

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

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Bernadeia Johnson
Superintendent Minneapolis Public Schools
1250 W. Broadway Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Dear Superintendent Johnson,

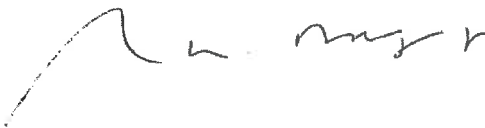
The Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota is pleased to provide its most enthusiastic support for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board proposal regarding capital and operating investment in the Phillips Community Center Swimming Pool.

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children between the ages of 1 and 14. African-American children between the ages of 5 and 14 are 3.1 times more likely to drown than their white counterparts. In Minnesota, the number one cause of accidental death for African American children ages 5 to 14 is drowning. Minnesota has the unfortunate distinction of having one of the lowest participation rates among youth of color in USA Swimming, the governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. The state has the highest rate of drowning among African Americans in the nation. Public swimming pool closures over the past decade have been concentrated in low-income and high minority census tracts within the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The result is a time-bomb on our hands that merits careful assessment and appropriate response.

Access to swimming programs should be a high priority to the Minneapolis Public Schools and reopening the Phillips Community Center Swimming Pool provides the connection required between school swimming and community safety to reduce racial disparities in drowning.

We urge the Minneapolis Public Schools to support the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's proposal that would provide the funding required to ensure success of the Project.

Sincerely,



Samuel L. Myers, Jr.
Roy Wilkins Professor of Human Relations and Social Justice
Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs