The project will involve research into policy options, policy discussions and consensus building, and innovative and realistic recommendations. The project will focus on policy approaches, rather than specific decisions regarding particular roads, bridges, or transit lines.

Project topics will include the following:

- The economic impact of transportation investments that increase mobility for people and goods.
- Access to transportation for Minnesotans as a means for improving their economic circumstances and quality of life.

- Cost-effective approaches for reducing or slowing congestion.
- Efficient and practical strategies for expanding transit options and use.
- Land use patterns for reducing the demands placed on the transportation system.

Growth & Justice identified transportation as a key area for smart, public-sector investment in its January 2007 report *Invest for Real Prosperity: A Strategy for Creating a More Prosperous Future for All Minnesotans*. Transportation infrastructure improvements will be necessary, particularly as the state's population grows by more than 1 million residents from 2007 to 2030, as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Congestion already stands out as an issue in some areas of the state, including the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, which the Texas Transportation Institute ranks as 23rd

worst for estimated congestion delays of 43 hours per traveler per year among 85 major metropolitan areas.

The Democratic leadership in Minnesota's Legislature plans to take up transportation in the 2008 session in hopes of overriding Gov. Tim Pawlenty's veto of a transportation bill in 2007 or of crafting a new proposal that can be passed into law. Action by the legislature, particularly on the issue of transportation financing, would set the stage for policy recommendations from Growth & Justice about how best to shape Minnesota's transportation infrastructure.

Look for more information about Smart Investments in Minnesota's Transportation Infrastructure in forthcoming issues of the Growth & Justice newsletter and on the website at www.growthandjustice.org.



SAVE THE DATE: *March 29, 2008*

**Smart
INVESTMENTS**
IN MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS

HIGHLIGHTS OF "SMART INVESTMENTS IN MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS" EDUCATION SUMMIT TO AIR ON TPT ON MARCH 29

Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) will air an hour-long program featuring the "Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students" Nov. 12, 2007 education summit on March 29 at 8 p.m.

The program will air on Channel 17 in the Twin Cities area. Residents in Greater Minnesota should check their local listings. The program will be re-broadcast two more times on Channel 17 and then will air again on TPT's digital channel.

A DVD of the production will be available for distribution in early April.

MINNESOTA'S PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN TRADITION: HELPING BUILD GROWTH AND JUSTICE'

By Dane Smith

Growth & Justice has scheduled a very imaginative and on-message event to take place during the Republican National Convention.

On Thursday Sept. 3, at 10 a.m. at the College Club, next to the Governor's Residence on Summit Ave. in St. Paul, Growth & Justice will sponsor an educational symposium that will honor "Minnesota's Progressive Republican Tradition."

Govs. Arne Carlson and Al Quie have agreed to participate. Both of those respected elder statesmen have

expressed clear and strong disapproval of the state's recent course toward excessive fiscal austerity and disinvestment in public assets.

The symposium will help us highlight our non-partisan status and appeal.



Former Governors Arne Carlson & Al Quie

live has been shaped by a progressive culture, one that was until recently shared by all major political parties.

More important, it gets the message out that Minnesota's distinctiveness as one of the best places in the world to

Republican leaders in this state, going back to statehood have contributed enormously to this tradition. Republicans fought for women's suffrage, racial equality, conservation and environmental protections, and civil service reforms.

Former Gov. Harold Stassen was instrumental in forming the United Nations. GOP leaders at the state level pushed through landmark investments in mental health reforms, community colleges, and generally improved on, rather than repealed, the New Deal initiatives that created more economic equality, a strong middle-class in Minnesota.

Please check our web site this summer for further details about the event.

"WORST POLITICAL ADS IN AMERICA" *continued from page 1*

The Bad Ads awards four years ago, which also featured former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich, allowed us to highlight our non-partisan status and the premium we put on reason and civility in policy and politics. Then and now, we won't miss an opportunity to also make the case that ample and smart investments in education, transportation, and health care will bring prosperity to all Minnesotans.

As fate would have it, the current Growth & Justice President Dane

Smith covered the event four years ago as a reporter for the Star Tribune. In his review Smith said that, "Obviously enjoying the Academy



WORST POLITICAL ADS IN AMERICA

Awards-style send-up, more than 600 Minnesota political types from all major parties yukked it up Wednes-

day night at the first 'Worst Political Advertising in America Awards.' . . . [Speaker of the House Steve] Sviggum [a Republican] said he attended 'because I was asked. It was fun. We need to lighten up and not take ourselves too seriously all the time.'"

Please check Growth & Justice's website early this spring (www.growthandjustice.org) for the time and date of the event, as well as information on how to purchase tickets.

Thank You 2007 Donors

The work of Growth & Justice would not be possible without the support of a long list of individual and foundation supporters to whom we are extremely grateful. Your investment in Growth & Justice has paid off many times over. Thank you.

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GROWTH & JUSTICE WELCOMES MATT KANE

Matt Kane has joined Growth & Justice as the organization's first policy fellow for infrastructure and economic development.

A graduate of the University of St. Thomas and the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Matt has worked on public policy issues for more than 20 years, primarily at the national level. His research, articles and books cover a wide range of topics, including economic development, economic and demographic trends, regional economic analysis, transportation policy, urban revitalization, and work force issues.



Matt Kane

Prior to joining Growth & Justice in 2007, Matt worked for the Washington-based Northeast-Midwest Institute, the National League of Cities, and a national association of economic development centers. He

also taught economic development classes at the University of Michigan. Matt has testified before Congress about local economic development and worker dislocation.

Matt, his wife, Liz Conway, and their three children live in Minneapolis. Matt's family roots in Minnesota date back to the 1800s, and five generations of Kanes have lived in Minneapolis.

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