

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Available Streaming Online at www.spps.org/boe and Saint Paul Cable Channel 16

October 11, 2021

4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Jim Vue, Vice Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: Y. Carrillo, Z. Ellis, J. Vue, J. Brodrick, C. Allen, J. Kopp

J. Foster arrived a few minutes late.

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; Cedrick Baker, Chief of Staff; Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer; Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer; Assistant Superintendent Collins; Tom Parent, Facilities Director; Kevin Burns, Director of Communications; Brian Hammer, Interim Board Secretary.

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Vue moved approval of the Order of the Main Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call order:

Carrillo	Yes
Ellis	Yes
Vue	Yes
Brodrick	Yes
Allen	Yes
Kopp	Yes

The motion was approved unanimously by a 6-0 vote.

IV. ENVISION SPPS UPDATES

Superintendent Gothard began the Envision SPPS presentation by thanking the board and administration for gathering this evening for this important update. He spoke of the district having too many schools and not enough staff to provide a well-rounded education for all students. The goal of providing a well-rounded education is part of SPPS Achieves strategic plan to create sustainable schools. The district's challenges are not the result of the pandemic, but rather are a result of broader changes in the district.

Dr. Gothard told the board that tonight they would hear the names of schools that would be impacted by Envision SPPS recommendations to merge or close as well as how and when those changes would occur. These would be hard times for families and staff members. Closing a school is not something anyone ever wants to do and between now and the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education on November 16th, there would be a number of opportunities to engage with the administration team in multiple languages. The meeting plans were posted on the Envision SPPS website. Dr. Gothard also encouraged members of the community to speak directly with board members. He then turned the presentation over to Chief Turner.

Chief Turner began by thanking the team which has done this work, a core group and collective administrative effort to develop the recommendations based on workgroup outcomes, meetings and retreats to achieve a well-rounded education for all students in the district. She then explained that the presentation was organized to review recommendations one-by-one by city area. The presentation would take approximately one hour and Q&A would follow. Chief Turner also noted her intention to follow-up, if needed, on any questions that they may not be able to answer immediately during this meeting.

Chief Turner emphasized that achieving a well-rounded education for all students was the goal and that included a focus on core content courses of reading, writing and math, and also equitable access to specialist areas such as music, dance, and theater. She noted too many students to not have access to specialists due to school size. She reminded board members that the district had unsustainable schools with just 5-6 teaching staff, which meant some teachers were teaching joint classes comprising two grade levels (e.g., 2-3 grades combined). The situation in more sustainably sized schools was quite different. Chief Turner also reviewed for board members Chief Wilcox Harris's case studies comparing student experiences in an unsustainable school and a sustainable school, in which there was a distinct lack of experiences for the student in the unsustainably-sized school.

An accompanying slide showed the enrollment of large, small and unsustainable schools in the district today, with unsustainable schools having 250 or less students. Chief Turner also referred to a new video regarding well-rounded education for all students in which parents speak about why a well-rounded education in elementary school is so important for later school experiences.

Chief Turner then turned to discuss Minnesota's and the district's shifting demographics and the declining birth rate, a 10-year trend across the US. She cited statistics of St. Paul's smaller number of births over time, ranging from 5,922 births in 2012-13 to 5,059 births in 2019-2020. This number was expected to continue to fall and, by 2025-26 the number of kindergarten students is projected to be 3,677 students, compared to 4,452 in 2018-19. Another factor mentioned was Saint Paul Public Schools today captures only 60% of school age students in the city today.

Next, Chief Turner began presenting Envision SPPS recommendations with the goal of providing all students with a well-rounded education. She reviewed the criteria through which all recommendations were filtered, including:

- Data
- Facilities

- Operational efficiency
- Retain capital investments
- Spatial alignment
- Equity
 - Avoid unintended consequences
 - Integration
- Accessibility
 - Physical
 - Program accessibility (transportation)
- Location and density of students and schools
- Enrollment
- Market demands
- Pathway programming
- Financial/funding
 - Sustainability
- State statutes/legal (known)
- Unknowns:
 - Legislative (state/federal)
 - Cruz-Guzman

Chief Turner then showed a map of Saint Paul schools which indicated those schools impacted by recommendations, the majority of which were elementary schools plus one high school. She noted that the recommendations were developed to be as equitable as possible given demographics and to impact less than 10% of all students. The students impacted by these recommendations total 2,949 students (9%). She emphasized that some of the recommendations had come directly from community and were viewed very positively. Chief Turner also reviewed a slide providing a demographic breakdown of the total systemic impact:

Students impacted: 2,949 total

% of all students: 9%

- Hispanic: 19% (14% of total distinct enrollment)
- American Indian: 1% (1%)
- Asian: 22% (32%)
- Black: 32% (26%)
- Pacific Islander: 0% (0%)
- White: 16% (21%)
- Two or more races: 10% (7%)
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 73% (65%)
- Homeless: 12% (14%)
- MLangL: 36% (28%)
- Special Education: 14% (17%)

Following the overview, Chief Turner presented the recommendations by area:

Area A Recommendation: Relocate L’Etoile du Nord Lower to LNFI Upper

- If LNFI program grows, then PK would relocate to an early childhood education hub
- LNFI Lower facility re-envisioned

