

SIX TIMES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

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Minnesota's First K-12
IB World Schools District

South St. Paul
Public Schools



OUR VISION 2020 TO CREATING THE WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE (WBWF)

Who We Are

South St. Paul Public Schools strives to provide the best educational opportunities for all children. We believe that students will be ready for post-secondary education, as well as their career when they graduate from South St. Paul schools.

The enrollment trend at South St. Paul Public Schools has been rising due to open enrollment options, as well as the increase in population growth in the city of South St. Paul. There are currently 3,412 students enrolled in the district, attracting more than 350 students from other districts.

The population at SSPPS currently consists of 62.3% white students and 37.7% students of color. The percentage of minority students has more than doubled over the past ten years, with majority of this diversity growth at the elementary level. With the diversity of students in SSPPS, 14% of the students have a first language other than English.

The graduation rate at SSPPS exceeded state average for all district. The 2014 graduation rate of 95.9% has steadily increased from a percentage in the low 80s in 2009, and is continuing the positive trend in state average.

The achievement gap at SSPPS remains consistent and there is plenty of room for potential growth. We believe that achievement gaps are more likely to be closed and students are more likely to succeed in high school if they are ready for school upon entering kindergarten.

SSPPS believes that providing an education to our students that leads to creating the world's best workforce is a goal that must be addressed early on in every child's life.

SSPPS at a glance:

- 3,412 students of which 350 are open enrolled
- 95.9% graduation rate (one of the highest in metro)
- 62.3% white students and 37.7% students of color
- 14% of SSPPS students have a first language other than English



What is WBWF?

In 2013, the Minnesota Legislature passed the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) bill to ensure every school district in the state is making strides to increase student performance.

In order to prepare our children to be the world's best workforce in the future, SSPPS developed a strategic plan that will address the following five goals:

1. All students are ready to attend kindergarten
2. All students in third grade achieve grade level literacy
3. All achievement gaps are closed
4. All students are ready for college and career
5. All students graduate from high school

SSPPS will be working in partnership with staff members, leaders and parents to achieve this goal.

Packer Pride, Worldwide

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

OUR DISTRICT PURPOSE

Igniting a passion in every learner to inquire,
continuously improve and engage in our changing world

OUR CORE VALUES

Compassion

Appreciation of kindness, fairness and justice toward all people because of who we are

Equity

Equal access to opportunities in academics, student services and activities

Excellence

Striving for the/our best in all we do with high expectations for all

Integrity

Do the right thing, even when no one is watching

Resilience

Ability to bounce back from challenges and disappointments with confidence and hope

Respect

Honoring our similarities and differences in our assumptions, inquiries, words, and actions

OUR VISION 2020

By 2020, we will...

- **Prepare** each and every student for their next step
- **Deliver** on our SSPPS promises, priorities and goals
- **Provide** high quality, individualized programs, services and learning for all ages and stages of a learner's life
- **Offer** anywhere, anytime personalized learning
- **Create** meaningful solutions, encourage shared ownership, and improved outcomes
- **Partner** with our families and community to meet all student and family learning needs



Preschool



Kindergarten
Ready



On Track
in Third Grade



College and Career
Ready



Graduate from
high school



COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

A college-ready student is an academically prepared student, ready for post-secondary education or training without the need for remedial coursework.

A career-ready student possesses both necessary knowledge and technical skills needed for employment in their desired career field.

Ultimately, students will graduate from high school with skills to communicate, work collaboratively, and work competitively in a school or work environment.

SSPPS believes that providing an education to our students that leads to creating the world's best workforce is a goal that must be addressed early on in every child's life. By setting goals and attaining high standards early, our students will better progress in school and beyond.

As part of the SSPPS vision, we have expanded our community's access to quality early childhood education. A full implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) standards and practices are also implemented to help students on each grade level to meet college and career readiness targets.

