

CELEBRATING THE IMPACT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

# CEUE

COLLABORATIVE URBAN EDUCATOR PROGRAM



## The Collaborative Urban Educator Program Impacting the Lives of Educators and Students

How can schools help urban students become more successful? One way is by making school staffs more representative of the populations served. The Collaborative Urban Educator program has helped to create educational climates in the Twin Cities where children can interact with effective role models of many races and backgrounds, opening their eyes to new possibilities.

CUE was created in response to a 1990 Minnesota Legislature initiative that called for pilot programs to design, implement and evaluate alternative routes to teaching licensure, thereby increasing the number of teachers from underrepresented populations in Minnesota. While the populations of the state's urban and first-tier suburban districts were rapidly becoming demographically diverse, the number of teachers from underrepresented populations was small and decreasing. The Legislature sought to reverse that trend. The program was designed to:

- Recruit successful people into teaching, specifically those of diverse cultural backgrounds underrepresented in the Twin Cities education community;
- Create a model for recruiting and preparing teachers for urban settings;
- Provide opportunities for creative, collaborative planning and implementation of a dynamic, evolving, best practice teacher preparation model;
- Allow candidates the option of working toward a Master of Arts degree in teaching while earning licensure;
- Provide opportunities for professional growth for both teachers and St. Thomas faculty members;
- Provide a dignified, personalized transition into classroom competence and continuing professional development;
- Support CUE alumni through the job selection process and the beginning years of teaching.

*As a highly successful public-private partnership, CUE has sent 330 alumni into area education settings. These diverse, powerful leaders have impacted positively the lives of tens of thousands of students.*



Father Dennis Dease  
president  
University of St. Thomas

*“CUE is a remarkable public-private partnership that brings together many diverse interests to carry out a program that meets the needs of our public school districts and their teachers and students. I consider CUE to be one of the University of St. Thomas’ most significant outreach efforts to schools and communities of color throughout the Twin Cities area.”*

On the cover:  
Julie Vasquez, CUE 3 (left) and  
Amanda Herrera-Gundale, CUE 9 (right)  
with students

## Nearly Two Decades of Impact

Written by St. Thomas professor Dr. Trudi Taylor with assistance from human resources personnel from the St. Paul and Minneapolis school districts, the CUE proposal was selected by the Board of Teaching to receive state grant money. Taylor then was joined by Dr. Jeanne Mortinson and Ava Nielsen of the St. Paul and Minneapolis public schools, respectively, to serve as program co-directors. Taylor and Mortinson have continued in leadership roles, and Mortinson serves as director.

The grant served as a catalyst for exploring unique and collaborative approaches to the increasing challenges faced by major urban school districts. The CUE model was developed as a nontraditional elementary licensure program to prepare carefully selected college graduates with diverse racial, cultural or experiential backgrounds to be effective urban educators. It used an outcome-based, personalized cohort model to provide a dignified transition from other careers into education. Originally, it prepared effective urban educators to work in Minneapolis or St. Paul elementary schools. To meet changing state needs, the program was expanded to



Left to right: Dr. Trudi Taylor, Dr. Jeanne Mortinson, Ava Nielsen

include secondary mathematics and science licensure and suburban district options. The Legislature has provided appropriations continually since 1997 to fund this expansion.

The Collaborative Urban Educator Expansion program (CUE EX) was funded by the first legislation of its kind that benefited a private university. While the bulk of program costs have been borne by the state, St. Thomas and the St. Paul, Minneapolis and suburban school districts have also provided direct support. Other funding has

come from private and public sources, including grants from the Emma B. Howe Foundation, US West, Minnesota desegregation funding, and federal Transition to Teaching and Educational Technology grants.

The CUE program is an excellent example of the public and private sectors working together for the common good. The policies that have created and sustained the Collaborative Urban Educator program have had an enormous impact on Minnesota.



Bruce Kramer, Ph.D., interim dean  
College of Applied Professional Studies  
University of St. Thomas

*“CUE has had tremendous positive impact on education in Minnesota. Nearly 20 years ago when we asked, ‘Where are our future urban educational leaders?’, we had no idea that so many would build on their CUE experiences to meet that need. The program has brought highly skilled, well-qualified teachers from a myriad of backgrounds into the urban educational environment, and it is these teachers who strive on behalf of our entire community to ensure that all children will learn.”*

## By the Numbers\*: Impact of the Collaborative Urban Educator Program – 1991-2008



Aaron Benner, CUE 4, and a student

- 330 CUE Program alumni
- 341 Licenses earned through CUE
- 45,000 Students who have had a CUE teacher\*\*
- 100% Cohort participants typically offered positions upon program completion\*\*\*
- 20 CUE cohorts: CUE 1–12 (K-6 model); CUE EX 1-3 (K-8 or secondary mathematics or science model); SPED 1-5 (EBD, LD or DD model)
- 126 Schools in the metro area where CUE educators are now working
- 16 Metro area districts where CUE educators are working
- 88% CUE retention rate over the program's 18-year history
- 35 District teachers who have served as adjunct faculty for CUE
- 150 Classroom teachers, including many CUE alumni, used as clinical supervisors and student teaching mentors
- 38 CUE alumni who have pursued administrative licensure and/or served as administrative interns
- 64 Local, state, national and international professional presentations about the program
- 305 CUE participants self-reporting as persons of color
- 2 Other universities impacted through CUE, Hamline University and Concordia University - St. Paul, joined the legislative initiative and now coordinate programs with the University of St. Thomas CUE program.

### According to results of a Spring 2008 CUE Alumni Leadership Survey:

- 75% Maintain active connections with other CUE alumni for personal and professional support
- 70% Would likely not have gone into education had it not been for the CUE opportunity
- 74% Have completed a master's degree
- 16% Have gone on for an Ed.S., Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree
- 25% Have earned additional endorsements
- 56% Have served as a mentor teacher/classroom host teacher
- 90% Attend professional conferences
- 48% Have presented at workshops and conferences
- 19% Have presented testimony to state or national panels
- 20% Have presented to college classes or are serving as adjunct faculty
- 60% Work beyond the classroom level with parent and community groups to promote student success
- 37% Have solicited and used grant funds to help students succeed
- 81% Are serving on building level committees

\* Based on survey data, personal contacts or reported information

\*\* Estimated from regular education class sizes of 20 and special education average class sizes of eight

\*\*\* Positions were all in sponsoring districts before fall 2002; some CUE alumni have since secured employment beyond their sponsoring districts

*88% CUE retention rate over the program's 18-year history*

*70% of CUE survey respondents say they likely would not have gone into education had it not been for CUE.*

## CUE Impacts the Academic Achievement of Vulnerable Learners

For five of the 18 years she spent as a senior buyer for some of America's most prestigious companies, Sharon Freeman watched the CUE program, its participants and its accomplishments. Finally, in 1996, she applied.