Relocate L'Etoile du Nord Lower to LNFI Upper to support well-rounded education in one building given much lower enrollment today compared to the past. The Lower school building could be reviewed if enrollment were to increase, with the recommendation for the Lower building to house Pre-K students which would provide flexibility should student enrollment grow again.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Vue asked for clarification regarding the meaning of use and utilization percentages presented on the slide.
- Director Parent responded by saying utilization numbers refer to % of capacity in a building so that following this merger the combined LNFI Upper school building utilization would be above 75% building capacity.
- Director Brodrick added that when the district first started the French immersion program, it was wonderful for Saint Paul; it was small to start with but subsequently grew tremendously and became a star school. Saint Paul was a leader in immersion programs with good reputations. He expressed disappointment that the district had lost enrollment in this school which was so successful for so many years, asking for more information about reasons school enrollment was lost and how they related to optimal size.
- Chief Turner noted L'Etoile du Nord was a top choice school, but cited families moving to Mandarin Jie Ming school, which performs strongly today, as a partial explanation. She mentioned the school community was open to working together to look at enrollment and ways forward. She mentioned that if students did not enroll at the beginning it was hard to integrate students at later grades. She said the school community understood that and the need to be flexible around class size. The class size cap would be rethought to allow more flexibility and increase enrollment. Given hopes that Lower campus student enrollment would increase, the Lower campus building would remain available for expansion.
- Chief Wilcox-Harris added that the district had seen growth in dual language immersion programs -- Hmong and Spanish -- but less growth in one-way immersion programs.
- Chief Brodrick requested more information about underlying reasons why parents choose to leave one school or Saint Paul school district. He emphasized that the district would want to address this very basic issue of parent departures since 2013 or 2014. He said he was concerned about immersion programs like this not attracting black and brown students saying that if the district could be better at that this school's enrollment might be better.
- Chief Turner said discussion could look at demographics in immersion in future discussions. Chief Turner also mentioned that each slide in the presentation contained enrollment numbers and had a similar lay-out.

Area A Recommendation: Close Parkway; Repurpose building as Hmong Dual Immersion Program.

- Students go to their area middle school
- Parkway becomes Hmong Dual Immersion middle school

Parkway closes (6-8 Montessori now) given 290 students were too few for a middle school program . The recommendation was to repurpose the building as Hmong Dual Immersion Middle School. Families would choose neighborhood middle school or magnet options.

- Director Vue asked about families impacted by the closure and whether their school choices would be prioritized.

- Chief Turner: Yes, all of the impacted students (2,900+ students impacted) would have the opportunity to participate in the choice program with a priority as an impacted school student. This has been a tradition of SPPS when students are impacted due to school closures.
- Director Vue: Can you say more about feedback from this group about the Montessori middle school pathway on the East Side.
- Chief Turner: Families at Nokomis choose Parkway, but JHill families tend not to choose that school. The reality is that Parkway has not been a popular choice for middle school.
- Chief Collins contributed that the district had struggled to find licensed middle school Montessori teachers and it was difficult to maintain middle school enrollment at Parkway school.
- Director Vue then requested more information about the middle school licensure issue.
- Chief Collins noted the need to make sure teachers have the middle school licensure endorsement and that the district had tried for years to encourage staffing to become licensed, and even tried to support teacher training, though teacher turnover made that practice unsustainable.
- Director Vue then asked if this was a general problem or if it was just for Area A.
- Chief Wilcox-Harris added that the middle school Montessori program at Parkway was virtually unique in the United States. It was very forward thinking when it was established.
- Director Carrillo asked how early did the district think this was an issue for Parkway and what mitigation actions had been taken.
- Chief Turner noted that Parkway was at first part of Strong Schools, Strong Communities and there was a year to create a plan at the time when the district had middle school capacity issues on the East Side. She said Parkway for a time included both Montessori middle school and regular middle school students, but there was much feedback from parents and teachers that was not a sustainable model, and the Montessori is now alone in Parkway and now enrollment is not there to sustain it. Families have spoken with feet and their mouths that middle school Montessori is not their choice.

Area B: Close Highwood Hills

- Students will have choice of other Area B community schools and magnet options
- Area B attendance boundaries will need slight adjustments to provide students with community school
- Engage community and neighbors to re-envision how best to repurpose building to meet needs

Students could choose other Area B schools and magnet options and the district would engage the community to see how best to reuse the building. Chief Turner said families were not choosing Highwood Hills despite a large housing complex nearby and it having been used for community events. The district would plan to sit with community and city to support the community and this building going forward. See slide of enrollment map. This was the only recommendation for Area B.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Brodrick asked for Highwood Hills enrollment numbers.
- Chief Turner: 175 students
- Director Brodrick: How many are East African?
- Chief Turner asked Director Williams to retrieve that data and added that the majority of students qualify as Black and a large percentage were Somali and the 2nd largest group were Karen.
- Director Brodrick then asked whether Highwood Hills had been identified as the Somali or East African school in that area.

