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NEWS RELEASE

Generation Next Names Michelle Walker as Executive Director

CEO of Saint Paul Public Schools has served as a member of the Generation Next Leadership Council and collaborated on multiple coalition projects

MINNEAPOLIS - September 1, 2016 – [Generation Next](#), a nonprofit coalition of civic, business and education leaders focused on closing the Twin Cities' achievement gap, has named Michelle Walker as its new executive director. Walker is a national leader who has extensive cross-sector leadership experience in education strategy and policy including positions in Washington, DC, New York and Saint Paul. Previously, Walker served for three years as chief executive officer for the Saint Paul Public Schools, where she held leadership positions for nine years.

“Michelle has a track record of success in effective cross-sector collaboration, and deep knowledge of education data and best practices,” said Eric Kaler, president of the University of Minnesota and co-chair of Generation Next. “She is the right leader to accelerate the ambitious efforts of Generation Next: closing the unacceptable achievement and opportunity gaps in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.”

When Walker assumes her new role on October 18, she will bring hands-on experience with Generation Next to the job. For the past three years, Walker has been an active member of the Generation Next Leadership Council, paving the way for many collaborative projects between the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) and Generation Next.

As chief executive officer in the Saint Paul Public Schools, Walker serves as the lead superintendent designee and primary staff liaison to the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education. She directly supervises eight district departments: Human Resources; Finance; Technology Services; Strategic Planning and Policy; Equity; Research, Evaluation and Assessment; and Communications, Marketing and Development.

In 2011, Walker actively advocated for the district's inclusive achievement strategy, *Strong Schools, Strong Communities*, coordinating its implementation with the district's senior leadership team.

Prior to joining the SPPS executive team, Walker served as chief of Strategic Planning and Policy for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), overseeing policy research and analysis, strategic planning initiatives, community partnerships and intergovernmental relations for the then 50,000 student district. At DCPS, Walker successfully managed the development of

the district's Master Education Plan, a comprehensive strategic plan to reform the system's academic and business operations.

“As a first-generation African-American of Caribbean descent, I was raised to believe that education has the power to transform lives,” said Walker. “This has proven true for my family and me, and I am thrilled to lead an organization whose mission is to help all children – regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status – to achieve their highest potential.”

For over three years, Generation Next has worked to ensure that every child has the academic, social and emotional skills to reach their full potential – from birth to young adulthood. It harnesses the insights and practical experience of thousands of local community, civic and business leaders to close education achievement gaps for Twin Cities' children, using rigorous data analysis and community engagement to identify what works and replicate the most promising practices. Examples of Generation Next progress are documented in its [2015 annual report](#).

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About Generation Next: A powerful coalition of civic, business and education leaders, Generation Next aims to close the achievement and opportunity gaps for students of color in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. It uses rigorous data analysis and community engagement to identify what works to close these gaps, and replicate the most promising practices. <http://www.gennextmsp.org/>