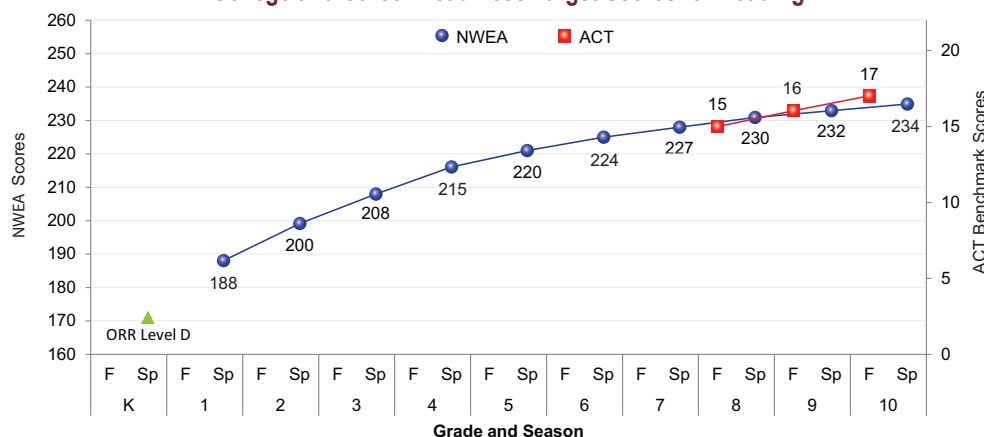
HOW DOES THE DISTRICT DETERMINE IF MY CHILD IS COLLEGE AND CAREER READY?

- Each student's academic growth in reading and math is measured with a computer-based test through the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)
- Students in grades k-10 are tested at least twice a year, and the NWEA test results allow the district to pinpoint students' current achievement and college readiness
- Several research studies also allow the district to link ACT and college readiness with NWEA scores
- The NWEA scores offer a unique way for teachers to appropriately target early interventions needed for students' continued academic success

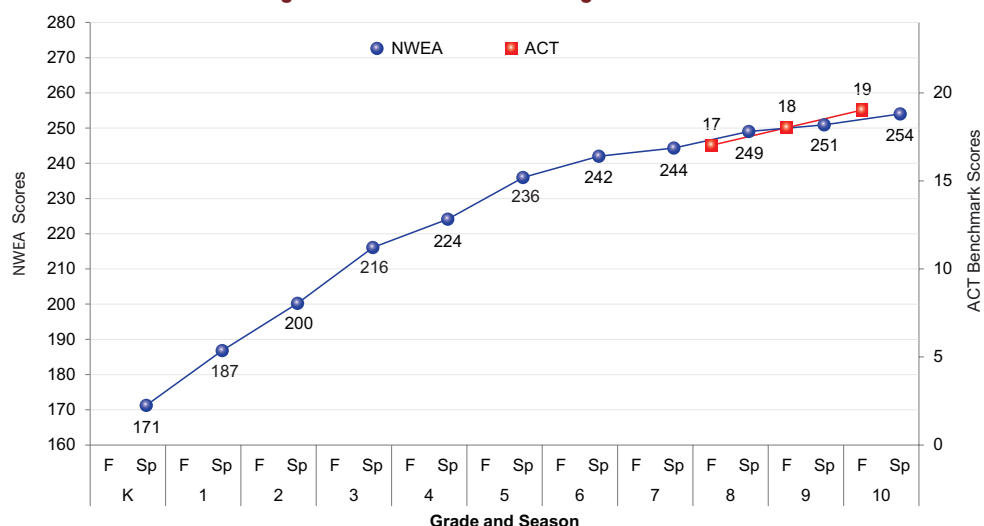
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS TARGET SCORES

Students whose NWEA scores are at or above the score listed for each corresponding grade, are considered on track to receive a 24 on their American College Test (ACT) and designated college and career ready.

College and Career Readiness Target Scores for Reading



College and Career Readiness Target Scores for Math





Establishing a Strong Foundation for Lifetime Success

Investing in the first eight years is critical for children to succeed, both in school and in life. Research shows that 90% of a child's brain develops in the first three years. Getting your child off to a good start in preschool will close the achievement gap and more likely to be college and career ready.

South St. Paul Public Schools' teachers strive to promote children's love of learning and curiosity through an intentionally planned hands-on learning environment, designed to foster the development of the whole child. Young children learn best through active involvement, in order to learn about themselves, other people and the world around them.