"I know that I would never have left corporate America if it had not been for the CUE opportunity," said Freeman. "CUE got me here – and this job is my life, my passion!

I used to stay up nights worrying about the company's bottom line; now I get to stay up nights worrying about how to positively change the lives of kids."

After completing CUE and spending several years in classrooms, she became a principal. Under her leadership, St. Paul's Prosperity Heights Elementary School was selected as a 2007 Title I Distinguished School in Category 2: Closing the Achievement Gap Between Student Groups.

"We need educators to whom the students can relate. I was the first black teacher, and certainly the first black principal, many of my students had known," she said. "They'd say to me, 'Wow! I didn't know it was possible. Maybe I could do that too, if I work hard enough?'"

Now as executive director of elementary schools for the St. Paul Public Schools, she continues to teach and work with students, principals, the district central office, community groups and policymakers to coalesce resources and ensure student success.



Sharon Freeman, CUE 7  
Executive Director of Elementary Schools,  
St. Paul Public Schools

*"It is absolutely unacceptable that any ethnic groups continue in generational poverty."*

*"For so many of these children, school is their only chance to break the cycle. They deserve – and society's future requires – the best educators we can give them. CUE has proven it can produce powerful, passionate professionals, persons equipped for the challenge of giving students the knowledge and skills to succeed."*



Maxfield School educator Phyllis Nesbit, CUE 1, with a student.

### Maxfield School

St. Paul's Maxfield Magnet School, a University of St. Thomas partnership site, serves the needs of the Rondo community with the assistance of six CUE alumni as teachers:

**Sang Le**, CUE EX 1

**Leslie Silas**, CUE 1

**Phyllis Nesbit**, CUE 1

**Rayford Sims**, CUE 2

**Gwen Jones**, CUE 3 and SPED 1

**Leeta Douglas**, CUE 8

**Principal Zelma Wiley**, CUE 2, led the school's academic progress for five years before her untimely death in 2007.



## CUE's Impact at the Personal, School and District Levels

While working as a financial analyst in the 1980s, Bernadeia Johnson volunteered with the Minneapolis Public Schools. Her experiences there led her to rethink her career path.

“CUE gave me the multifaceted support necessary to make the career change,” she said. “Now, nearly 20 years later, my passion for giving back to the community and making a difference in the lives of the most

vulnerable members of our community continues in my role as Minneapolis deputy superintendent.”

Upon completing CUE, Johnson served as a classroom teacher and earned her master's degree and national board certification. As a teacher, she noted how important the principal was in ensuring the success of all children and in challenging teachers to meet their students' needs. After earning an administrative license, she held positions in Minneapolis as a principal and in Memphis as deputy superintendent before returning to Minneapolis in 2006 as deputy superintendent and chief academic officer.

Growing up during the early 1960s in racially segregated Selma, Ala., Johnson remembers that education was viewed as the great equalizer. Regardless of socio-economic status or community standing, getting a good education and going to college were seen as avenues for increased participation in decisions that would impact the lives of the individuals and the community.

“Forty years later, Selma is not the same community in which I grew up. It mirrors the other urban centers across this nation that are struggling with issues of race, poverty, equity and access to educational opportunities,” Johnson said. “To level the playing field and advance democracy, we must have educators who can relate to urban children's experiences.”

Bernadeia Johnson, CUE 1  
Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic  
Officer, Minneapolis Public Schools

*“CUE has a brotherhood and sisterhood around it that buoys you and helps you become more than you thought possible. The program has always been ahead of its time, and its personalized, respectful approach has provided our district with diverse, award-winning, broad-thinking and well-grounded educators who are relentless about student success. Thanks to all who have made CUE possible! Please don't stop now – the needs continue to be great.”*

## The Power of Policy: CUE's Impact in Districts

Johnson continued, "CUE has had a powerful impact on Minneapolis schools and students, providing our system with educator-leaders with broad experiential backgrounds that allow for thinking and acting in creative, inclusive contexts. CUE alums come with a consciousness of intent to make children's lives richer through learning. They are in classrooms day after day, embracing challenges and combining their passion with powerful, effective, hard work. They exemplify CUE's culture of dedication and commitment, building relationships with children and families that others have given up on and helping students know they can live up to high expectations. Minneapolis has been blessed to have the services of Collaborative Urban Educators."



*"CUE made it possible to fulfill my strong desire to educate children. The collective embrace and structure of CUE helped so many of us, with all our diversity of experiences, feel fully supported as new educators. As a result, after 17 years I remain completely motivated and deeply committed to ensuring student success and closing the achievement gap. This is my passion. I cannot thank CUE enough!"*

– C. Bennice Young, CUE 1  
principal, Hall Elementary School



*Bernadeia Johnson's first principal position was at Hall Elementary School, a north Minneapolis school that was then the lowest performing school in the state. She led Hall through a significant turn-around, including applying for and receiving a federal magnet school grant to begin the process of becoming an International Baccalaureate program.*

*C. Bennice Young then led Hall through the rigorous process of achieving authorized status as an IB Primary Years Programme. Under her principalship and guidance, the school's mission is to ensure all its children become independent, critical thinkers who are prepared to embrace tomorrow's global challenges.*

## CUE's Personal Impact



**Aaron Benner, CUE 4**

**Before:** Halfway house employee and school volunteer

**Now:** Fourth-grade teacher, Benjamin Mays School, St. Paul

**Years in Education:** 14

**Points of Pride:**

- University of St. Thomas alumnus with a degree in criminal justice
- After-school tutor for homeless children through Project Home, six years
- Teacher, Galtier Magnet and Community of Peace, St. Paul
- Minnesota Teacher of the Year candidate, 2005
- St. Agnes High School Athletic Hall of Fame inductee, 2007

