



April 20, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

As the owner, Director and C.E.O. of Art Steps, Inc. I, Hilary Key, wholeheartedly endorse the Certificate of Achievement and Associate of Science Degree in Early Education Entrepreneurship, at San Diego Miramar College, which will provide basic business education to students wanting to start, manage, or scale a childcare business.

There is an unmet labor market demand in Southern California, for the occupations that this program trains for. The occupations that this program provides training for include:

- Preschool and Childcare Center Directors
- Business Owner
- Education and Childcare Administrator

As a successful business for the past 22 years, our focus is on seeing our staff thrive right along with our business, so I endorse the change that this program can make for the better where it comes to wages. According to the BLS, the average Child Care Worker salary in the US is \$27,490 as of May 29, 2021, and the average salary range typically falls between \$8.91 and \$17.99 per hour. The Certificate of Achievement and Associate of Science Degree in Early Education Entrepreneurship, at San Diego Miramar College will provide training so students can become Preschool and Childcare Center Directors which earn an average salary of \$49,160 and an hourly rate of \$23.63, a Business Owner who earn an average yearly salary in San Diego of \$210,830 (\$101.36/hour), or an Education and Childcare Administrator with an average yearly salary of \$57,340 (\$27.57/hour)

We have had many of the capable teachers we hire for our after-school fine art program eventually leave our company and go on to earn public teaching degrees, because they loved children, but never learned to be business-savvy, so they could never imagine themselves thriving with a location of their own. Where it comes to our administrative staff, people with business degrees generally do not understand the nuances and challenges of working with children. We would jump at the chance to hire someone who is an expert in both child development and business, and we could lay out a clear career path for them. We would love to see more candidates to franchise more locations, but the pool of potential partners is small. A person with a strong business and child development background would be an excellent fit.

The Early Education Entrepreneurship COA and AS degree will help Childcare students increase their salaries to earn a living-wage and ensure more children have access to childcare in order to meet the current demand in San Diego County. The Early Education Entrepreneurship COA and AS degree will provide students with the training, supplies, and marketing skills necessary to start, manage, or scale a child-centered business.

In the past 12 months, we have hired five students and at least seven recent graduates from the education and fine art programs at Cal State Fullerton and Cal State Long Beach, and expect to hire more teachers and administrators in the upcoming years. As our business grows, we expect to franchise to people with a passion for working with children and art while they watch their business grow.

This affirms that there are jobs available for program completers within the local service area of the college after taking into account the number of completers in similar programs at other institutions—as required by Education Code section 78015 and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH).

Sincerely,

Hilary Key
Director
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