Meet Eli Kramer

executive director
Dear friends of Hiawatha Academies,

As we embark on our tenth year of providing high-quality public education in South Minneapolis, we are pleased to share progress made in the last year. Thank you for your support in turning the dreams of this Hiawatha community into reality.

With your support and the hard work and dedication of our scholars, families, and staff, Hiawatha Academies is proving that a great education is possible for all children:

- **We're growing.** Hiawatha continues to deliver a high-quality education while growing to scale. Last year, Hiawatha launched its high school program and welcomed 104 ninth graders. Overall, we educated more than 1,000 scholars in four schools.

- **Our scholars are excelling.** The Hiawatha schools were the only schools in Minneapolis on the Star Tribune's 2016 Beating the Odds list in both reading and math. Every day our schools prove the possible – that every child can succeed.

- **We are closing the gap.** Hiawatha schools received top honors by the Minnesota Department of Education for our work to accelerate academic achievement and narrow opportunity gaps.

And, we are not finished.

In 2016, Hiawatha adopted a new strategic plan, Reimagine Possible. Reimagine Possible is our strategic commitment to excellence. It is a promise to our scholars and families that together we will raise the bar on college readiness to ensure that 100 percent of scholars graduate Hiawatha Collegiate High School truly college ready.

As we begin the new school year, let us reimagine what is possible in education. Let us reimagine a world where expectations are the same for all kids regardless of nationality, skin color or income. Let us reimagine a world where excellence in education is the rule, not the exception.

It takes a village to accomplish the work we are doing, and we kindly ask for your continued support to grow our excellent network of schools. Within the next 10 years, we will double enrollment, and we will open a second middle school.

Every person who supports our work has made a difference in helping us grow to where we are now – at the tipping point of boldly disrupting systemic educational inequity.

Please join us. Together we are creating schools that honor every child’s full potential.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
The need is urgent

Minnesota has the nation’s largest opportunity gaps in the country between white students and students of color.

1.4x In Minneapolis, white students are 1.4 times more likely than students of color to graduate from high school on time.

50th Minnesota’s graduation rate gap between students of color and their white peers ranks the state 50th in the nation. At 25 percentage points, Minnesota’s gap is more than double the national average.

1 in 10 Fewer than 1 in 10 black and Latino students in the Twin Cities attends college.

As more and more people of color call the Twin Cities home, these educational disparities will increasingly impact the long-term quality of life of all Minnesota residents and limit Minnesota’s workforce competitiveness. Systemic disparities undermine the humanity in each of us. Together we must do better.

The opportunity gap

These outcomes are the unacceptable result of an opportunity gap: the unequal and inequitable distribution of educational resources and opportunities that results in radically different levels of academic success for children based on their race, zip code, and socioeconomic status.

“Opportunity gap” is a much more accurate description of what is happening in Minnesota than the commonly used “achievement gap,” which ascribes lower rates of school success on the children themselves rather than on the unequal opportunities they receive.

“When I am on my way to school I feel excited. I am thinking about music and engineering.”

— Fourth grade scholar at Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Morris Park
Hiawatha is rooted in mission, vision and values

Ms. Rachel’s Kindergarten class | HLA-Northrop

Our mission
All Hiawatha Academies scholars will be empowered with the knowledge, character, and leadership skills to graduate from college and serve the common good.

Our vision
Hiawatha Academies will permanently disrupt educational inequity by ensuring a great school for every child.

Our equity vision
To honor the humanity of all people, we actively disrupt systemic inequity, in pursuit of an equitable world.

Our core values
Children are at the center of everything we do. Our mission requires bold thought and action. We choose optimism. We push ourselves to improve. We are stronger together. We create fun and a little weirdness.

“I like to prove that I can be strong and show who I really am.”

— Fifth grade scholar at Hiawatha College Prep
Hiawatha scholars are ...

Leaders

Joyful

Learners

Teammates

98% students of color | 90% eligible for free / reduced-price lunch | 89% speak a language other than English at home | 9% receive special education services | 65% receive English language services | 97% attend school daily

Seventh and eighth graders | Hiawatha College Prep
Hiawatha scholars continue to beat the odds

The following bar charts show the percent of scholars meeting or exceeding state standards on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) by subject area in 2016. Each year, Hiawatha scholars take the MCA in grades 3 through 8, to evaluate performance on the Minnesota state assessment standards.

The majority of Hiawatha Academies scholars out-performed national averages for student growth across most grades and subjects.