- Chief Turner noted the majority of students were Somali and that many nearby residents were Somali and Karen. She said the district would engage families to learn what could be done given most families were choosing Charter Schools, especially Somali-based charter schools.
- Director Brodrick said the district was struggling with tension of integration and de facto segregation often as a result of the fact that communities wanted that type of environment -- cultural immersion. He added that the district was looking at the Cruz-Guzman case decision still to come. If the district were to decide to close Highwood Hills the district would eliminate a school that was attractive to Somali families because Somali families were there. Director Brodrick noted that this board needed to talk about this tension/dilemma; SPPS had tried to be an integrated school district, but in 2021 the district had schools populated by one ethnic group. The board would hopefully seek to discuss this very important issue as a board and that the board needed to hear from communities regarding integration versus de facto segregated schools.
- Director Allen noted there was a lot of truth to what the district was seeing for safety reasons, when staff and parents looked like your children. SPPS needed to have safety in every building...Somali, Hmong, Karen and to nurture this environment in every building. The district wanted to change that so every school was safe -- with staff that can relate to their children and nurture them. Director Allen added that the discussion should not focus on one population only that was a primarily Somali school, for example, because all schools should have safety for all.
- Chief Turner said the district would be reaching out to targeted communities to see what those communities would like to see.
- Director Kopp asked when the board might hear about the engagement plan and what it may look like.
- Director Carrillo, returning to Highwood Hills, asked when was the last time the community was reached out to.
- Chief Turner said regular efforts were made by the principal who offered the school as a meeting site for the community to help community feel more familiar with the school, but families said they chose the charter school because there was a bus providing door-to-door service, a service SPPS did not provide. Director Carrillo asked if that was the primary reason as that seemed like a drastic reason to close a school because of a bus issue. He asked whether something else was going on.
- Chief Turner said families sought one language, one racial group, one socioeconomic group in their school. She said the district would immediately work with that community but the district needs a community with which to partner in return.
- Director Carrillo then asked whether there was a point when enrollment was higher. If so, when that was.
- Chief Collins noted enrollment declines for at least 6 years and the Head Start partnership in the school also closed due to low enrollment. He said administrators had reached out for at least 6 years.
- Director Vue added that 175 students were there now and asked who those students were. He said there were equity lessons that SPPS can learn about where students go and what students remain. The district should not be shuffling students around to another school.

Area C: Recommendation to Close John A Johnson, Merge with Bruce Vento Elementary

- John A Johnson students move to Bruce Vento
- John A Johnson facility re-envisioned
- The "New" Bruce Vento:
 - Previously identified that Vento building should be replaced (2019)
 - Design and construct new building tailored to specific program and neighborhood

Vento re-envisioned and rebuilt will represent investment in East Side state of the art elementary on land that's large enough for early childhood and elementary school. Repurpose John A Johnson. Most Johnson students live closer to Vento.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Brodrick asked for the timeline for the new Bruce Vento.
- Director Parent noted it would be a 3-4 year process with January 2026 as a possible move-in date. With the whole process still to come, that was just an estimate.
- Director Brodrick asked for clarification of how long it would take.
- Chief Turner said the merger would happen in fall 2022 in Vento and the redesign process for the new Bruce Vento would begin.
- Director Brodrick wondered whether students could be on that site during construction.
- Director Parent said yes and noted that this would be a slightly different process than a few years ago. He added that Bruce Vento was one of few sites where the district could keep school in session and build a new building on the same site/land.
- Director Brodrick sought clarification that it would be on the same site.
- Director Parent: That's correct.
- Director Vue asked about the meaning that the combined building utilization would be 115%.
- Director Parent noted that the capacity of a building is set by a process. When a building's utilization was above 100% it was necessary to work with teachers and administrators to ensure proper use of space to meet needs and how to manage this during the school choice process and during transition.
- Superintendent Gothard added that Chief Turner had shared a statement that the district had a specific number of excess seats in elementary schools.
- Chief Turner responded by saying there were 8,000 excess seats today.
- Superintendent Gothard noted he just wanted to illustrate the capacity the district had and to make schools the very best they could possibly be.
- Chief Turner remarked that those were last year's or the year before's enrollment and enrollment this year is lower.
- Director Kopp mentioned John A Johnson was a Resource Plus school and wondered whether that partnership would be possible following a merger with Vento.
- Chief Turner noted the district was hopeful that partnership would continue.
- Director Allen then mentioned concerns about over-enrollment and wanting to make sure the district was making a good decision about what happens to John A. Johnson.
- Chief Turner noted the district would look at flexibility for growth given that area of the city is dense with students and the new building would take into consideration the possibility of enrollment growth. She added that an incoming kindergartener had 11 to 17 options to choose from and choice in the district would not be going away, saying there were many options.
- Director Ellis looked at the final enrollment number in the combined school and asked whether the district currently had an elementary school that large -- 800 students. She was concerned about such a large size and wondered how a merger of two large schools would work.
- Chief Turner noted the goal was not to surpass 600 students in an elementary school. Vento and John A Johnson currently have about 588 K-5 students now.
- Director Ellis then asked how much above 600 the school could accommodate.
- Chief Turner added that Bruce Vento was close to 700 students historically, though that was dramatically different from today. She said the district did have sites with 500-600 students.
- Director Ellis said ideally enrollment would increase, but expressed concern about the program at 588 students. She asked what growth would look like after merger, with school choice adding new

students. She wondered how fast growth could happen and asked if the school was prepared for growth.