SSP Preschool options:

Kaposia Education Center
*Four-year-olds only

Lincoln Center Elementary
*Three and Four-year-olds

Kid Connections
*Three-year-olds only

Preschool options are available for three and four-year-old children. Two half-day options are available for three-year-olds. Four-year-olds have the options of attending two, three, four or five half-day preschool at South St. Paul.

Invest in your child's future today! Visit www.sspreschool.tridistrictce.org or call 651-457-9418 for more information.

Need Before or After Preschool Care?

Kids' Choice School-Age Care is offering a new program just for preschoolers this year. Preschool Care is available before and after preschool for four-year-olds at both Kaposia Education Center and Lincoln Center Elementary.

Every week, preschoolers attend and participate in fun activities such as circle time, lunch, outside time, a project or special activity, playing in the large muscle room, free choice and reading.

This fall, students have been practicing their coloring, cutting and stamping skills with lots of fun projects and activities; including fall trees made with their handprints, apple stamping, leaf sun catchers and coffee filter apples.

"My child is always so excited to come to Kids' Choice Preschool Care, it's all they talk about at home!" says one parent.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

What is Early Childhood Screening?

- * A "peek" into your child's development
- * Earlier is better. Screening should be done at about 3 ½ years of age.
- * No cost
- * Varied schedule of appointment times

What happens during screening?

We will check...

- * Hearing
- * Vision
- * Immunization Records
- * Motor Skills
- * Speech and Language
- * Social/Emotional Development

You will learn about...

- * Your child's development
- * How to get ready for kindergarten
- * Resources for school and parenting

Screenings are done at Kaposia Education Center at 1225 First Ave. South, South St. Paul.

Call 651-306-3623 to schedule an appointment, or if you have questions.

Contact Us for
Preschool Care !

651-306-3631
www.sspsc.tridistrictce.org



PARTNERING WITH PARENTS FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS

Parents can promote student achievement through a **Growth Mindset**, which is the belief that intelligence can be grown or developed with persistence, effort and focus on learning.

Believing that effort is a positive thing, and trying hard in the face of frustration and failure causes our intelligence to grow. When you try new things that are really hard, the brain makes new connections to transfer information faster.

People with a **Growth Mindset** care about and invest themselves in learning. Your brain is like a muscle. It grows through effort, practice and challenging exercise.

GIVING PRAISES!

The impact of praise is closely linked to how students view intellectual ability.

The way adults praise children's successes and failures has a direct impact on the mindset childrens develop.

Praise the **PROCESS** used, and avoid labeling intellect. For example:

- * specific effort
- * persistent struggle
- * use of strategies
- * learning something new
- * improving on something
- * taking on difficult or complex tasks



WHAT ELSE CAN
I DO TO HELP MY
CHILD SUCCEED?

Academic

- Create a routine with homework time scheduled
- Create a homework or reading area at home
- Prepare backpack, school supplies and lunch the night before

Health

- Get check-ups and dental care
- Update immunizations
- Eat healthy food and snacks
- Balance between activity, school work and screen time
- Set a bed time which allows 10-12 hours of sleep each night

PARENTING TIPS

FOR FOSTERING THE **GROWTH MINDSET**

Switch up your pronouns

Instead of "I'm so proud of you,"
turn the statement on its head,
"You should be so proud of yourself!"

Watch your body language

If grown-ups are tense, children will be
tense and unable to hear you.

Encourage your child

Embrace challenges and empower for change.
For example, "What would you do differently
next time?"

Avoid labels and give **Growth Mindset** praises

See these temporary problems as things your child
has not yet learned, then you are allowing
your child room for change

Get curious about your child's work and thinking by using open ended questions

There are no right or wrong response to these
questions. For example, "How do you feel about ..."

Practice your own **Growth Mindset** voice and be a model to your child

LEADERS PARTNERING FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS



Dr. Dave Webb
Superintendent

Over the past 100 years in our school district, we have always sought out partnerships with our community to support student success. Most recently, with the increased level of accountability, state testing, and a global competitive market place, our partners have never been more important.