*“CUE: My best life decision by far!”*

*“What I like best about being in education? Taking advantage of my race and gender in the classroom and school. Students have always been interested in what I have to say, and that is a definite blessing! I particularly recognize that black boys need role models, and I accept the challenge to do whatever it takes to make these children feel wanted and loved. I see myself in the faces that I teach, and that motivates me every day! Teaching is a calling – I’ve been given a gift – and I hope to use it every day in the classroom to help a child.”*



**Eleanor Clemmens, CUE 7**

**Before:** Insurance examiner and underwriter

**Now:** Principal, Battle Creek Environmental Magnet School, St. Paul

**Years in Education:** 10

**Points of Pride:**

- Sixth-grade teacher
- Administrative intern
- Assistant principal
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- Educational Administration License
- Certified Special Olympics gymnastics coach

*“My decision to go into education through CUE was the best decision I could have made. CUE not only provided me with a strong academic foundation, but the relationships made through the cohort have provided me with continuous support.”*

*“What I like best about being in education: I have the opportunity to affect the future.”*

*“Our children deserve to have representatives of many races and ethnic groups as teachers and educational leaders to inspire them to strive for excellence, to support their dreams and to serve as examples of the possibilities open to them.”*



**Robin Francis, CUE 5**

**Before:** Mutual funds sales

**Now:** Assistant Principal South Washington County School District

**Years in Education:** 13

**Points of Pride:**

- Elementary teacher
- Administrative intern
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- Education Specialist degree and administrative licensure
- Family center director

*“Going into CUE was the best decision I ever made. I have the most fulfilling career on the planet! We are working with our future leaders.”*

*“I am proud I was the first person of color to be a building administrator in South Washington County.”*

*“What I enjoy most about education is seeing the looks on the faces of students when they see a face that looks like theirs. My favorite quote so far? ‘You are the principal? Do you think I could do that one day?’”*



## CUE's Personal Impact



**Amanda Herrera-Gundale, CUE 9**

**Before:** Peace Corp volunteer, naturalist at an environmental learning center, preschool teacher

**Now:** Teacher, first-grade bi-lingual classes and curriculum specialist, St. Paul Cherokee Heights Elementary School

**Years in Education:** 8 as licensed teacher  
**Points of Pride:**

- Fourth- and fifth-grade teacher
- Master of Arts degree in reading candidate, University of St. Thomas
- Co-facilitator for summer environmental education workshops for teachers
- Summer Fund for Teachers travel fellowship award winner for trip to Mexico in 2008

*“Going into education has been an exciting and rewarding journey for me. The field of education is so vast; I can’t imagine leaving it.”*

*“Being in the field of education has stretched me in ways that are not possible in other careers. Education is a highly dynamic, rigorous field where you can explore so many avenues and passions while creating enriching educational experiences for future generations. Thanks to all who have made CUE possible as a way to get into education!”*



**Stanley Kusunoki, CUE 9**

**Before:** Freelance writer, broadcast producer, Poet-in-the-School

**Now:** High potential teacher, Red Oak Elementary School, Shakopee  
**Years in Education:** 8

**Points of Pride:**

- Second- and third-grade teacher
- Summer workshop instructor, The Loft Summer Camps for Young Writers
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- Certificate in gifted and talented education, University of St. Thomas
- Leader of district and school staff development on differentiation and curriculum adaptations
- District Social Studies Articulation Committee member

*“Without CUE I probably would not have been able to go into education. The time frame, intense immersion, cohorts and financial support made possible that which would have been impossible.”*

*“Students need teachers to identify with. For example, there is an instant bond between the Asian students and me. There is a trust that helps them open up and share their culture and history, so all kids benefit. And don’t forget males as role models! We are in short supply in many schools.”*

*“Three acquaintances of mine are going into education because of my enthusiasm, and, best of all, three of my students this year want to be teachers based on their experiences in the High Potential class. CUE makes a huge difference by bringing in teachers who have connections to other things outside of education that can enrich the students’ experience and strengthen the entire community.”*



**Fatima Tanni Lawson, Ph. D., CUE 6**

**Before:** Counselor and research fellow

**Now:** Principal, L’Etoile du Nord French Immersion School, St. Paul

**Years in Education:** 12

**Points of Pride:**

- 2007 St. Paul Elementary /Middle Level Math and Science Principal of the Year
- Superintendent licensure, 2008
- Elementary teacher
- Administrative intern
- Treasurer, St. Paul Principals’ Association
- Adjunct faculty, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Presenter at state and national conferences
- Published poet whose poetry has been presented internationally
- Under her leadership, L’Etoile du Nord has made Adequate Yearly Progress every year

*“CUE has made all the difference in my life. Without this opportunity, I would not be where I am today – impacting the lives of the students with whom I work and the community in which I live. I have a heightened sense of social consciousness, justice and fairness. My CUE preparation set the purpose as well as the direction for me. Seeing me in a leadership position has motivated under-represented students to believe they, too, can become educators.”*

*“Policymakers: Thank you for providing the opportunity to soar. CUE has made a huge difference in my life and allowed me to make a difference in the lives of others. At least five other people I know have decided to try careers in education because of my positive experience. We need this program.”*

## CUE's Personal Impact



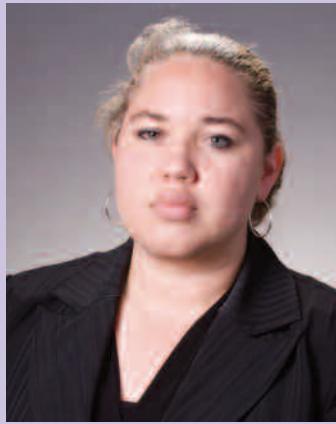
**Angela Mansfield, CUE 6**

**Before:** Preschool teacher  
**Now:** Reading First literacy coordinator,  
Minneapolis Schools District  
**Years in Education:** 13  
**Points of Pride:**

- Milken National Educator Award winner in 2002. This award recognizes outstanding early- to mid-career teachers who demonstrate exceptional educational talent, outstanding accomplishments, strong long-range potential and an engaging and inspiring presence. Winners receive a \$25,000 prize.
- Ph.D. candidate in literacy education, University of Minnesota
- Teacher Advisory Council member for North Central Region Educational Laboratory
- Presenter at state and national reading conferences
- First- and second-grade teacher

*"Children need to see role models of all backgrounds, sizes, shapes and nationalities. It is critical for children of color to see themselves in professional and leadership roles. This raises the bar for them and lets them know that all things are possible."*