- Chief Collins illustrated enrollment numbers by citing an 18 section school had about 450 students, while a 24 section school had over 600 students.
- Director Ellis assumed families would choose to go there, though that was a big assumption.
- Director Carrillo asked what the target capacity of the new site at Bruce Vento would be.
- Director Parent responded by saying that was part of the design process which may include looking at additional programs such as daycare options (in a daycare desert).
- Director Carrillo expressed concerns about enrollment to echo Director Ellis given the district had found out a lot of students were leaving to go to charter or neighboring districts. He wondered whether the district was setting itself up for an empty building in the future. While the percentage of households with children in this area was quite high, this project would be spending taxpayer dollars to attract those students.
- Director Brodrick noted having a little trouble with his arithmetic, asking Mr. Parent whether the district was expecting to build a building for 800 students.
- Director Parent noted part of the district's expectation was 800 students given current enrollment in both schools.. He said it was more than just the number of seats and kids but also strategic. He said it would be discussed in workgroups too.
- Director Brodrick sought to confirm that at this moment the expectation was to build for a capacity of 800 students.
- Director Parent: Yes, about ballpark.
- Director Brodrick then said when Director Carrillo talked about this area as one where we're losing students he wondered whether the district wouldn't be putting all of its marbles in one basket for a new school. He asked whether the building would be attractive and conducive to attracting students in that area and stated not knowing for sure if it's a good idea to build. He said he kept asking why we can't predict or state why families are not choosing SPPS in those areas. He said he did not expect an immediate answer now, but emphasized that it was a key question.
- Chief Turner noted that as the core group looked at this particular recommendation and began to model it out, the core group determined John A Johnson would not be able to accommodate a merger, but Vento school wouldn't either, though the site could accommodate a new school design school for 800 students. If we want students to come back, we know how to open schools if needed and how to prepare families to come back to well-rounded programs. Families were leaving because they were not able to provide well-rounded education, that's what the district had heard. To reiterate, if the district built a strong program families would come and Chief Turner added that she would love to come back in 3 or 5 years to re-open John A Johnson.
- Director Brodrick said he may have misheard but wanted to affirm that as the district was going to make a commitment to close and build a large Vento school, community engagement would happen prior to the final decision to gauge the question why people were not choosing SPPS schools. Before committing to build 800 student school, he emphasized the district must learn from community about what is needed. Before building it the district wants to know whether they would come. Just as Director Vue asked regarding the timeline regarding community engagement, the district needed to hear those things so the district had a good feeling about what the district was going to try to do.
- Director Ellis said she could use something like Cliff Notes to understand how the use and utilization numbers were determined.
- Chief Turner asked whether Director Ellis would like that now.
- Director Ellis noted she would need a visual at some time.
- Chief Turner said that Vento is at 70% use/utilization now, while John A Johnson stood at 79% now, and the merged schools would have a 115% utilization rate in the near term. This 115% use

rate can be managed with flexibility, noting the district had experience in tight buildings. She noted that currently both buildings had excess capacity and district experience in managing physical space utilization would guide it now.

- Director Carrillo noted the need to have numbers that were understandable to community, asking what 115% meant. He added that it was necessary to be clear about the implications so the plan was understood correctly.
- Director Allen mentioned it would be helpful to explain how shared resources worked in a combined school as a well-rounded school.
- Chief Turner noted resources in a combined school would be shared and students would have access to those resources. She remarked that John A Johnson did not have an assistant principal now due to enrollment, but merged schools would have an assistant principal and more music, phy ed, dance, etc. Combined programs would have more resource options -- language, dance, field trips, community experts. In sum, there would be more staff and more resources.
- Director Allen: Thank you!
- Director Kopp said she was just reminded about what happens when communities combined wondered what impact on EAs and TAs would be as enrollment increased.
- Chief Collins said with more students there would be more opportunities for other positions and that the district would be looking at budgets for specifics. He noted that discretionary dollars would be available.
- Superintendent Gothard said some limitations to discretionary funds now were due to the need to subsidize lower enrolled schools.
- Director Kopp said a well-rounded education was a key feature but there were other benefits to combining.
- Chief Turner noted combined schools may offer a 1.0 FTE family liaison rather than .5 FTE now.
- Director Brodrick asked whether the October 1, 2021 enrollment numbers for this school were available now.
- Chief Turner: Those are the numbers I did give in this presentation -- 352 Vento, 250 enrollment at John A Johnson as of Oct 1, 2021.
- Chief Turner noted that enrollment certification happens in late November or early December and the numbers presented today were tentative numbers, not final enrollment numbers.
- Director Brodrick asked how soon numbers would be turned into the state.
- Chief Turner: Dec 1.

Vice Chair Vue called a 10-minute break at 6:17 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Chief Turner continued review of recommendations:

Area D --- Relocate Cherokee Heights Montessori program, Merge with JJ Hill

- Cherokee reopens as community school in Area D
- Cherokee Montessori relocates with JJ Hill

Feedback from the Cherokee Heights community indicated desire for a strong comprehensive school in their neighborhood and strong pathway to Humboldt. Relocating and merging Cherokee Heights Montessori would not likely impact Cherokee Heights enrollment; the majority of families would likely stay at Cherokee and those who choose Montessori would choose JJ Hill.

Area D: Close Riverview Community School, Merge at Cherokee Heights

- Riverview community program relocates to Cherokee
- Creates stronger pathway to Humboldt

- Cherokee Heights utilization rate is not impacted but establishes stronger growth potential

Area E: Wellstone Spanish Dual Immersion students merge at Riverview; Wellstone Biosmart students go to district science magnet(s) or community schools

- Strong Spanish Dual Immersion program at Riverview
 - Miles traveled for Wellstone Spanish Dual Immersion students
 - 61% increases from 2.4 to 3.6 average mile
 - 40% are closer
- Wellstone Biosmart students relocate either at Farnsworth Aerospace, Crossroads Science or community schools
- Wellstone facility re-envisioned

