An educational leader and visionary with over twenty years experience, Ronald J. Simmons was selected by Minneapolis Urban League CEO Scott Gray to lead the organization's Social Enterprise Academy School which serves students in grades 6-12.

Simmons' experience is vast, in addition to teaching experience in both traditional and alternative school settings, he has served stints as an Assistant Principal at Patrick Henry High School; and as the principal of North High School in Minneapolis and John F. Kennedy High School in Bloomington. Known for spearheading learning communities with school climates and challenging class instruction that serve to close student learning and achievement gaps, Simmons will be bringing his expertise to the MUL Social Enterprise Academy School. The MUL Social Enterprise Academy School, is a 21st century learning community, which has been innovatively structured based upon best practices to blend academic, career development, college readiness and expeditionary learning employing social enterprise aimed at fully engaging student learners, while preparing them for college and career pathway access.

When asked about the new position and his vision for the MUL School, Simmons commented, "I am excited about the challenge of fulfilling a lifelong dream of further expanding educational opportunities for all students. and continuing to work with our future leaders of America. The vision of the Urban League Academy enables our students to pursue a successful pathway which includes high academic achievement, career choices in both current and emerging occupations; the vast array of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics (STEAM) aligned jobs, dreams of becoming an entrepreneur, and essential college attendance attaining a range of postsecondary certifications as well as Bachelor's degrees. I am expecting great outcomes this year and welcome the opportunity to lead the school's team of educators and support the successful educational journeys of our students."

In addition to classes required for high school graduation, the MUL Academy offers the following learning opportunities found to improve school bonding and learning outcomes for today's student learner:

Expeditionary learning which means students will complete projects and assignments that link academics, careers and the real world,

Increased focus on identifying a career of interest, vocational career awareness sessions that provide students with opportunities to explore careers of interest while also helping them to understand the postsecondary education required to enter the career,

Positive youth development sessions focused on behavior, healthy relationships, peer issues, attitude, violence prevention, goal setting and achievement and the development of other key soft skills and characteristics that students will need to attain good jobs,

The creation of social enterprises related to these careers so that students can earn money and obtain hands on work related experience,

A partnership with the Robotics, Engineering, Arts and Design (READ) Program offering students opportunities to explore aviation, sound engineering, television and video production and graphic arts,

Earning the ACT National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) along with a Minneapolis Public School(MPS) high school diploma,

Summer internship opportunities in Building and Construction Trades; Culinary Arts; Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology (STEM), and

College visits, financial aid information for college, and presentations from MUL college partners.

Scott Gray, the organization's CEO and a solutionist who envisioned the strategic direction for the MUL school in response to data about disconnected students, lagging high school graduation trends among youth of color and escalating unemployment rates said, "It is unacceptable that our kids of color are not learning on par with other kids in the State of Minnesota and we can't continue to prescribe the same old strategies when the needle is not moving. We must develop bolder strategies that give our kids a chance to succeed in the global world."

To obtain more information about the school and for enrollment information contact the MUL Social Enterprise Academy at 612-874-9667, stop by the school's informational table at the MUL Family Day event slated for August 25, 2012; or email Orieon Thurston, the Dean of Students at othurston@mul.org.