



EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes

TO: District 65 School Board

CC: Dr Angel Turner, District 65 Superintendent

Dr. Charmekia McCoy, District 65 Director of Schools Management

Dr. Katie Speth, District 65 Assistant Superintendent of Academics

FROM: Dan Coyne, District 65 School Social Worker

DATE: August 7, 2025

RE: Care for Learners Pilot

Objective: ☒ **Information** ☐ **Discussion** ☐ **Follow-up** ☐ **Decision**

Background: The Care for Learners Pilot (Care For Learners Pilot) is a new King Arts collaborative process where monies donated from community partners can be used for King Arts families experiencing housing/food insecurity. Over the past years, we have had the privilege of experiencing generous donated resources from community partners that were used to assist D65 families: housing, clothing, furniture, food, employment, and gift cards. Given the current federal, state, county, and D65 tightening budgets, it seems timely to explore a new formal process to assist our most vulnerable D65 families. The Care for Learners fund is a private not-for-profit entity embedded within Reba Place Fellowship (a faith-based Mennonite community located in south Evanston since 1957).

Goal/Guiding principles: The goal of the Care for Learners pilot is to provide King Arts families who are experiencing an unexpected hardship, a small but helpful Target Gift card during their family crisis. While working alongside D65 families who are experiencing housing/food insecurity, we most often hear the need for food/fuel. Having access to the Care for Learners digital Target gift cards can be a valuable tool in the King Lab provider's service menu.

Input sought/received: The initial vision for the Care for Learners fund was presented to the Board of Directors of Reba Place Fellowship Ministry Fund in the winter of 2025. After a unanimous vote affirming this new collaborative service with D65, it was determined that using the Target Corporation's digital gift card system would be the most efficient method to distribute digital gift cards for food/clothing/school items without fee/charge. During the spring of 2025, the Care for Learners fund vision was presented to the Cares Team of King Arts (Admin, Social Workers, and Counselors) with full support as long as D65 approved the pilot. The King Arts Cares Team meets weekly to review students/families struggling (crisis, attendance issues, and behavioral concerns). The Cares Team is a natural group to help identify families experiencing hardships who might benefit from the Care for Learners Pilot.

Options considered: Many of our families experiencing housing/food insecurity are experts at locating resources to help patch together family needs. Our D65 teams, including teachers, admin, and service providers, have discovered meaningful support

systems/resources for our families; having one more Target Gift card option deserves a chance to succeed.

Recommendation: Affirm the Care for Learners Pilot at King Arts and provide a means for a program report/debrief in the Spring of 2026 which will include a summary on the total dollars donated towards the Care for Learners Pilot.

Financial Implications: The Care for Learners fund will not require any public funds given the private not-for-profit 501-C entity of Reba Place Fellowship. All of the funds collected by Reba Place Fellowship and distributed to D65 will be without fees/costs--hence, every dollar donated will go to D65 families (no administrative costs).