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Vue asked follow-up questions regarding mention by Chief Turner that Area D families were not interested in Montessori philosophy and asked for more background information.
- Chief Turner: Montessori families who support that philosophy would likely move to JJHill, which is where families in that area went several years ago.
- Director Vue then referred to Riverview Community School having just a 33% usage rate and whether the long-term outcome for Cherokee Heights was also 33%.
- Chief Turner said the combined school utilization percentage would actually be about the same as the Cherokee Heights utilization percentage currently. Once combined the utilization rate would be close to 70%.
- Director Vue: Okay.
- Director Parent added that assuming the district had greater retention of Cherokee Montessori enrollment, referring to Chief Turner's statement that community indicated interest in remaining at the new comprehensive Cherokee Heights school, the new enrollment would be about 330 students for a 70% utilization.
- Director Vue then asked a final question about this area, which was in reference to what families in the area want to see in this neighborhood.
- Chief Turner noted initial West Side community discussions had taken place and community feedback indicated this plan would be welcomed and positively received. There are already plans to hold an official meeting to talk with community to seek their input.
- Director Vue asked for more information about the long-term rationale for having a community school at Cherokee Heights.
- Chief Turner referred to community feedback to date which indicated they wanted a core school that was well-rounded and that supported a pathway to Humboldt. She said there was excitement around a community school from this community that was very supportive of their schools. Community see families coming into the area's magnet schools, the community think a strong community school would help to build a strong community high school. New Humboldt construction helps to celebrate this community support and relates back to supporting the community school.
- Director Kopp added that the West Side needed two strong options in the community to retain their community in SPPS schools, given proximity to West St Paul school district which could be a draw to families. She said it was important to retain enrollment and recruit families to keep it strong.
- Director Allen turned to learn more about the numbers anticipated for JJ Hill which was at a 100% utilization rate, while also anticipating numbers staying in Cherokee Heights. She also asked about the plan for repurposing Riverview.

- Chief Turner noted the Spanish Dual Immersion School at Riverview would continue to be an option for families who want a dual Spanish immersion program, which was considered a magnet school option.
- Director Allen asked whether there were numbers to sustain the dual immersion program.
- Chief Turner referred Director Allen to Area E plans in which the board would see how Riverview would become sustainable as Area E recommendations included closure of the Wellstone Dual Spanish Immersion program and merged that program at Riverview.
- Director Allen then asked where Wellstone Dual Immersion Students come from (geographically within the city).
- Chief Turner noted students come from all over the city and that currently Wellstone Dual students were geographically split among Districts A, C and E students attend Wellstone while D, B, F area students currently attend Riverview school. In this plan, all students would go to Riverview. Wellstone Biosmart school would close and students would choose other science magnet or community schools.
- Director Allen asked for confirmation that the plan was to strengthen both schools/programs.
- Chief Turner: Yes.
- Director Carrillo noted that he had two kids at Wellstone Dual and he lived in Area F. He said they chose Wellstone because they thought it was the best research-based Spanish dual immersion school in the district. He asked for the main reason Wellstone would be closed.
- Chief Turner said merging Wellstone and Riverview dual immersion programs left Wellstone Biosmart program unstable, and census data showed that Spanish language families living on the West Side added to the reason for combining in Riverview. Chief Turner added that the Riverview program was a longstanding program with a strong tradition of Hispanic families supporting it. When considering where to locate the two merged programs that were unsustainable on their own, the team considered building capacity, utilization, where the program was welcomed by community, and other factors. She added West Side community had verbally welcomed the merger and community members were ecstatic about bringing the dual immersion program back home to the West Side.
- Director Carrillo asked for confirmation that those were West Side community members, not North Side community members. He stated there were more students on the North Side than on the West Side and that the district needed to think of students as a community and not just as numbers. This recommendation was asking 500+ students to feed programs far away from their homes and breaking apart a healthy school. He noted that he was not saying nothing should change, but research showed dual language programs have a positive impact on students. Breaking up Wellstone to make dominoes to fit on the West Side was inequitable. The recommendation did not add up given numbers and distances involved. Director Carrillo noted that this was what systemic racism looked like. He said he had concerns that the district was targeting a school that served students of color and this was indicative of the need to develop this conversation about equity more. He stated he knew French and Hmong immersion programs had a chance to have conversations about mergers and asked whether there had been conversations with Spanish immersion programs to cover all students, not just the West Side.
- Chief Turner noted that the core team went over the enrollment numbers over and over again and that a lot of work and re-work resulted in these recommendations. With this recommendation, 61% of students would see an increase in the distance to school and 40% of Wellstone students actually lived closer to Riverview than Wellstone. She emphasized that parents wanted well-rounded programs and the decision was to have one strong program added that as the team looked at the West Side, which has only two schools in total, the team thought it was inequitable to close a school there, where the district had recently remodeled and upgraded Riverview. All these things went into account. We did talk about Adams, though as an administration we worked

to reduce that enrollment during construction rather than allowing or encouraging 4 sections of kindergarten this year, so the reduction in enrollment in Adams was intentional and it will take 3-5 years to regain Adams' enrollment...The Envision team felt it was worth the risk to have a beautiful building. Adams is a one-way managed immersion program, while Wellstone and Riverview are dual immersion programs.

- Chief Agbamu added that Adams had a 40-year history and it was the first one-way immersion program in Minnesota. Dr. Agbamu noted Riverview became a two-way immersion program out of need and two-way immersion had proven outcomes from studies in other states. She mentioned Adams was increasingly diverse, but not to the extent of Riverview and Wellstone. She said Riverview had buy-in from parents, and so did Wellstone, but all criteria considered led to the recommendation for the merger at Riverview. Adams had many students on the kindergarten waiting list this year and that having one-way and two-way immersion options in this one district gave parents a choice.
- Director Carrillo expressed concerns that the district was leaving the North Side without a school and that the district knew there was a charter school that would likely capture the North Side students -- parents may say so long to SPPS. He emphasized that enrollment at Crossroads, Wellstone, and schools in the area had not declined, yet the West Side struggled with enrollment not to mention the transportation issues the district has. He was concerned about using investments made in schools as a rationale for making a decision, adding that the district was currently under projections and with this recommendation was saying it doesn't support programs that successfully retain students. He also expressed concerns about opening up a space on Rice Street at a time of higher crime, saying he had really big concerns that this was not a good strategic idea right now and that the message is that the district doesn't really care about the North Side that much.
- Chief Turner responded by emphasizing that at the forefront of all of the Envision SPPS recommendations was putting students first. She noted agreement that not having a school in a community was a concern and the district's goal was to work with the city and possibly move the rec center attached to the school closer to the street. The first goal, however, was to ensure students had a well-rounded education. Chief Turner added that Director Carrillo was correct that enrollment was retained at Wellstone but in part due to city-wide bussing as a city-wide magnet school. Principals say they could have higher enrollment if they had city-wide bussing too. As for Biosmart, the program was not distinct from other schools. The district would be gathering feedback from community in the next month and she noted that the district may have the opportunity to make some revisions if necessary.
- Director Kopp mentioned that data points would be helpful, including how many students are in the Wellstone attendance area and how many choose Wellstone. She expressed concerns about a possible hole the district would be leaving if Wellstone were to close, saying some sense of that data would be helpful.
- Chief Turner said that for Wellstone Biosmart the attendance area was the entire city. For fall of 2019, 11 families chose Wellstone for their school. The district defined choice as families who make active choices themselves and other families may choose. Chief Turner noted that Wellstone currently had two sections of kindergarten now, and those classrooms were full, but they were not active choosers.
- Director Kopp: Asked about summer students enrolling in Wellstone.
- Chief Turner said enrollment figures included 27 students, January through summer, including 4 active choosers and 23 who enrolled in summer. She added that enrollment and market demand were part of this review.

