



**Thank you, Legislators,** for empowering families with this opportunity to choose their child's education. While the students' names tell a story of great diversity in South Dakota, **the families all share a great sense of gratitude.** Your action in 2019 increasing the tax credit to 100% has allowed SD Partners in Education to award scholarships at a level that gives these families true choice. We are so grateful to the ten insurance companies who contributed a total of \$2 million to the Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) making this a choice a reality for South Dakota families.

- **In the current 2021-2022 school year approximately 1288 students and their families will receive over \$2.2 million in tuition scholarships.** They are enrolled in 43 schools across South Dakota.
- **This choice for families results in a significant savings for the State's taxpayers.** The per student equivalent for state aid in the 2021-2022 year is \* \$6,210.94 with the State's share projected to be \$3560.11. If the State spent that amount on the 1288 scholarship students, it would result in a State expenditure of almost \$4.6 million. These are students from families with low to moderate income, making both starting and continuing in non-public schools a real financial sacrifice. Thank you for making that continuing choice a real possibility for these families. (\*Legislative Research Council.)
- **The average scholarship this year will be approximately \$1728.** The highest award of \$2900 is reserved for returning high school scholarship students whose families qualify as "free lunch" under the federal lunch guidelines. Scholarship amounts are tiered with the highest going to families qualifying as "free."

***You are making a difference! (quotes from schools and families)***

*"Our school has seen a population change over the last 10 years that mirrors the changes we have seen in our community. Our free and reduced lunch numbers have increased steadily to 47% of our students. These families value a choice in education and wish to make it possible for their children although paying full tuition is not financially feasible."*

*"I wish you could have seen the faces of some of these parents when they hear the news their child received the scholarship."*

*"These families have jobs, work hard, love their families and want this education for their children, but have a hard time financially. The scholarships have helped these families."*

*"As a single Mom of 2 young children, I want to thank you for the blessing of my daughter's education."*

*"Mom and Dad are immigrants; Mom is willing to work three jobs to keep her little girl at our school. Mom sobbed tears of joy to think her child could be here."*

*"39% of our families are on free/reduced meals. These parents make huge sacrifices to have their children attend a private school."*

*"As parents of a young family we are grateful for the option that private schools provide us in the education of our children. The SDPE scholarship program has made all the difference for our family, a blessing for which we will always be grateful."*

**Thank you so much for what you do for our families!**