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To expand access to early childhood education to Minneapolis children and families, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and the University of Minnesota formalized a new partnership. The goal is to improve the overall quantity and quality of services by working together and with community partners to establish new early childhood education centers in the City of Minneapolis, beginning in North Minneapolis and eventually expanding to a second center during the next several years.

There is not enough space at high-quality facilities in North Minneapolis to meet the demand for successful early childhood education, University research recently found. This program is meeting a real need and aligns with the State's focus, on supporting families seeking quality education for their young children.

"MPS continues to make significant investments in early childhood education because we believe that it is critical to reducing and eliminating the disparities in student achievement," said Dr. Bernadeia Johnson, superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools. "I am grateful to the University for helping to elevate early childhood education and to our partners for their longstanding commitment to young children and their families."

The partnership will support early learning "centers of excellence" that are based on the most current research and that demonstrate strong results for the children that participate. The program model will be based on both best-available research and evidence-based practices, and the already-established promising and proven practices of existing high-quality programs. The partnership will focus on the planning, development and implementation of permanent sustainable solutions for children ages 0-5 in Minneapolis.

MPS will provide the leadership, physical space, and staff with a long-term goal of sharing this space with other community partners. The University will share intellectual capital, through research, to best support early learners; convene and facilitate a conversation to find long-term solutions for this partnership; and continue to innovate and improve the experience for young students.

"The investment we make now in Minneapolis' young children will pay dividends in the years to come—they are our future college graduates and workforce," said University of Minnesota President Kaler. "The U is uniquely poised to partner in this effort, with our past and current work in early childhood education as well as ongoing commitment to close the state's achievement gap."

MPS has a long history of partnering closely with the University's Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) and Department of Educational Psychology faculty, and this

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investment will continue that tradition. Many other University resources will provide assistance to this partnership: Professor Michael Rodriguez, who is leading Achievement Gap efforts; the University's Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC); the Human Capital Research Collaborative; and other academic departments and centers.



Minneapolis Public Schools and the U of M plan to broaden their partnership to include other community-based organizations that have long been working on providing early childhood education to the children of Minneapolis. These programs, through their existing services and ongoing commitment to finding the best ways to serve young children and their families, will enrich the knowledge and bandwidth of the overall partnership such that more children reap the benefits of high-quality early childhood education.