- Director Brodrick noted that as someone who had been a long-time North End community member, Director Carrillo's questions resonated with him. He then asked whether the school the district was looking at closing was a sustainable school.
- Chief Turner: Yes, that's correct.
- Director Brodrick then added the district had a satisfied parent on its own school board and that the school's building was an integral part of that neighborhood -- a school on the hill; it was a landmark for that community. As Director Carrillo said the district was taking a sustainable school that was a major part of the community and closing it at least temporarily. He said his guess was that kids in the geographic band, shown in a previous slide, would be those kids presented with quite a diversity of backgrounds. Giving a personal anecdote, he said as he ate his butter pecan ice cream cone across the street from the school, he was concerned about his beloved Rice Street -- a neighborhood on the brink -- that the city government knew needed to remain a place where kids could grow up. He regretted becoming sentimental as one of those kids, saying he agreed with everything Director Carrillo said about the wisdom of closing that school. Director Brodrick added that he heard Director Carrillo say he was open to options to keeping that building open and maybe even combining it with the old Washington School. Before he continued, he just wanted to say it made him pause in terms of what the best future may be. He was hoping this conversation would be part of the conversation as a board and absolutely including a conversation with those people in the neighborhood. He added that all those people at the ice cream shop get along, which was a model for these difficult times.
- Chief Turner noted these decisions had been emotional decisions and that she appreciated the board's emotional perspective on this. She added that the board may recall that the recommendations presented would be data-based decisions; if you didn't lean on data the decisions would be impossible to make. She encouraged the board to look at the data, including the percentage of students by city area. For a magnet school, enrollment was exactly what you'd expect to see with a magnet school, but there was also the need to provide a unique curriculum with a wide geographic reach that was also socially, economically and linguistically diverse. She asked whether the district was providing that at Wellstone. No, based on data one cannot come to the conclusion that Wellstone was accomplishing all of these things. With the district's goal of providing a well-rounded school, data showed that neighborhood families were not choosing Wellstone, which led to the recommendation to combine Riverview and Wellstone. Chief Turner added that Director Brodrick was right that the district's goal was to re-envision that school. This recommendation stands, but she added she was encouraged by hearing board member concerns.
- Director Ellis asked how many Wellstone Biosmart students go on to Washington Biosmart?
- Chief Turner said the team would find that data and present it for Director Ellis. Chief Turner noted not being concerned about Washington enrollment given the long waiting list for Washington that numbered 100s of students.
- Director Ellis noted she understood that Washington was not hurting for enrollment, but that this was on Rice Street, and the district's objective was to create sustainable pathways for a school that's right down the street, adding that if you eliminate it, that would affect the community.
- Chief Turner responded by saying 34 students had elected to move from Wellstone to Washington (40% of Wellstone students choose Washington).
- Director Brodrick said that when the district created the upper and lower campuses from Farnsworth and Cleveland to go to Johnson, he recalled excitement about creating an exciting Arcade Street corridor that could be the substance of a neighborhood, which was analogous to helping the Rice Street community and working with the city to make something happen. Director Brodrick said his beloved Rice Street was a neighborhood on the brink but that people got along there, adding that anything the district could do to strengthen schools, and communities, would be

valuable. Director Brodrick concluded by saying that perhaps his colleagues could help him with the data.

- Director Carrillo sought to clarify whether Director Brodrick was referring to enrollment data in the pathway to Washington and added that he thought that the percentage of Wellstone Biosmart students going to Washington may be higher.
- Director Ellis then asked whether Crossroads Science was a magnet.
- Chief Turner confirmed it was a citywide magnet.

Area E Recommendation: Close Galtier and Merge at Hamline

- Galtier students relocate to Hamline
- Hamline-Galtier envisions new school community program
- Hamline-Galtier programs merge
- Galtier facility re-envisioned
 - Option for Early Childhood hub
- All students east of Snelling get bused

Chief noted that the programs could fit in either the Galtier or the Hamline school building, but there was room to grow if both programs were in Hamline. The programs could grow in that building, which was attached to a Park & Rec building next door. Plus, it was across the street from Hamline University which partners with the school. Special ed and early childhood programs were in the Hamline building now. This decision came from a review of the data. Schools have been the heart of community, so Galtier could now be open to becoming an early childhood education hub, plus Galtier was uniquely designed for prekindergarten programs where the community would have access to the playground too. Chief Turnered added the district wanted to have a school program in the neighborhood and that program would be for 4-year-olds; the building would not be abandoned, but vital. With this recommendation, rather than leaving both programs unsustainable, the district would have sustainable programs at Hamline with a combined capacity at 78%.