*"CUE set me off on the right direction professionally – inspiring me to grab my passion and use it to impact the lives of children. It does take a village, and I'm honored and thankful to be a citizen of that village."*



**Mauri Melander, CUE 7**

**Before:** St. Thomas graduate in journalism and sociology  
**Now:** Assistant principal, Ramsey Fine Arts School, Minneapolis Public Schools  
**Years in Education:** 11  
**Points of Pride:**

- Minneapolis Superintendent's Office Liaison to the School Board and community
- Middle school teacher
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- Education Specialist degree, University of St. Thomas
- Assisted in opening a St. Paul charter school
- Adjunct professor, University of St. Thomas School of Education

*"I have found that when doors shut, others can open. I was not every teacher's dream child in the Minneapolis Public Schools. I had endured experiences that helped build a hard shell around me that was difficult to crack. As a young adult, being a teacher was the furthest thing from my mind, but when I graduated with a toddler in tow, being the next Barbara Walters no longer seemed a reality. That's when the CUE door opened, and I've never looked back."*

*"I'm proud to use my personal experiences and apply them daily to the children and families with whom I work. And I'm most proud of having the knowledge, heart and passion to try and crack the same shell I once had that many of my students build around themselves."*



**Elizabeth Mena-Larson, CUE 6**

**Before:** Headstart teacher and home-school liaison  
**Now:** Teacher, Four Seasons Elementary, St. Paul, a year-round school  
**Years in Education:** 12  
**Points of Pride:**

- Third-, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher
- Lead teacher for grade level
- Tutor for students with learning disabilities
- Student work published for peace, essay and poetry contests
- Guest lecturer on responsive classroom, Hamline Urban Educator Program
- Participant with classes in the Read, Explore, Create project

*"CUE gave me the opportunity to have a career in an area that brings out the best in me. I am blessed to have been part of such a supportive and rigorously academic program."*

*"I live for the 'Aha!' moments when you are teaching a concept from a different angle – and a little voice somewhere from in the classroom says 'I get it! Aha!!' These are the moments that make it all worthwhile!"*

*"CUE has given me a career where I can not only impact others, I can take care of my family financially. Now I have a legacy I can pass on to my baby daughter!"*

## CUE's Personal Impact



**Kirk Morris, CUE 5**

**Before:** NSP customer service representative  
**Now:** Administrative intern, Ramsey Junior High School, St. Paul  
**Years in Education:** 13  
**Points of Pride:**

- Who's Who Among American Teachers, 2006
- Disney Teacher of the Year nominee, 2005
- Elementary teacher
- Junior high mathematics teacher
- Junior high baseball, football and basketball coach
- Presented teacher workshops on innovative teaching that combine math and music
- Administration licensure candidate

*"CUE has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. Education was my calling. The CUE program made it possible and prepared me to be an excellent educator. I was ready and confident when I began my first teaching assignment."*

*"It is extremely important for teachers of all racial and ethnic groups to be represented in schools. Students need to see school leaders who look like them. Many minority teachers can better relate to the issues the students are living through."*



**Harold Scott, CUE EX 2**

**Before:** Sales manager, Dayton's  
**Now:** Teacher, eighth-grade world geography, Capital Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet School, St. Paul  
**Years in Education:** 8  
**Points of Pride:**

- Member of Capital Hill's Leadership Team
- Presenter at National Association of Gifted Children conventions
- Coach of seven students who have advanced to the national History Day finals
- Urban education seminars and classes, Hamline University

*"CUE has allowed me to find my joy – teaching! I never had job satisfaction like this until I became a teacher, because I believe my work is so important and meaningful ... The thing I like best about education is the impact I have on young people's lives and the responsibility that goes with that!"*

*"Thanks to all the policymakers who have supported CUE – the program that has brought this rich pool of educators into our schools. Our children are appreciative, as are the educators, for what your support has made possible. Thanks to CUE for helping many of those wanting to make a difference in the world (like me!) find our way into the hearts, classrooms and lives of our students!"*



**Lynette Scott, CUE 6**

**Before CUE:** Health care professional  
**Now:** Mathematics coach and fellow in the St. Paul Leadership Institute for Aspiring Principals  
**Years in Education:** 13  
**Points of Pride:**

- Interim principal
- Site Council chair
- Third-grade teacher
- Mathematics curriculum coordinator
- Ed.D. candidate in leadership at the University of St. Thomas

*"I love the energy of my students and my work, and if it had not been for CUE, there is no way I would be where I am today. The CUE program changed my life and because of CUE, I am able to give back to my students, my community and the world."*

*"The CUE connections and networks have been great; we can connect people interested in education with others and also get more individuals to consider an educational career. It is vital to have educators students can relate to and who can help bridge the cultural gaps."*

*"I know I can have a positive impact on students, just talking with them, sharing my experiences and sharing aspirations for their lives ..."*

*"Thanks to the CUE opportunity, I feel I am part of the positive directions for the future of the world. I urge the Legislature to continue this important program, because its impact on student learning has been profound."*

## CUE's Personal Impact



Anupma Sharma, CUE SPED 2

**Before:** Teacher in India; educational assistant with St. Paul Public Schools

**Now:** Special education teacher, Highland Park Senior High, St. Paul – EBD self-contained classroom

**Years in Education: 8 in the United States and 6 in India**

**Points of Pride:**

- Brings a culturally inclusive, supportive perspective to the classroom
- Relates to other school professionals because of her experience as an educational assistant
- Celebrated with the first two students she had taught as freshmen as they graduated in spring 2008

*“CUE is the best thing that has happened to me. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity. I became part of the family at St. Thomas.”*

*“As a teacher my job is to open up the world for my students. They experience, learn and become open to different styles, ways and thinking about life.”*

*“CUE made it economically possible for me to complete my license and taught me about diversity.”*

*“Please keep up the good work!”*

*“A good friend of mine became a special education teacher because I was able to introduce her to the great people in the special education program at St. Thomas.”*



Rayford Sims, CUE 2

**Before:** Accountant

**Now:** Science specialist, Maxfield Elementary School, St. Paul

**Years in Education: 16**

**Points of Pride:**

- One of 10 science teachers in the Midwest and the only teacher from Minnesota to be selected to participate in a major three-year federal science project, the Department of Energy Academy for Creating Teacher Scientists
- Sixth-grade teacher
- Reading teacher
- School leadership team
- Instructor, St. Paul Catalyst Summer Science Institute
- Instructor, University of Minnesota's Summer Science program
- Member, Minnesota State Advisory Panel on State Science Tests

