



## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

390 City Hall  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Telephone: 651-266-8510  
Facsimile: 651-228-8521

February 7, 2012

Ms. Janet Swiecicowski  
District Leadership in Communications Award  
MinnSPRA  
1027 West Roselawn Avenue  
Roseville, MN 55113

Dear Ms. Swiecicowski:

I am pleased to write in support of the nomination of Valeria S. Silva, Superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools, for MinnSPRA's 2012 Star Award for District Leadership in Communication. There is no worthier candidate for this award.

As the leader of the city's public schools, Superintendent Silva seeks out, forges and *activates* partnerships—with government, business, nonprofit agencies and others—to address concerns we all share and to achieve results that benefit all Saint Paul's children. This pragmatic style is a hallmark of her leadership.

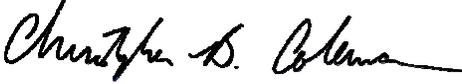
Bridging the educational achievement gap for children is at the core of my agenda for Saint Paul, and Superintendent Silva is an engaging and effective partner in this endeavor. Together we have launched Sprockets, the citywide out-of-school-time network of enrichment programs and activities for children and youth. With Wilder Foundation and Ramsey County, we are leading the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood cradle to career education initiative with the goal to close the opportunity gap for some of the poorest youth in the city. I count on Superintendent Silva's knowledge and vision as a member of my Education Leadership Team and work one-on-one with her to shape strategies to ensure all Saint Paul children succeed in school and in life.

I have talked with dozens of mayors around the nation and know the relationship I have as Mayor to Superintendent—close, collaborative and risk-taking—is exceedingly rare.

Superintendent Silva is a leader of bold vision and action. Her Strong Schools, Strong Communities strategic plan required tough, data-driven decisions about what's best for kids. This included the radical and not always popular change from 20 years of school choice to a community school model that has the potential to be better for our least well-served students. Now in its first year of implementation, the Strong Schools, Strong Communities plan represents a clear and uncompromised commitment to closing the achievement gap once and for all.

The City of Saint Paul is fortunate to have a school superintendent who is eager to collaborate, to tackle tough problems, to align services, and to work hand-in-hand to secure resources for critically needed initiatives. Superintendent Valeria Silva's willingness to do all this is a testament to her laser-like focus on educating all our city's youth. After more than two decades in the district and, now, two years as its superintendent, Superintendent Silva has proven that she is an administrator of vision, substance and capacity. She deserves to be awarded MinnSPRA's 2012 Star Award for District Leadership in Communication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher B. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Christopher B. Coleman

Mayor