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Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Congratulating the Saint Paul Public Schools on their 150th Anniversary
September 13, 2006

Betty McCollum
9/13/06

Ms. McCOLLUM: Today I rise to congratulate the Saint Paul Public Schools on their 150th Anniversary. On the first day of this school year, more than 41,000 kindergarten through 12th graders entered one of the doors of the more than 70 schools staffed by more than 6,500 teachers and personnel in the Saint Paul Public Schools. This school year marks 150 years of the district's commitment to educating the families of Saint Paul and creating public spaces for civic and community engagement.

Saint Paul Public Schools have a proud history. Harriet Bishop, originally a teacher in Vermont, traveled to St. Paul in the late 1840s and is credited with starting the first public school in St. Paul. It was in 1856 that a school district was formed in St. Paul in order to attract settlers and to educate the frontier children. Even before Minnesota was admitted into the Union as a state, the people understood the importance of education.

Over the past 150 years, the St. Paul Public Schools have created a "world of opportunities" for their students, teachers, staff, and community members. And the world has also come to St. Paul Public Schools. More than 80 native languages are spoken in its classrooms. And each year, St. Paul elementary, middle, and high schools welcome a more diverse student body. And, this school year, the Saint Paul Public Schools' Language Academies will teach English to 1,650 new Americans.

As good stewards of public resources, St. Paul Public Schools are an integral part of our neighborhoods. They provide safe spaces for our children and youth to grow and learn where teachers and staff offer an enriched environment for students to develop into healthy, contributing adults. St. Paul Public Schools also provide the needed public community spaces to support a strong and engaged citizenry that is needed to support a strong democracy.

In honor of the students, parents, families, and St. Paul Public Schools teachers and staff, I submit this statement for the official Congressional Record. I look forward to continued celebrations of success and milestones in the education of the people of St. Paul.