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Humanities
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For Immediate Release

\$10.6 Million Education Grant Awarded to Minnesota Humanities Center's Education Strategy

October 26, 2015—ST. PAUL, Minn.—The Minnesota Humanities Center is pleased to announce a grant from an Omaha-based donor for \$10.6 million over the next three years to support the development of the humanities-based education strategy in partnership with the Omaha Public Schools. This strategy, which was developed by the Humanities Center in partnership with an Omaha-based donor, the Omaha Public Schools, and with multiple Minnesota partners and cultural organizations, has been implemented in select schools. The results have been so positive that the Omaha Public Schools have adopted the Humanities Center's Education Strategy as a critical factor for student and school success.

This strategy is founded on the reality that relationships are fundamental to learning and that relationships exist within cultures. Educators, students, and parents create success by closing the relationship gap, which underlies and undercuts efforts to close the achievement gap. Ongoing evaluations show the positive gains in stronger relationships, increased engagement, school culture, and community connections.

The Omaha Public Schools embrace the strategy with extraordinary support from this anonymous donor. The district has 52,000 students, 100 schools, and over 109 languages spoken in the community.

"How we reach out, how we create those relationships really is the key to our success," said Dr. Mark Evans, Superintendent of the Omaha Public Schools. "If we are going to make a difference, first we have to demonstrate that we do care. The Minnesota Humanities Center is now a key part of our education plans and professional development."

The education strategy's goal is increased student engagement. It is founded on core principles: build and strengthen relationships, the power of story and the absent narrative, learn from and with multiple voices and cultures, and solutions for change already exist within communities.

Robust and intense professional development supports educators as they make the strategy their own, as schools adopt and adapt it, as community partners embrace it. The result is a growing base for sustained success. "This has changed my life as a teacher and as a human being. Everyone should have this powerful experience. Simple. And it's working," said one Omaha Public Schools educator. A St. Paul Public Schools educator said, "It is a wonderful collaborative professional experience which sharpens the focus of the lens through which I view my world and my teaching practice by voicing multiple perspectives and experiences in a critical dialogue."

The Humanities Center will launch an Educator's Institute this summer (June 26 through July 1) at the Humanities Center. To learn more join us at the Humanities Center on **October 28** for a **media briefing at 10:00-10:30 am** followed by an **in-depth informational session from 10:30-11:30 am**. The Humanities Center website has more information about this Education Strategy in [Omaha](#) and here in [Minnesota](#).

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