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Superintendent Statement on CSI

October 14, 2014 1:30 p.m.

I wanted to take a minute to address several issues around the Community Standards Initiative contract, and provide you with information on why a contract was awarded.

Given the academic challenges of our district, we know we cannot tackle the achievement gap alone. We rely on community partners to support our students and families in their success through programs and initiatives that supplement our daily work.

I remain committed to working with community groups and organizations that have the capacity to do the job and demonstrate results for our students—many of our partners succeed in this every day.

In considering the contract with CSI, my staff and I had many reservations about moving forward with it. I was cautious because it was apparent that they would need significant support and assistance from the district to fulfill the contract. MPS did more than our due diligence to help CSI succeed, even linking them up with our research and evaluation team, to develop a specific timeline for implementation and execution, as well as metrics to determine how the program was progressing. But I was also optimistic about the potential for students to benefit from the services that CSI said they could provide.

It was my hope that CSI could have reached the targeted students who needed access to resources in and out of school. Namely, utilizing the services of an experienced local clinical psychologist like Dr. Bravada Garrett-Akinsanya to support youth was a definite draw.

It is important to me that stakeholders feel they can publicly voice their opinions about the decisions we make on behalf of Minneapolis students. Several board members, elected officials and community members expressed support of this contract, which further influenced moving forward with the contract.

The full contract for CSI in 2013 was for \$385,000 over two years, plus the \$30,000 for the project manager. If the agreed upon work was completed, then the contract payments would have totaled that amount in the end. However, CSI did not meet the goals and metrics in the agreement and I was contacted by Clarence Hightower, who acknowledged that CSI did not have the capacity to meet the goals and objectives documented in the contract. That is when I decided to terminate the contract effective October 17.

As we move forward, I think it is important that we continue to leverage community partnerships that propel us forward. We have many successful community partnerships helping us meet critical needs and achieve great results for our students, and yet we need to make sure those groups represent our diverse population of students.