Area E Recommendation: Close LEAP High School

- Students select area high school language academy and/or other alternative program
- LEAP facility re-envisioned

Chief Turner noted that this high school, traditionally designed for new immigrant students, had 176 students in SY19-20 and currently had 144 students. In addition to not being as welcoming to New Americans as the US had been in the past, the opportunities in this school did not match other high schools. A standalone high school for 144 students was not a well-rounded education. These students would attend other language academy programs in the city.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Kopp first stated that LEAP was a special place; it's like a family, adding that this news could be devastating, very difficult for this community. Director Kopp asked what the bridge to the next plan would look like and how could the district ensure that the experiences in other spaces would be comparable to this special place. She added this was a very specific program that would be difficult to replicate in other spaces.
- Chief Turner responded by saying these were excellent questions and points. She said a significant number of LEAP students were Latino and the Envision team had a meeting there tomorrow to learn more from students. To answer Director Kopp's question, yes the district did have a plan and the Envision team would have feedback from that meeting for the next Envision SPPS meeting.

- Director Kopp emphasized that there must not be a gap, that LEAP students must be well received and supported at their next school.
- Chief Wilcox-Harris added her agreement that LEAP was a very special place that started in the early 1990s. She noted, however, that today the district had five language academies at other high schools. She acknowledged that LEAP was a unique program for supporting ALCs, and the district was considering what other schools may be good options. Chief Wilcox-Harris emphasized that support would be wrapped around these students.
- Director Kopp: Thank you.
- Director Carrillo noted Director Kopp's points made him think of the 'why' question -- why the recommendation for closing. He said that the board was hearing from Galtier that they don't have enrollment support for that special community. Director Carrillo said he'd like to see a recommendation provide direction about these plans. For example, would the district fire and then rehire teachers or would there be a more inclusive approach for teachers. He asked for more information about these intentions.
- Chief Turner responded by reviewing the range of solutions brought to the board and then she read through the definitions of those solutions. For instance, if the recommendation were to combine two schools or different programs, leadership would be combined though separate budget codes would be retained. Crossroads was a good example of two programs with one leader at that school. Another solution had similar programs moving to one school (a merger), which would lead to one leader and decision-making structure, with one budget code, and staffing would be interviewed and selected. All recommendations today were mergers, which meant Galtier would merge with Hamiline and the resulting school would have one leader. HR and the Superintendent of Schools would make those decisions and teaching positions be merged and assigned on a seniority basis. Chief noted the district would be following terms laid-out previously in that regard.
- Director Allen said she appreciated Director Carrillo's request. She said she'd like to see what the district was growing in those spaces in regard to specialists in music, art, etc., asking how education would be enhanced in specific schools. Director Allen asked to know specifically what would be done and how. She added that the district was losing enrollment was understood, but added that the district was losing enrollment due to a lack of cultural content at schools.
- Chief Turner said Director Allen may recall that work begins on November 16th, after the board's vote, and it would begin with the public participation process with parents and stakeholders. At that time, the district would involve community and stakeholders regarding specialists to offer in this new school environment, adding it was premature now to do that, but that work would continue in January.
- Director Allen then asked why it wouldn't be premature to make those decisions without knowing the enrollment and whether it was possible to create that scenario with that enrollment known given that enrollment creates the funding opportunity to have specialists. She added her agreement with Director Carrillo that the district needed to start to paint that vision for communities, otherwise they would not participate in the district process and wouldn't enroll in schools.
- Superintendent Gothard noted that this allowed the district to repurpose its resources.
- Director Allen asked Chief Turner to be very specific about how a school would allow well-rounded education to be actualized.
- Superintendent Gothard said that if the district were able to stabilize enrollment, that would allow the district to repurpose resources as part of the design process. He noted that families today were saying the district needed to do more, and in order to be sustainable the district needed to develop some scale to do it in a better way.

- Director Allen said her question surrounded enrollment and that she was on the board when Galtier was possibly going to close and since then it did not seem like things had gotten better. She noted the classroom cap as it related to school expansion and asked what the strategic plan was for Hamline and other schools if the district did not get the enrollment desired.
- Chief Turner said that since 2016 the district had met with the Galtier community to see what they would like to see in that school in terms of support and with regard to enrollment, but ultimately it came down to the product offered. Families were leaving to find a well-rounded education, and the district was working within its structure to improve upon its product and it was on the basis of that educational experience that the district believed more children would return. The result would be reopened schools that the district was closing now. Chief Turner then asked whether she had addressed Director Allen's question.
- Director Allen noted that her response did not address her question because she was concerned with the slippery slope. Director Allen added that a lack of engagement was a problem and that they needed to hear from community simultaneously. She added that the district was making adjustments now, but those could not happen overnight or in one year. She said she was concerned about where the district would be at in 3 years, while the district was waiting for implementation. Director Allen noted that a lot of parents didn't think about the big picture of the district or even the school, but they did care about their teacher. Building leadership and building complaints had not been addressed, and by not listening to community and students families had left those schools. She added that the district had a history of looking at credentials rather than at leadership quality. She concluded by saying that was what she wanted to say.
- Chief Turner: I have taken notes on those pieces.
- Director Ellis then said she had a question of the General Counsel: "Must we vote on all of these schools together?"
- General Counsel Long said it was his understanding that this was being presented as one package. He then asked Chief Turner for confirmation.
- Chief Turner responded by saying: "Yes, as a single package." She noted that as the district heard from the public and the board, the Envision team would possibly make adjustments, but that, in order to be equitable, data analysis would be used to develop the rationale. The same criteria would be used to make decisions/recommendations and any modified recommendation would be presented on November 16th.
- Director Ellis noted that while the district knew what it did, the community may be asking what the district did was really enough. Community expectations were high and those conversations would need to continue going forward to see if there couldn't be a meeting in the middle. Director Ellis said she didn't like being in this situation in 2016 and she didn't like being in this situation now, with all the emotions. Furthermore, at this time when the district had just been back in schools for maybe 6 weeks. She asked what the district had done beyond just subsidizing the schools and the staff to support leadership as they were struggling. More specifically, what did the district think it did to find a pathway to be elsewhere than the position it was in now. Director Ellis said she was not hearing what our efforts were beyond subsidizing with money. Please refresh my memory regarding LEAP, did we have students at LEAP older than 18?
- Chief Turner said, yes, students could stay until they were 21.
- Director Ellis asked whether students had the option of going back to high school.
- Chief Turner responded by saying, yes, they could. As a super senior, students could look at alternative options -- Gordon Parks, as one example. Chief Turner said LEAP students had told the district they wanted more offerings like what a larger high school would offer.
- Chief Wilcox-Harris noted that she was the first person to talk about LEAP being part of a general high school because LEAP could not offer the level or depth of electives of larger high schools.