This chart shows the share of Hiawatha scholars meeting expected growth targets as measured by NWEA MAP tests in 2015-16.
Children are at the center of everything we do

Meet Yessi Gonzalez

Now entering her tenth grade year, Yessi has attended Hiawatha schools since fourth grade. Her relationships with teachers have kept her coming back each year. “Teachers show they care, and that motivates me to keep going,” she says. “Every time I reach a goal, they set a new one. It’s really irritating, but then you feel like nothing is impossible.”

Currently, Yessi is an active sophomore at Hiawatha Collegiate High School, participating in Principal’s Cabinet, playing soccer, and enjoying math and literature. Yessi loves to learn from and about other cultures and is exploring careers where her passport will be her most important accessory.

“Teachers show they care, and that motivates me to keep going.”
Meet Ulysses Duval Zuniga

Uly entered Hiawatha in third grade. He and his younger sister and brother all attend Hiawatha schools. Uly is passionate about history. Now in tenth grade, Uly took AP Human Geography – a history and social studies course – as a freshman. The class was “challenging, but worth it,” he says. “I’ve been really into history since sixth grade at Hiawatha College Prep with Ms. Black because she made it fun.”

Uly knows his education will open doors to many future opportunities. Still in the early discovery of pairing passion and profession, Uly is exploring careers that will incorporate his love of sports – such as broadcast journalism – or leverage his strength for helping others – such as social work.

“I’ve been really into history since sixth grade at HCP.”
Hiawatha Academies is committed to providing a world-class education that elevates rigor and relevance, as well as joyful, hands-on learning that builds confident learners and leaders.

Expand learning time.
A longer day and year offers more opportunities to engage scholars in high-quality instruction through a well-rounded curriculum.

Build character and leadership skills.
Focusing on character helps develop traits, habits of mind and behaviors that are not only critical for success in school but also help young people grow into active citizens and community leaders.

Support effective teaching.
Great teachers are critical to scholar success, so we design observation, feedback and professional development opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their craft.

Set high expectations.
We believe in every child and set high expectations for their success.

Focus on results and accountability.
Regular assessment of and responsibility for scholars’ learning keeps all staff intensely focused on academic outcomes as the primary measure of the success of their instructional strategies.

Engage parents as partners.
Active parent involvement at school helps motivate scholars and is critical to their success.

Hiawatha’s proven-effective model
Meet Maria Tapia

Maria Tapia is passionate about helping her children succeed in school. She had enrolled her daughter into three different schools before starting her at Hiawatha Academies. She wanted a school that provided the academic and character-building supports she knew her daughter needed to thrive. The Hiawatha experience her daughter received prompted her to enroll her two younger children at HLA-Northrop.

Maria encourages her children towards a love of learning. “Whatever they choose, I want them to be able to look back on their lives and feel proud of what they’ve achieved.”

Maria is pleased that Hiawatha Academies believes scholars should be proud of their heritage and their cultural roots. Born in Mexico, Maria says the ability to speak two or more languages is like having a superpower. “If we teach our children the skills they need, they’ll develop the knowledge to grow up believing that they can – they can be anything.”

“I want them to go to college and to have the freedom to choose what they want to be when they grow up.”
Close up on Close Reading

“It was hard to keep hope alive when there was so little to feed it.”

What is “it” at the end of the sentence talking about? Is “hope” something that really needs food to stay alive? What does the author really mean when she says “there was so little to feed it?”

This is a glimpse into the fourth grade classroom discussion in spring 2016 of A Long Walk to Water. Scholars explored figurative language through the inquisitive methodology of Close Reading. This method of literacy instruction emphasizes critical understanding of rigorous passages and helps scholars develop skill sets to make independent meaning of texts.

In the last year, Hiawatha adopted the Close Reading methodology to drive excellence in literacy and critical thinking, which are lifelong and foundational skills. “Focusing on Close Reading has improved scholars’ understanding of texts at a deep level,” says Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Morris Park principal Jessica Hayes. “Scholars make meaningful connections and enjoy the process of analyzing both what is written and what is left unsaid.”

Hiawatha was proud to see a 6 percentage point jump in reading scores network-wide in 2016. As a result of this success, the network continues to deepen its use of Close Reading in all classrooms.
Living into our equity vision

Hiawatha’s equity vision is: To honor the humanity of all people, we actively disrupt systemic inequity, in pursuit of an equitable world.

Children are growing up today in a global world where they will frequently encounter multiple languages, cultures, and ways of being. To prepare scholars for work and life in the 21st century, we must provide an inclusive education in which all children see themselves and their experiences reflected in the classroom, and they find windows into the lives of others.

