



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CHRISTOPHER B. COLEMAN
Mayor

February 19, 2014

Valeria Silva, Superintendent
Saint Paul Public Schools
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Mary Cathryn Ricker, President
St. Paul Federation of Teachers
400 Selby Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Superintendent Silva and President Ricker:

For several years, we have come together to advance student achievement in Saint Paul. I've been proud of the collaborative partnership between teachers and school administrators that, together, made progress to end academic disparities between students of color and white students. The continued – and improving – success of Saint Paul students is a testament to both the dedication and effectiveness of Saint Paul teachers and to the district's plan that strives for greater proficiency of all students, especially students of color.

Today's announcement that Saint Paul's overall graduation rate is up by 5.27 percent over last year, and up almost 13 percent since 2009 speaks volumes about the importance of the collaborative partnership we've built over the last several years. After years of working to close a stubborn achievement gap, we are finally making real, substantive progress. Now is not the time to stop.

Advancing student achievement has been a collective effort. I have applauded the Federation's work to introduce the Peer Assistance and Review program and the Parent/Teacher Home Visit program. I have brought the voice of the teachers union to discussions with business groups and education reformers. I believe so strongly in the importance of collaboration that I invited American Teacher Federation President Randi Weingarten and President Ricker to Washington, DC, to meet with mayors from around the country to learn about our "third way" of union, district and mayoral collaboration, an effort, we have learned today, that bears real results.

Since becoming mayor, I have been pleased to work closely with teachers and the administration on a range of issues affecting the district. As you know, there is no job I take more seriously than ensuring the success of our young people. I urge you to come together and find a solution so that we can continue the important work of educating the next generation and finally close the achievement gap. Saint Paul has a long history of peaceful labor relations and I hope that will continue.

I stand ready to talk to you either by phone or in person to find a path forward. I will have my staff reach out to you in the coming days to see if there is a time that would work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Coleman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher B. Coleman
Mayor