

MINNEAPOLIS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Urban Education. Global Citizens.

807 NE Broadway  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413-2398  
Phone: 612.668.0200  
Fax: 612.668.0195

BERNADEIA H. JOHNSON  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

TOM MADDEN

CARLA BATES

JILL DAVIS

PEGGY FLANAGAN

LYDIA LEE

CHRIS STEWART

T. WILLIAMS

August 25, 2010

Rajiv R. Shah, M.D.  
Chairman of the Board  
ACES  
1115 East Hennepin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Dear Dr. Shah:

Minneapolis Public Schools are proud to have been partners with ACES for the past 15 years, and are excited about the organization's focus to reduce the academic achievement gap of inner-city students.

In 2007, the District implemented a 5-year strategic plan to achieve two important goals: raise every student's achievement, and close the racial and economic achievement gaps. We recognize that we cannot do it alone, and are excited to partner with organizations like ACES to help us.

Our vision is to make every child college ready. To do this, we are creating an environment in our schools where all Minneapolis students can succeed in school, regardless of their background. We have set high expectations of our principals, teachers, and nonprofit community partners, all consistent with our values of putting children first.


In order to achieve our vision, we know that students must be supported at each stage of their development – from pre-school to post-graduation. In our current strategic plan, we have focused on early literacy – reading by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – as one of our first initiatives. But, we know that if students are not continually supported thereafter, all of the gains made can be lost within one or two years.

For this reason, ACES' focus on grades 4-8 is very important. It is here where inner-city students are most at-risk of "falling through the cracks." We appreciate ACES' intentional efforts to combat the "4<sup>th</sup> grade slump," an important stage in learning. If students fall behind here, it may be too late to catch them once they move on to high school.

ACES' academic focus and structure allows us to extend the school day for the students involved. The way in which ACES integrates with the school helps to provide students with a smooth transition from the school day to the after-school time.

MPS supports the ACES model and we are encouraged by early results of students in the program. We hope that other community partners will join us in helping ACES continue its work in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Sincerely,



Bernadeia H. Johnson  
Superintendent of Schools



---

**Independent School District 625**  
360 Colborne Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299

**Office of the Superintendent**  
*Suzanne P. Kelly*  
Interim Superintendent of Schools

---

Telephone: (651) 767-8150 • Fax: (651) 290-8331 • [www.spps.org](http://www.spps.org)

November 10, 2009

Rajiv R. Shah, M.D.  
Chairman of the Board  
ACES  
1115 East Hennepin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Dear Dr. Shah:

Congratulations on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ACES. Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is excited to partner with ACES to increase the academic achievement of students in Saint Paul. When working with community partners, SPPS looks for organizations whose goals align best with the district's and whose activities have a positive effect on the students involved. ACES is one of those organizations, and is a model of how schools partner with community organizations to gain high academic achievement for all students.

A unique focus on the "4<sup>th</sup> grade slump" - a crucial transition point in learning - helps our most vulnerable students at a critical time in their educational development. If students fall behind in grades 4-8, it is very difficult for them to catch up once they enter high school. ACES is one of a very few organizations in the Twin Cities that focuses on academic support for these students.

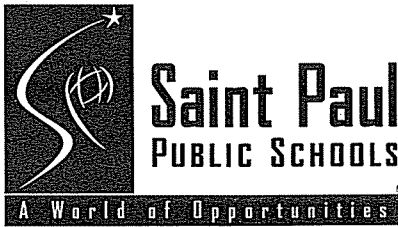
ACES academic focus extends the school day for students, and the ACES structure helps to provide students with a smooth transition from the school day to after-school time. A prime example of this is at Monroe, where Principal Unowsky has adjusted the after-school program so that all students will participate in and benefit from the ACES experience.

At SPPS, we are in the fourth year of our 2006-2011 Strategic Plan for Continued Excellence. As part of this plan, we have implemented several strategies designed to close academic achievement gaps between student groups, and build strong partnerships among students, parents, schools and the community. It is our hope that others will join us in supporting ACES in its efforts to assist the district as we work together to close the academic achievement gap of Saint Paul students. SPPS is proud to support ACES and hopes to implement the program in other schools in the district.

Regards,



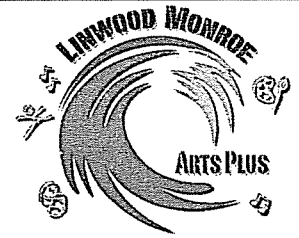
Suzanne P. Kelly



*Linwood Monroe Arts Plus*  
**Monroe Campus**

810 Palace Avenue • Saint Paul, MN 55102 -3497

Telephone: (651) 293-8690 • Fax: (651) 293-8699 • [www.spps.org](http://www.spps.org)



November 24, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Linwood Monroe Arts Plus is fortunate and honored to be a partner with ACES. In 2007-2008 Saint Paul Public Schools decided to merge Linwood A+ Elementary with Monroe Community School. At this time we also expanded our offerings for our students and families. The ACES program has been a willing and effective partner during this merge and during our school expansion.

Our community partner ACES works with students during school and after school to provide both academic and social support. The goal of our ACES partnership is to expand opportunities for success for all of our students and families. The specific focus of ACES is in working with our students in grades 4-8. This is particularly important as there is a drop in academic achievement that often accompanies students as they move through the intermediate grades and on to junior high.

Through ACES, the academic day is extended for students. The ACES team builds strong relationships with our students and then utilizes their time to help our students advance. One measurable outcome from our last year was that Linwood Monroe 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students had the top junior high reading and math growth as measured by the MCA-2 (our state mandated testing). This type of achievement gain occurs through excellent education during the school day alongside strong after school programming. We believe that the work of our ACES program was instrumental in supporting our strong learning gains.

As a high poverty school, with over 70% of our students receiving free and reduced lunch, we look to unique ways to add value to our students' education. ACES programming is one of those valued ways that is highly thought of by our students, staff, and families. We support the ACES programming at Monroe and hope that others consider supporting ACES, specifically with its work in St. Paul Public Schools. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to personally hear supportive words regarding the ACES program.

Sincerely,

Steven Unowsky, Principal