*“Getting into education through CUE was one of the best opportunities I have had in my life. I was a good accountant – but education is my true calling in life.”*

*“What I like most about being in education is knowing that I make a positive impact on our nation's future leaders. I also know that it is very important that students, parents, community members and staff realize that all racial and ethnic groups have valuable contributions to make to our great nation.”*

*“To all the people who have made CUE possible: it is indeed a great program, creating opportunities to get a cross section of our society into education. Thank you, and please help it continue!”*



Giselle Spears, CUE 6

**Before:** Healthcare professional

**Now:** Third-grade teacher

**Years in Education: 13**

**Points of Pride:**

- Reading Specialist license
- District and building level professional development instructor and committee member, math assessment and reading
- Participant on several Minnesota Department of Education state standards panels and committees
- Mentor teacher
- Assisting school in International Baccalaureate process

*“CUE! This decision changed my life. Our cohort and instructors were wonderful. There is something to be said for pursuing a career after you have had some life experience!”*

*“Possibilities! That's what I like best about being in education. Working with students to help them realize the power they have within themselves is exciting.”*

*“As a product of the Chicago Public Schools, I personally know the importance of being exposed to teachers who are representatives of many racial and ethnic groups. I was blessed to have some phenomenal teachers throughout my school career who looked like – and sometimes acted like – my parents, because they cared for me.”*

## CUE's Personal Impact



**Julie Vasquez, CUE 3**

**Before:** Early childhood educational assistant, St. Paul Public Schools  
**Now:** First-grade teacher, Battle Creek Environmental Magnet School, St. Paul  
**Years in Education:** 16

**Points of Pride:**

- Teacher, Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented School
- Teacher, Monroe Community School
- Lead teacher for summer workshops at Itasca State Park Biological Station
- Inquiring Minds summer workshops
- Teacher, after-school enrichment
- Teacher, K-3 fitness
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas

*"Last year one of the students I had as a first-grader my first year of teaching graduated from the St. Paul public schools as an honor student. He invited me to his ceremony as the teacher who most influenced his learning. It was a great honor for me and a big highlight in my teaching career."*

*"I think it is so important for students to see diversity in the teaching staff of their schools. When I was growing up, I had great teachers, but I longed for more teachers of color. Now that I am teaching, I try to bring my culture, traditions and language into the classroom, and I know my students appreciate it. They see themselves in me."*



**Pao Vue, CUE 10**

**Before:** Research assistant  
**Now:** Principal, Pillsbury Elementary School, Minneapolis  
**Years in Education:** 8

**Points of Pride:**

- Elementary teacher
- Assistant principal
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- Education Specialist degree, University of St. Thomas
- Ed. D. candidate in leadership, University of St. Thomas

*"Participating in CUE was one of the best decisions I have made in life. CUE brought me to where I am today."*

*"Education is the key to opportunity. I think of my own life and how I've come a long way since CUE. It opened the door. Thank you to all who have made it possible."*

*"After a number of years in the elementary classroom and serving at North Community High School, I am looking forward to working with Pillsbury Elementary, a K-5 elementary mathematics, science and technology magnet school serving northeast Minneapolis families."*



**Monroe Walker, CUE 7**

**Before:** Trainer, sales and marketing  
**Now:** Assistant principal, Webster Magnet School, St. Paul  
**Years in Education:** 10

**Points of Pride:**

- Elementary teacher
- Administrative intern and assistant principal
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas
- K-12 Principal Certificate
- Site administrator, summer school
- Leader in helping move Webster Magnet's focus to service learning

*"I always wanted to work with children. CUE provided me the opportunity to fulfill my dreams."*

*"I'm most proud of helping students become the best citizens they can be! My career has been wonderful working for St. Paul Schools. I have worked as an elementary teacher in grades three through six, an administrative intern and assistant principal over a ten-year span. I feel very fortunate to work with a remarkable and dedicated staff and enjoy watching children learn and grow to meet high expectations. I look forward to many more years of successful growth as an educator."*

## CUE's Personal Impact



**Jerry Yia Yang, CUE 4**

**Before: Computer technician**

**Now: Fourth-grade teacher,  
Hmong International Academy, Minneapolis**

**Years in Education: 13**

**Points of Pride:**

- Elementary and English as a Second Language resource teacher, Minneapolis Webster School
- Bilingual certificate
- Assisted with planning and opening of the Hmong International Academy

*“I am so proud to be involved with the learning and lives of so many young people, especially our Hmong newcomers from Tham Krabok, Thailand, who really needed our support. CUE has given me the opportunity to impact their lives in many meaningful ways. CUE has changed my life and the lives of many others in the Hmong community. As a former refugee, I would not have had the opportunity to be a teacher without CUE. Now I can use my own experience to help the children I teach everyday. Thanks, CUE!”*

*“The children we reach will someday be our leaders, teachers, doctors and lawyers, contributing to our communities, state, nation and world. Please give others this opportunity by preserving CUE, because CUE could well be their only chance to go into education, particularly for first generation college graduates like me. We really depend on the generosity of this program.”*



**Dexter Yee Yick, CUE EX 3**

**Before: Photojournalist and video producer**

**Now: Fifth- and sixth-grade teacher,  
New City School, Minneapolis Public Schools**

**Years in Education: 7**

**Points of Pride:**

- Second-, third-, seventh- and eighth-grade teacher
- Trained in responsive classroom methods
- Soccer coach
- Community/school liaison
- Master of Arts degree in teaching, University of St. Thomas

*“When strong relationships are built between teachers, students and parents, academic and social growth is possible.”*

*“As a person of color, I am able to connect with children who have had similar life experiences. I am honored to be in a position where I have a lifelong influence on children from all demographic, economic and ethnic backgrounds – children whose academic and social skills are often affected by factors beyond their control.”*



**C. Bennice Young, CUE 1**

**Before: Federal contract manager**

**Now: Principal, Elizabeth Hall International  
Elementary School, Minneapolis**

**Years in Education: 16**

**Points of Pride:**

- Member of the leadership team that transformed Hall into a fully authorized International Baccalaureate Magnet School
- Bush Fellow, 1999-2001
- Education Specialist degree, University of St. Thomas
- Fellow in the Minnesota Principal's Academy, 2007-08
- Classroom teacher and mentor, 10 years
- Hall selected for Magnet School of Distinction Award 2008
- Enrollment has more than doubled in three years
- Hall made Adequate Yearly Progress 2 years in a row

*“I have never looked back. I knew being in education was what I needed to be doing and every day I feel grateful that I had this opportunity through CUE.”*

### **Note:**

Dozens of CUE alumni have equally compelling profiles. Their stories will be told in later CUE materials.