Through robust staff development, we are living into our equity vision with a focus on creating culturally relevant classrooms across Hiawatha schools.

A few examples of this work in the last year are:

- **Expertise** We hired a Director of Equity Initiatives to lead our collective action.
- **Development** All staff are engaging in equity-focused professional development throughout the school year.
- **Evaluation** Coaching and performance evaluation tools now include equity indicators.

This is not the solution; this is the beginning of a journey.

Strength through sustainability

At Hiawatha Academies, we believe in putting children at the center of our work and making our work sustainable for teachers and staff. These values must be thought of as harmonious goals. Long-term, we can’t do one without the other.

As part of our work to make Hiawatha a sustainable place to learn and work, Hiawatha decided to shorten the length of our school day by 60 minutes. Starting in the 2016-17 school year, scholars will attend school for 7.5 hours each day, giving scholars more time to play, study, and spend time with family. It will allow staff to pursue personal responsibilities and interests. And they can plan and prepare even better lessons for our scholars! We continue to value more time in school and still spend 35 percent more time on average in the classroom than in other schools in Minneapolis.

“Hiawatha lets you express yourself and be who you want to be.”

— Sixth grade scholar at Hiawatha College Prep
Great teaching matters

Whitney McKinley has clocked more than 16,000 hours in a classroom! That’s 10 years of actively engaging students in art, math, science and English language instruction. Her passion for the last five years has been inspiring students through art.

Whitney’s scholars employ the creative process to explore how art can be used to raise awareness around local, national and global social justice issues. Topics can range from immigration to the treatment of animals in captivity, to the policy positions of presidential candidates. “I love to see the magic that happens as my scholars translate an idea in their head to paper or another medium,” she said. “They are able to express themselves as individuals in a powerful way.”

The most unique part about teaching at Hiawatha, she says, is the community of educators. “We’re always looking for ways to improve, and that keeps us relevant,” she said. “Everyone here really wants the best for our scholars.”

Whitney was a finalist for Education Minnesota’s Teacher of the Year award in 2016 and is now an assistant principal at Hiawatha College Prep.

“Teachers give us hope when we are on the edge and ready to give up. Teachers lay the foundation of our futures and beautiful lives.”

— Ninth grade scholar at Hiawatha Collegiate High School
Meet Whitney McKinley

“I love to see the magic that happens as my scholars translate an idea in their head to paper or another medium.”

teacher and leader
Hiawatha is growing

By replicating educational quality while growing to scale, Hiawatha can serve as a proof point for what is possible in education. By scaling the network in Minneapolis, we will raise the bar for all schools and improve the educational landscape for all Twin Cities children.

Now at four schools, Hiawatha has demonstrated consistent groundbreaking academic performance. By 2018, Hiawatha will achieve its bold vision of operating five schools. Over the next 10 years, Hiawatha will double its enrollment to serve more than 2,200 scholars, which is 5 percent of the Minneapolis student population.

This graphic shows existing grade levels in white and planned expansion in black.

Hiawatha Collegiate High School opens

In August 2015, Hiawatha Collegiate High School welcomed its first class of ninth graders, the Class of 2019. This kicked off the next phase of Hiawatha’s growth, which will see these scholars through high school graduation.

In response to calls from the Class of 2019 and their parents, Hiawatha accelerated the opening of its high school to ensure that the founding class of first graders in 2007 would have a path through high school within the Hiawatha network.

In January 2016, the high school moved into a brand new facility with 22 classrooms, a gymnasium, science labs, a media lab, and a college counseling room. The site is the future home of Hiawatha’s second middle school, scheduled to open in August 2018.

As the high school expands to grades 9 through 12 and, eventually, 788 scholars, it will move to a permanent facility in 2018.
A strategic plan that Reimagines Possible

Hiawatha Academies pursues a mission and vision that drive excellence in educating more than 1,000 Hiawatha scholars while growing to a scale that will permanently disrupt educational inequity. In 2016, Hiawatha’s Board approved a new strategic plan, Reimagine Possible.

Reimagine Possible is a strategic commitment to excellence. By 2020, Hiawatha Academies will be among the best school systems in the country in preparing scholars for college graduation and a lifetime of success.

Reimagine Possible is about raising the bar and disrupting systemic educational inequity that prevents too many children from reaching their full potential.

Reimagine Possible is about raising the bar. Four pillars define Hiawatha’s aim to Reimagine Possible.

**Excellence**
Pursue excellence in academic and character development, staff hiring and development, and family engagement.