Our parents are not only the most important educators in our students' lives, but our most important partners each and every day to support their child's success in our school system. In addition to their great work, we depend upon great partnerships with our teachers and staff, school board, and city to help our children have greater levels of success. Our community service organizations such as, the SSP Educational Foundation, SSP Open, SSP Lions, and Rotary, also provide many additional layers of support and opportunities for our students. We are proud of our community and all they do to support the success of our students.



Mayor Beth Baumann
City of South St. Paul

The City of South St. Paul is where community and school are one. Although geographic boundaries play a part in this, it is also evident in how we make decisions and the actions we take on a daily basis.

Our partnership is apparent in our use of shared activity spaces and shared employees and in the joint projects we take on to better utilize property and buildings in the city. We also are committed to our children and their growth and success in the community and in the world.

This is reflected in the youth and service activities performed by the Mayor's Youth Task Force, the participation of the students and faculty in the city-wide clean ups, community celebrations and events and the participation of city staff, elected officials and community members at the schools on a frequent basis. Our pasts and futures are ever linked to provide the children and families of South St. Paul a safe place to learn and grow.



Ann Counihan
Board of Education

The boundaries of the city of South St. Paul and the school district are nearly the same, fostering a feeling of family, with opportunities for parent and community involvement. South St. Paul Public Schools considers this parent and community involvement as critical to the success of our children. We believe these partnerships bring together diverse individuals and groups, to expand opportunities for children, families, and our entire community. On behalf of the SSP Board of Education, thank you to all of our staff, community members, leaders, and organizations, for your dedication and commitment to the education of our youth.



Jim Woodburn
SSPTA Union President

South St. Paul's teachers are highly qualified and highly motivated to help build the World's Best Workforce. Our main focus is the students. The students are the core of the entire educational system. The South

St. Paul Teachers' Association has worked hard to build partnerships with the Board of Education, District administration, City of South St. Paul, and the South St. Paul community.

We want our students to be successful now and for the rest of their lives. As teachers, our goals include: closing the achievement gaps, graduating all of our students, and preparing all of our students for college and careers. The success we perpetuate will be realized in the future workforce. It will allow our economy to stay strong and to keep our future bright. We truly appreciate the support we receive from the community and from all of our parents.



Dr. Chad Schmidt
Director of Learning

South St. Paul Public Schools is proud to have Dr. Chad Schmidt as the new Director of Learning for the district. Chad replaces the late Jane Stassen who served in this role for the past nine years. Chad, who began his new role with the district on January 1, 2015, shared that he is "looking forward to re-joining the South St. Paul Schools team and working collaboratively with educators, students, and families to advance learning for all."

STAYING HEALTHY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Smart Choices is a partnership between Dakota County school districts and Dakota County Public Health that focuses on creating healthier school environments by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. The goal is to help students maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease, and improve academic performance.

This Wellness Committee is made up of school staff (teachers, food service, nurses, etc.), family members and community members working together on projects like:

- * **Promoting breakfast**
- * **Ensuring that all foods sold to students meet national government standards**
- * **School gardens**
- * **Starting an after-school physical activity club**
- * **Continuing the Lit PE program**

If you are interested in learning more or volunteering, please contact committee co-chairs Jennifer Sexauer at jsexauer@sspps.org, or Tammy Lenarz at tlenarz@sspps.org.

South St. Paul Public Schools

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Preschoolers are Investigating Kaposia!



Four-year-olds are examining what it's like to be a student at Kaposia Education Center!

Over 75 preschoolers are attending preschool at Kaposia Education Center where classes are housed on the main level in spaciously designed rooms with the younger learners in mind. They have easy access to the large muscle room across the hall from their classrooms and lots of exciting new things to examine that promote creative thinking and build on their learning.

We have two Minnesota Reading Corps staff in our Kaposia classes who are helping our children get ready for kindergarten success. They support our students' learning through play with vocabulary building, reading, rhyming and identification of letters and their sounds.

Not only are our preschoolers investigating their new space, but they are also adding to it!

As you walk through the preschool hallway, you may notice a beautiful collage mural of children around the world.

This art piece was collaboratively created by School Board Member, Lauri Flatley, and her Scout troop with clip-pings from preschoolers' artwork.



Stop by and check out this very special masterpiece!