# Reduced Gravity Educational Flights - Overview

Alissa A. Keil  
Reduced Gravity Program Coordinator  
NASA Johnson Space Center  
April 2008

<http://microgravityuniversity.org>



## The National Impact of CUE

Alissa Kuseske Keil, CUE 8  
Education Coordinator  
NASA Johnson Space Center

While most CUE alumni continue to serve as educational leaders in Minnesota schools, unique opportunities have led some CUE alums into other arenas. Alissa Kuseske Keil engages young people and their teachers with real-life science and math issues as an education coordinator at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.



With a mass communications background, Keil was a St. Paul school volunteer when a friend encouraged her to apply to CUE. Upon completion in 1999, she taught fifth- and sixth-graders in St. Paul's Crossroads Elementary Science and Montessori School, a year-round school focused on inquiry science. She started the Go G.I.R.L.S. (Girls Into Really Learning Math and Science), an after-school science and math club. She was part of the team in 2003, when Crossroads was selected as one of 50 NASA Explorer Schools in the nation.

In 2005, NASA approached Keil to become a NASA explorer school coordinator at its Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. Her success there in assisting schools integrate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) into their curriculum using NASA resources earned her the position of education coordinator at NASA Johnson Space Center.

*“CUE changed my life. Because of CUE, I have had amazing opportunities to become an educator with a national forum. My goal is to inspire teachers and students to reach beyond today and get excited about the future they help create!”*

– Alissa Kuseske Keil  
Education Coordinator,  
NASA Johnson Space Center

### In this position, Keil is:

- Program coordinator for the Interdisciplinary National Science Project Incorporating Research and Education Experience, a summer internship program for high school students that encourages STEM careers;
- Program coordinator for the Pre-Service Teacher Institute, workshops that introduce teachers to new NASA curriculum and STEM resources;
- Reduced Gravity Program coordinator for educators in both NES and Network of Educator Astronaut Teachers. In NES and NEAT Flight Programs, educators develop science proposals to test student-designed experiments in microgravity, lunar gravity and martian gravity aboard NASA C-9 aircraft.

## Celebrating the Impact of the University of St. Thomas Collaborative Urban Educator Program



The University of St. Thomas has celebrated the completion of 19 Collaborative Urban Educator cohorts. Each has been unique, with new strengths, new ideas, new challenges and new inspiration. CUE alumni have gone on to make an indelible mark on St. Thomas, school districts and thousands of children and families they have served so successfully.

CUE is genuinely collaborative. Hundreds of dedicated professionals have worked for two decades to create the CUE experience and to keep it a viable, powerful, life-affecting project. Individuals and groups representing many arenas – policymakers, post-secondary educators, teacher organizations, school and district administrators, classroom teachers and parents – have worked tirelessly with CUE to live out their commitment to meet the needs of children.



Celebrating our 18th anniversary this year, we acknowledge Daniel Loewenson of the Minneapolis Public Schools and Philip Penn of the St. Paul Public Schools, who worked with Dr. Trudi Taylor of the University of St. Thomas to create the original CUE concept.

We also thank those individuals and the organizations they represented whose vision helped develop CUE and without whose efforts CUE could not have been successful:

**Richard Simms**, Minnesota Department of Education

**Jan Magnuson**, St. Paul Public Schools

**Katrina Reed**, Minneapolis Public Schools

**Louise Sundin**, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers

**Ava Nielsen**, Minneapolis Public Schools

**Rev. Dennis Dease**, University of St. Thomas

**Charles Keffer**, University of St. Thomas

**Robert Miller**, St. Paul Public Schools

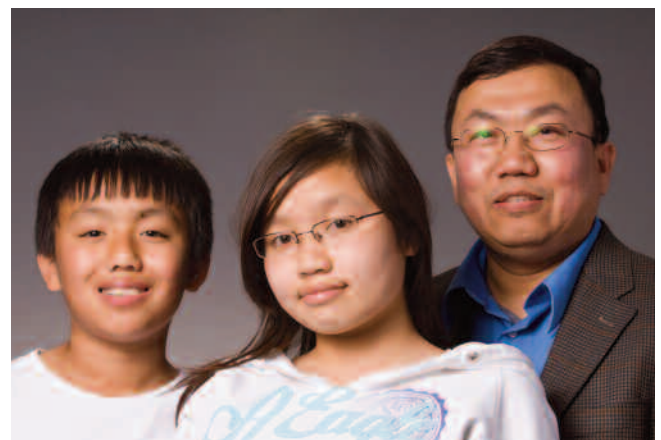
**Janice Hallman**, St. Paul Public Schools

**Kerry Felt**, Minneapolis Public Schools

**Don Nielsen**, Minneapolis Public Schools

**Doug Hennes**, University of St. Thomas

**Goff and Howard**, public affairs firm





## CUE Has a Long List of Friends

CUE has always depended on the ability and commitment of district superintendents and administrators, principals, assistant principals, mentor teachers, union representatives and program instructors. The quality of the education professionals who work daily with CUE members is humbling, providing not only academic information but also serving as models of socially involved, caring, hope-filled educators.

No group has worked harder to make this program successful than the urban educators themselves. CUE 1 through 12, CUE EX 1 through 3, CUE Special Education 1 through 5 and CUE Math/Science members have supplied strong support for program staff and for their CUE colleagues. Participants and their families provided each other with everything from baby-sitting to living quarters, and together continue to make this a vital, relevant effort.

Thank you to all who continue to make possible the important work of the University of St. Thomas' Collaborative Urban Educator program.

