



April 16, 2024

Dear Board of SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288:

I am writing to inform you of my decision to retire from my position as Superintendent of SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288 (SWMetro).

After much contemplation and consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is time for me to step down from my role and embark on the next chapter of my life. It has been an honor and a privilege to lead SWMetro, the Minnesota River Valley Special Educational Cooperative (MRVSEC), and the Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative (CSEC) for 18 years this month.

I reflect back on April of 2006 when I was asked to take on a “hobby job” as the Executive Director of MRVSEC on a month-to-month basis until a permanent replacement was found. Immediately in April of 2006, I understood the importance of the role and was immensely grateful for the opportunity to begin working alongside amazingly dedicated educators, staff, students, member district leaders, and Board members, including Denny Havlicek and Deb Pauly who have literally been on this journey with me since day 1. I acknowledge the amazing mentorship I received from superintendents like Jon McBroom and SueAnn Gruver. I equally appreciate the long-time professional colleagues who guided and influenced me over the years such as Barbara Bahnson, Joyce Eissinger, and Cindy Walters.

During my tenure, I have witnessed the unwavering commitment of our team to provide the highest quality education and support to every student. Together, we have achieved numerous milestones and overcome various challenges, all while fostering a culture of excellence and innovation. I am incredibly proud of our collective accomplishments and the positive impact we have made on the lives of countless individuals within our community.

As I reflect on my time here, I am filled with gratitude for the trust placed in me to merge two longstanding educational cooperatives and then to re-vision them as the 4<sup>th</sup> Intermediate School District in Minnesota. Few educational leaders are given the privilege to create a district. For that, I am eternally grateful.

I will never forget the relationships I have forged and the memories I have cherished throughout my career. I will forever treasure the countless experiences, both professional and personal, that have shaped my journey as an educator and leader. While I am saddened to bid farewell to this chapter of my career, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and the opportunities to explore new interests and pursue other passions.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students for their unwavering support, collaboration, and dedication to the mission of our district. It has been a privilege to work alongside such remarkable individuals who share a common commitment to excellence and student success.

In the coming weeks, I will strive to ensure a smooth transition process and provide any assistance necessary to facilitate the seamless continuation of our district's mission and goals.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for continued success and prosperity to SWMetro. May the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and excellence continue to guide the district as it strives to fulfill its mission of empowering every student to reach their full potential.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve as Superintendent of SWMetro. It has been a privilege and an honor that I will always cherish.

Sincerely,



Darren G. Kermes  
*Superintendent*  
*SouthWest Metro Intermediate District #288*