**Scale**
Establish Hiawatha Academies as a nationally recognized, replicable, five-school network. Double the network’s current enrollment to grow to a quality and scale that will disrupt systemic inequity.

**Community**
Promise a path to and through college for all students, including communities most affected by the opportunity gap in South Minneapolis, and strive for diversity among the scholar community to prepare scholars for success in a racially diverse world.

**Partnerships**
Ensure a great school for every child by partnering with community schools of all types, prioritizing policy efforts around teacher licensure and early learning, and engaging families as active partners in disrupting systemic inequity.

To learn more about our strategic plan, visit: www.hiawathaacademies.org/about-hiawatha/strategic-plan/
Meet Shawn Regan

“I find so much joy in seeing that spark in a scholar’s eyes when a particularly challenging puzzle is solved.”
At Hiawatha College Prep, scholars see a familiar face in math class every day. More than a friendly helper, Shawn Regan brings his skills as a former math teacher to the classroom to make sure every scholar is reaching their full potential.

Shawn guides scholars through their toughest math challenges three hours a day, five days a week. He might work with a small group of students off to the side in class, or move between scholars' desks making sure to answer any questions. He knows that discovery is a dual process; he learns as much from them as they from him. He particularly enjoys learning about scholars' culture, families, personal challenges, and their hopes and dreams.

Hiawatha Academies would like to thank Shawn and 85 other committed volunteers who gave of their time and talent in support of Hiawatha's community of scholars.

Kafia Ahmed  
Taz Ahmed  
Gerardo Alcazar  
Bob Amis  
Max Anderson  
Carlos Baires  
Tom Bezek  
Macallum Brabender  
Sahr Brima  
Kris Bruun  
Kevin Busch  
Nancy Close  
Kate Cook Courchane  
Joshua Crosson  
Margarita Dimas Cultu  
Joe Dixon  
Heather Rodgers-Rubash  
Ted Dyste  
Derek Eddie  
John Erickson  
Alberto Fierro  
Alec Fischer  
Sergio Fischer  
Luz María Frías  
Kathleen Ganley  
María Godinez  
Beth Grosen  
Jordan Haag  
Jim Hancock  
Maggie Harris  
John Hest  
Zachary Hurdle  
Malanda Jean-Claude  
Julie Johns  
Brandis Johnson  
Bob Josephson  
Jeff Kalish  
Nupur Kamat  
Kierstin Karlsrud  
Jan Kleinman  
Bill Kuhlmann  
Diane Kuhlmann  
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Quinn Tierney  
Ivory Umanah  
Eleanor Whitty  
Tatiana Williams  
John Wodele  
Joetta Wright  
Alileen Wu  
Linda Yang
Our community of contributors

Hiawatha Academies would like to thank our generous donors for their financial contributions in the 2015-16 school year. Thank you for making the network’s growth and vision to disrupt systemic inequity a possibility.

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Floyd and Carole Ahlgren
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E.L. Amis Foundation
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Jesse Lee
Penny Leporte
Emily Loh
Ericca Maas
“We have visited schools across the country, and Hiawatha stands out because of its positive atmosphere, strong academics, talented team, and ability to scale. We are so excited about the impact they are making for Minnesota scholars!!! That impact will be felt for years! We are big supporters.” — Phil and Margie Soran

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Youth Music Education Foundation
Greta Zietz

“We need more schools like Hiawatha, because Hiawatha pushes us to be great, pushes us to achieve.”

— Ninth grade scholar at Hiawatha Collegiate High School
Financial health reflects our values

At Hiawatha Academies, our organizational values are reflected in our overall financial health. Hiawatha’s strong financial management continues to ensure that Hiawatha is on track to being self-sustainable on state and federal funding when at capacity, a key national benchmark of high performing networks.

### Balance Sheet

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>$3,614,603</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
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<td>FY16 ending fund balance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities + fund balance</td>
<td>$3,614,603</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information is reported from preliminary unaudited financial statements.
Campuses

Hiawatha Leadership Academy
Northrop | K-3
Principal | Daniela Vasan
1611 East 46th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-455-4004
hlanorthrop.hiawathaacademies.org

Hiawatha College Prep
| 5-8
Principal | John Kaczorek
3800 Pleasant Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-353-4324
hcp.hiawathaacademies.org

Hiawatha Leadership Academy
Morris Park | K-4
Principal | Jessica Hayes
3810 East 56th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55417
612-987-5688
hlamorrispark.hiawathaacademies.org

Hiawatha Collegiate
High School | 9-10
Principal | Nicole Cooley
4640 17th Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-547-9056
hchs.hiawathaacademies.org

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