### The Impact of Legislative Support

From the beginning, the Collaborative Urban Educator program has been a state-supported initiative. Special appreciation goes to:

Rep. Matt Entenza

Rep. Mindy Greiling

Sen. Sandy Pappas

Sen. Larry Pogemiller

Rep. Alice Seagren, now State Education Commissioner

Sen. LeRoy Stumpf

Rep. Barb Sykora

*CUE alumni have gone on to make an indelible mark on St. Thomas, school districts and thousands of children and families they have served so successfully.*



## CUE Alumni in their own words ...



*As a person from a low-income family and the first in my family to graduate from college, I want to support others who need help and encouragement. CUE helped me get into education and indirectly helped all of those who have benefited from my work. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the CUE program. I believe it is so important for those who are from underrepresented groups or disadvantaged backgrounds to be leaders in education. We are very passionate about helping others because we know the value of education.*

**– Melody Martagon Geiger, CUE 12**

*Having worked in the public schools as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and director at the state level since I completed the CUE program, I can say unequivocally that teachers who are passionate and committed to urban education are essential. It takes a certain type of teacher to work with students of color in an urban setting, and I know that the CUE program has helped to produce quality, qualified teachers!*

**Leona Robinson-Derden, CUE EX1**

*Considering all of my educational experiences, none has proven to be as worthy or valuable as my experience in the CUE program.*

**Maria Renee Grigsby, CUE 5**

*CUE experience helped me understand how effective a cohort can be professionally and also how important it is to have professional support when changing careers.*

**Zonghlob Yang, CUE 8**



*The students I have been fortunate enough to have spent time with on this shared journey have blessed me with their own life experiences and perspectives, supporting a diverse community of learners and challenging me as a professional. CUE has not only helped me establish my initial motivations and skills as an educator but has been instrumental in helping me develop my vision of education as a way to bring about social justice and help people empower themselves and their communities.*

**Kyle Johnson, CUE 12**

*I work at a school with a very high poverty rate, student of color population and ELL population. On the First Grade Oral Reading Assessment given by the district, 12 out of 20 passed their tests. One little African-American girl went from reading zero words per minute to reading 96 words per minute. By working hard and not giving up, I was able to help close the gap for my students.*

**June Dye, CUE 7**



*Using the Kansas Writing Strategies that I learned in the CUE program has had a wonderful impact on special education students. For example, in a class of 18 students with writing disabilities who had each failed the state writing test at least once, 16 of them passed last year. The basic and proficiency curriculums were taught and applied to the five-paragraph essay format. It was a great way to teach kids essential writing skills, and they were so excited when they passed the test! Thanks, CUE!*

**Dana Pederson, CUE SPED 5**

*I feel a close kinship to most families of my students, knowing the struggles they face trying to raise healthy children in a society which has denied them many opportunities. They want the same successes for their children as other parents, but don't always have the resources or the ability to advocate for them, so I become that advocate. If I have made a difference in the life of just one child, a difference that can inspire that child to achieve great things, contribute to society, improve his or her quality of life and become a role model for another child, then one of my goals as an educator has been fulfilled. I could not have taken the first step in this process without the assistance of the CUE Program. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity it afforded me to reach my goal of becoming an educator and making a difference in children's lives. Thank you!*

**Bettye Brown, CUE 4**

## CUE Program Alumni 1991 - Present

### CUE Program alumni totals

#### 330 CUE participants:\*

- 271 Initial Licensure program alumni
- 70 Special Education Licensure program alumni
- \*11 Completed two CUE programs

### CUE 1 1991-92

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Bezel Bailey  
Celia Burton  
Jacqueline Caldwell  
Heidi Christopherson  
Teferi Fufa  
Bernadeia Johnson  
Craig LeSuer  
Phyllis Nesbit  
Leslie Silas  
Yvette Turner  
Paulita Yates Todhunter  
Celia Bennice Young

### CUE 2 1992-93

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Maria Estela Tapia-Alfaro  
Denise Smith  
Joel Beck  
Steven Date  
Athena Dupart-Meacham  
Verlene Green  
Joseph Groves  
Charles Hallman  
Carla Long  
Greg Lucas  
Nathaniel Moore  
Ogbiji Victor Okom  
Peter Sandstrom  
Rayford Sims  
Zelma Wiley

### CUE 3 1993-94

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Minoo Alahyari  
Gary Baldwin  
A. Darlene Gibson  
Mary Hreha-Johnson  
Gwen Jones  
Evelyn Kimble  
Teng Lee  
Leah Lewis-Frazier  
Chasu Lo  
Joshua Lowey Bliss  
Amanda Nappier  
Laura Nunez  
Pia Payne  
Susan Providence  
Carmenlydia Reggans  
Lequyen Tran  
See Pha Vang  
Julie Vasquez

### CUE 4 1994-95

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Jacqueline Baker  
Aaron Benner  
Michael Binns  
Michelle Butcher  
Bettye Brown  
Elena Calderon  
Priscilla Davis  
Karen Covington  
Celanese Fantroy  
Leahjean Frazier Dixon  
Ursula Hardy-Gorman  
Renee Hunter  
Andrea James  
Mai Lee Thao  
Toni Lofgren  
Nathan Long  
Annette Lopez

Darleen Smith  
Gia Taylor  
Akhaphet (Lah) Vixayvong  
William Watkins  
Jacquelyn Williams  
Jerry Yang

### CUE 5 1995-96

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Nedra Anthony-Houston  
Ray Betton  
Lisa Boone  
Kelly Clopton  
Cornelius Day  
Linda Dixon  
Maria-Renee Grigsby  
Larry Hawkins  
S.T. Jamison  
Shawntel Jenkins  
Robin McIntosh Francis  
Kirk Morris  
Tracee Robinson  
Catalina Salas  
Blong Thao  
Suvone Vang  
Andrew Xiong  
MayMoua Yang  
Gregory Young

### CUE 6 1996-97

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Shabnam Alimohamed  
Raquel (Kelly) Casper  
Ruey-Yun Chern  
Mary Frances Clardy  
Sharon Greaves  
Wilfred Johnson  
Fatima Lawson  
Elizabeth Mena  
Lynette Scott  
Daria Slick  
Matthew Smith  
Giselle Spears  
Bryon Adams  
Angela Boone Mansfield  
Terry Burks  
Karen Bray  
Colleen Lenz  
Jose Ponce  
Eric Robinson  
Gretchen Stewart  
Stacy Wells  
Harold White  
Ramona Whitehurst

### CUE 7 1997-98

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Eleanor Clemmons  
Kitisha Collins  
Lissette Estepa  
Sharon Freeman  
Teynae Johnson-Land Tarver  
David LaDay  
Rheyna Mezile  
Ana Miranda  
Stephen Shepherd  
Scott Tryggeseth  
Monroe Walker  
Lizabeth Wilson  
Maijue Xiong  
Tou Vang Xiong  
Tracy Zachary  
Ana Arevalo  
Mathew Collier  
Mark Dundas  
Candace Foreman  
Randolph Green  
June Holland Dye  
Tron Jones  
Patrick Julien  
Mauri Melander  
Charles Moore

