

Andrew McCree  
1809 Castle Ridge Dr.  
Plainfield, IL 60586

Re: KLA Schools - Naperville

September 5, 2018

To: Whom it May Concern

My name is Andrew McCree, and I have served as an administrator for early childhood programs in Illinois public schools over the past seven years. Early childhood is both a lifelong passion and profession for me. Over my career I have studied and seen first-hand the positive impacts early childhood education can have on individual children, families, and communities.

Professor James J. Heckman is the Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. Professor Heckman won a Nobel Memorial Prize in economics for his research on the economic gains from investing in early childhood development. He found that quality early childhood development strongly influences the health, economic, and social outcomes for individuals and societies. Professor Heckman and his colleagues' newest research finds a 13% return on investment for comprehensive, high quality, birth-to-five early education.

Recent publications in The Daily Herald and The Beacon-News have proclaimed that 1 in 4 children are starting kindergarten unprepared to learn at high levels. This proclamation is based on the 2017-2018 implementation of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey that collected data on children's math; language and literacy; and social and emotional development. Although your local school districts continue to serve children, families, and communities at high levels, it will take additional supports to meet the needs of all children within any community.

The Illinois State Board of Education promotes a Birth-Third Grade (B-3) Continuity Project to create a comprehensive, high quality, early education as described in Professor Heckman's research. Components of this project include community partnerships, family engagement, aligned curriculum and instruction, aligned assessments, data driven improvement, and supported transitions. My experiences with KLA-Plainfield have shown me their dedication to providing high quality early education services in all of the listed areas.

KLA-Plainfield's vision for early childhood education aligns with the B-3 Continuity Project. They provide services for children from infants through kindergarten, additional enrichment opportunities, and before-after school care for school-aged children. Perhaps KLA-Plainfield's greatest strength is their aligned curriculum and instruction through their Reggio Emilia Approach to learning. This approach includes long term project-based learning with child research and investigations. The Illinois State Board of Education supports project approach and project-based learning that allows child-led investigations based on inquiry as best practice.

I hope this letter will help you with your decision when considering the approval for additional KLA schools. There is a need for high quality early childhood services, a high return on investment for high quality early childhood services, and KLA schools' approach to learning continues to meet and exceed standards set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Sincerely,

*Andrew J. McCree*