



City of Saint Paul
Mayor Chris Coleman
Education Initiatives Overview
January 2014

"Education is my crime prevention strategy, my neighborhood development strategy, my workforce development strategy and my economic development strategy."

- Mayor Chris Coleman

Sprockets



In 2006, when Mayor Chris Coleman first took office in the City of Saint Paul, he launched a citizen commission to determine if afterschool learning was a priority for parents and youth leaders. With strong affirmation from the public, he created the "Second Shift Commission" to develop a plan for a citywide afterschool network. In 2011, the commission's plan was fulfilled with the launch of a private-public partnership with the City of Saint Paul known as "Sprockets."

Sprockets is a strong network of afterschool and summer programs that currently has 33 organizations using its shared data system to track information on afterschool programming for 7,475 youth. Sprockets provides youth-serving organizations with professional development on program quality improvement and assessment of youths' social-emotional development, which, when combined with data tracking on school and afterschool engagement, will provide a powerful picture about how youth are faring.

Sprockets offers a Program Finder database that parents and students can access online to search for out-of-school time programs nearby along with other information to help parents make decisions about afterschool and summer learning that's right for their children.

The vision of Sprockets is that all Saint Paul youth will develop their abilities as learners, contributors, and navigators so they can recognize and achieve their greatest potential.

www.sprocketsstpaul.org (also included is a separate 2011-2012 Sprockets Data Report)

Early Learning Childhood

Investing in high quality early childhood education can make a difference in whether a child is ready for kindergarten. Children who start school with the social, emotional and developmental skills they need are more likely to do better in life. The reality is that not all children are ready for kindergarten. That's why Mayor Coleman believes high-quality early learning is an investment that will pay off by helping children be ready for school and beyond.

From 2008 – 2010 the Saint Paul's Thomas-Dale neighborhood was



the site of an experiment by the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) to provide low-income families with scholarships for their children to attend high-quality early learning programs. The experiment showed that children were better prepared if they attended programs with the highest ratings, according to the rating system MELF developed.

Following the success of the MELF scholarships, the State of Minnesota approved \$40 million in funding for early learning scholarships. Low-income children in Saint Paul are eligible for these state scholarships.

Additionally, in late 2011 Minnesota was one of nine states to be awarded a federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Child grant. The state received \$45 million to expand its early learning scholarship program and increase the number of highly rated early learning providers. Saint Paul's Promise Neighborhood is one of four Transformation Zones where these federally funded scholarships are available to qualifying families.

Mayor's Education Reform Task Force, National League of Cities



Mayor Chris Coleman currently serves as the President of the National League of Cities (NLC). In March 2013, Mayor Coleman and NLC Second Vice President Ralph Becker, mayor of Salt Lake City, UT, formed the Mayors' Education Reform Task Force to explore how cities can be involved in local education reform efforts. That summer, members of the task force met with Education Secretary Arne Duncan to highlight the role mayors can play in bringing together community wide education transformation in their communities. In November, the NLC and the U.S. Department of Education established a formal partnership that strengthens partnerships among schools, families, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, local government, business, philanthropy and others in order to advance student engagement and learning, and improve schools.

This new partnership with NLC includes a promise to hold community conversations in cities across the country focused on early childhood education, afterschool learning, and postsecondary attainment, with the outcome of engaging the whole community in solving education issues and closing the achievement gap.

Youth Jobs



As many studies have shown, there is a growing skills gap in Minnesota. The Twin Cities have among the nation's highest gaps in employment between white residents and residents of color. Disparities threaten our competitive advantage as highly-skilled baby boomers leave the

workforce in masses. Saint Paul's teen unemployment rate was 32 percent, compared to the national average of 16 percent. Taking action to build a stronger workforce for tomorrow, in 2013 the City of Saint Paul, piloted a successful corporate internship program that helped 21 young men and women develop the workplace skills while working for a local company. In 2014, the program will add 80 more jobs. Partnering with local Saint Paul business and government, this initiative aims to help Saint Paul students get on the Right Track to a successful career. www.stpaul.gov/righttrack (also included is a separate two-page handout about Right Track)

Parent Academy



The Parent Academy initiative of the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is one initiative that takes direct aim at closing the achievement gap.

Research is clear: When parents are involved in their children's learning, children have higher grades, test scores and graduation rates; better school attendance; increased motivation and better self-esteem; lower rates of suspension; decreased use of drugs and alcohol; and fewer instances of violent behavior. Parental involvement is twice as predictive of a student's academic success as family socioeconomic status.

In 2012, Mayor Coleman made a \$300,000 city investment to expand the Parent Academy so that it could be provided in all schools because he felt the research was so compelling about the need for parent education. The Parent Academy is an evidence-based program based on the PIQE curriculum. It is a free six-week series of classes, plus college tour and graduation, designed especially for parents and guardians. The goal is to bring schools, parents/guardians and the community together as equal partners in the education of our children.