Lincy Pullappally  
Howard Robinson  
Cy Thao

### CUE 8 1998-99

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Michelle Deziel  
Leetta Douglas  
Niki Gores  
Marcus Knox  
Alissa Kuseske  
Vatsala Menon  
Ma'lene Walker  
Chan May Vang  
Zong Yang  
Nkaujlig Young  
Tracine Asberry-Lindquist  
Shalema Blue  
Mia Rene'a Brown  
Alicean Fer Byrd  
Bounna Chhun  
Angela Garding Camacho  
Samanntha Mouacheupao  
Richard Romano  
Anisha Samuels  
Monique Stumon  
Michelle Wiese

### CUE EX 1 1998-99

#### K-6, 5-8, Secondary Licenses

Harrison Hammuud  
Jason Johnsen  
Masanee Robinson  
Siknin "Joe" Chan  
Saran Jenkins  
Utana Newborn  
Leona Robinson  
Kathleen Vulu  
Phillip Clomon  
Kimberly Korent  
Sang Le  
Antoine Mefleh  
Frances Mudek  
Vanessa Thompson  
Shoua Vang  
Kethkeo Vichaiyath  
La Yang  
Ann Patrin Yee  
Danielle Zdon

### CUE 9 1999-2000

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Debra Barraza-Hibbard  
Susan Fredrickson  
Amanda Herrera-Gundale  
Stanley Kusunoki  
Thy-Dung Nguyen  
Tlotlisang Rowan  
Marta Shahsavand  
Kamille Wells  
Iab Ong Yang  
MarkAnthony Edwards  
Adriana Florencia  
Linda Fong  
Karen Owens Robinson  
Jamil Salaam  
Tanya Thomas

### CUE 10 2000-01

#### 1-6 Elementary License

Victoria Estrellado  
Tasha Hardin  
Tiffany Kirk  
Chivouayyi Lo  
Deborah Martin  
Michael Paradise  
James Walker  
Patrick Burrage  
Melvina Gillespie  
Kimberly Hicks  
Benjamin Kimmel  
Greta Kivens

Tracy Murray-Foreman  
Pao Vue  
Mexi Zahm

### CUE SPED 1 2000-01

#### K-12 Special Education Licenses

Ray Betton  
Lisa Boone  
Catherine Butcher  
Darlene Gibson  
Randy Green  
S.T. Jamison  
Gwendolyn Jones  
Gretchen Stewart  
Tanya Williams

### CUE EX 2 2000-01

#### K-6, 5-8, Secondary Licenses

Beatriz DeSantiago  
Shoua Lee  
Marcus Moten  
Myla Pope  
Harold Scott  
Dua Thao  
Song Thao  
Margarita Romo  
Louis Francisco  
Sinthang Has  
Omar Adams  
Said Ahmed  
Latanya Daniels  
Kristie Powell  
Larry Wren  
Wadsa Schneider  
Tony Washington  
Chalmer Davis

### CUE 11 2001-02

#### K-6, 5-8 Licenses

Ed Colon  
Dereje Daba  
Ingrid Martinez  
Barbara Merritt  
Catherine Nixon  
Delene Thomas-Sanders  
Ven Mai Tran  
Dawn Vaughn  
William Yang  
Andrea Eastlund  
Yajaira Guzman-Carrero  
Marian Hassan  
Cheryl Pete  
Wangyal Ritzekura  
Sonrisa Shaw  
Khe Thao  
Norma Ulasich  
Tamara Valme  
LaCrissha Walton  
Frank Webster

### CUE 12 2002-03

#### K-6, 5-8, Licenses

Sabrina Harris  
Tasia Islam  
Kyle Johnson  
Melody Martagon-Geiger  
Niceta Smith  
Ly Vang Xiong  
Sunny Carder  
Jillene Isaac  
Kimberly Sy  
Theodore Whitehurst  
Teresa Laws Taylor

### CUE SPED 2 2002-03

#### K-12 Special Education Licenses

Willie Allen  
Kimberly Blackshear  
William Derden  
Tyrone Kindle  
Carr Kpanyor  
Jennifer Lee

Lynnece Bowen  
Regina Burrell  
Enrique Centeno  
Joan Duncanson  
Daniel Harty  
Fhonda Hicks  
Mary Jones  
Shannon Roney  
James Salava  
Anupma Sharma  
Michael Shepperd  
Antonia Vanyo  
Gina Feinstein

### CUE EX 3 2002-03

#### K-6, 5-8 Licenses

Sharon Hampton  
Nichole Salaam  
Dexter Yee Yick  
Roque Arcilla  
Leon Buford Kelly  
Christopher Deanes  
Maryann Madison  
Ternesha McCorkle  
Guillaume Paek  
Delon Smith  
Steven Williams  
Edna McKenzie  
Durana Azizi  
Jeninne McGee

### CUE SPED 3 2004-05

#### K-12 Special Education Licenses

Christal Hudson  
Freya Rae Schirmacher  
Shirley Pierce  
Marie Anderson  
Jean Miller  
Mona Hadary  
Vincent Jackson  
Wendy Larson  
Erik Moe  
Stefanie Morseth  
Dana Pederson  
Lisa Williams  
Michael Motzko  
Cynthia Hanley-Thureson  
Dawn Shannon  
Larry Wren  
Sara Gramer  
Donald Scott Manson  
Paul Stern  
Delene Thomas-Sanders  
Katherine Campbell

### CUE SPED 4 2006-07

#### K-12 Special Education Licenses

Lukas Johnson  
Lillian Collins-Renelus  
Catherine Boler  
Ryan Galindo  
Robert Henery  
Cynthia Herrick  
Karen Robinson  
Barbara Marchetti  
Yaritzy Sorenson  
Luke Rus  
Danielle Schacherer  
Myliassia Tenner  
Susan Gravelle  
Lacna Lee  
Sara Masson  
Sunita Persaud  
Dustin Thune  
John Hamilton  
Jennifer Lopinot  
Jillene Isaac  
Gina Runck



### School of Education Mission

Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the mission of the School of Education is to educate practitioners to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully to advance the common good.



UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

College of Applied Professional Studies

School of Education  
Graduate School of Professional Psychology

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