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- **Chicago Heights to be the epicentre of the \$10 million Early Education Research Initiative**
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- An innovative \$10 million initiative has been introduced for the early education sector which is run by two economic professors. This multi-year program will work out ways in which the learning environment can be enhanced and improved upon.

This program is supported and administered by the Harvard University and the University of Chicago in a bid to improve education in America. The entire initiative is funded by Chicago philanthropists Kenneth and Anne Griffin.

The Griffin foundation, as it is referred to, will devise apt and effective learning environment, enhance student performance and analyse incentives offered to teachers. Two economic professors from the University of Chicago, Steven Levitt and John List will lead this program and they will be assisted by the Education Innovation Laboratory, Harvard's faculty director and an economics professor Roland Fryer.

List, a field experiment specialist, has interestingly been studying incentives in the field of education for the last couple of years. According to him, this research initiative will help them optimize means of administering Pre-K and K-12 in the most effective manner.

A study that focuses on the preschool level will be set in motion for which about seven million dollars will be spent. Study will be conducted by breaking the pre schoolers into three groups of 150 students each chosen by a lottery system from a 1000 student's pool.

A preschool known as the Griffin Early Childhood Center will be created by the first arm of this program in Chicago Heights, IL. The second group will be offered incentives of \$7000 after outlining the goals with the help of parents. This group will not attend the Center. The third group on the other hand will also be offered the same incentive which will be put in a college fund.

Advisors all over will monitor the students studying at the centre as well as those studying under this program in other schools. All students will be constantly monitored for academic progress till they graduate from high school.

According to List, in comparison to the control group, students in arms one, two and three will be very successful. He went on to say that the important aspect will be in determining the best and most effective arm.

At least three million dollars will be spent on looking into and researching incentives offered for student mentoring, teacher incentives and research at the K-12 level. Tom Amadio, the Chicago Heights School superintendent said in a university press release that a lot can be expected for the community from this research initiative. He went on to thank the program for the benefits it is sure to offer the community of Chicago Heights as well as the school district by broadening opportunities in education for the children.

The reason for choosing Chicago Heights is the diversity in its population and lack of facilities at the preschool level. Griffin Foundation, which has donated for this program supports a variety of initiatives in the field of education, arts and science.

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