- Director Ellis noted that it would seem the district would want the LEAP program, with its particular mission, to remain a small program, but she was hearing that some students wanted electives. Director Ellis asked whether LEAP was ever meant to be a large program, given the specific learning needs of students who attend the school.
- Chief Turner said Director Ellis was correct, but LEAP was not designed to have just 144 across 4 grades. Chief Turner added that she did think the district would be able to work with students to understand what a transition would look like to co-locate with another program at another school where more resources are available thanks to enrollment. She mentioned that a parent recently told the Envision team that LEAP was great but the student was not ready for college when they left. Chief Turner emphasized that the district can provide better and stronger education at other programs. This may be a program that included transfer of staff support to a new school.
- Director Ellis: Thank you.
- Director Brodrick then asked for a clarification from Chief Turner and General Counsel Long regarding the vote on November 16th. He stated that the board would be voting on November 16th on a package, however within that package would be several big changes for particular school communities. If the board were to vote on a package the board would need to be in agreement on all elements of the package. If the board were to vote individually on recommendations or on a package, the board would need to flesh out individual decisions in order for them to be in the package on November 16th.
- General Counsel Long deferred to Superintendent Gothard to respond to this question.
- Superintendent Gothard said the district's goal was to provide recommendations by November 16th. There would be a lot of ideas and emotions like those expressed tonight. He advised making a motion at that time, and it could be one motion or a series of motions. If separated, some may not be agreed on. The question is whether the district would be working comprehensively. The administration would be bringing a recommendation to the board on November 16th and it would be the board's decision on how to bring those motion(s).
- Director Brodrick offered that his concern was how the board as well as the community would have opportunities to weigh in before the vote on November 16th. If the board were to decide that one recommendation may not be agreed upon, within an interlinked package it would be very difficult for a board to do without having had the chance to dive into individual recommendations and hear the community surrounding recommendations. He said the board can't vote on the whole package if the board felt like it had not made a proper judgment.
- Superintendent Gothard noted that the 2nd half of today's presentation would provide details about the community engagement process.
- Director Brodrick added that his uneasiness was not about Envision SPPS as a general plan, but rather about casting a vote on November 16th on all of those individual decisions that impact individual staff, schools and students. He said his concern was going from several recommendations to one package, though he'd wait to see what was in the next few slides since he did not want to make this into a debate about whether the board should vote for a package or for individual actions. He said board members were responsible for every part of that package.
- General Counsel Long noted Director Brodrick was correct that it was the board's decision and it was also the board's decision about how to approach this decision.

Area F Recommendation: Close Jackson Hmong Dual Language (HDL), Merge at Phalen Lake Hmong Dual Language (HDL)

- Stronger HDL program
 - Citywide busing provided
- Parkway repurposed for Hmong Language & Culture middle school program
- 1 mile from Phalen (lower campus) to Parkway (upper campus)

Chief Turner mentioned that Hmong community representatives came to the administration two years ago and provided public comment and spoke with community to discuss HDL (Hmong Dual Language) and about forming a Hmong workgroup, led by Dr. Agbamu. The group developed recommendations to move to Phalen Lake Elementary which had the capacity to merge. The workgroup preferred one building to two, the district did not have a building to accommodate a K-8 school. Therefore, the administration suggested a Upper and Lower Campus configuration, with Parkway becoming a Hmong Language and Culture middle school program (upper campus). This example shows why a package vote works, because of the interlinked plans for school buildings -- Parkway Montessori would close but the school would be repurposed as Hmong Language and Culture Upper School.

Area F Recommendation: Close Jackson Community and Merge at Maxfield

- Jackson facility re-envisioned
- Assumes PK remains at Maxfield
- Maxfield-Jackson school re-envisions new school community program
- Historical Rondo neighborhood
- Promise Neighborhood

Area F Recommendation: Close Obama and Repurpose site

- Current Obama students will go to their community school or magnet options
- Repurposed site reopens as:
 - PK-5 Montessori
 - Middle grades program

Area F Recommendation: Obama as PK-5 Montessori program and 6-7 middle grades

- PreK-5 Montessori program
- 6-8 middle grades program (not Montessori)
- East tower capacity: ~475
- West tower capacity: ~400
- Obama: 85% utilization rate (PK-8)

Area F Recommendation: Relocate newly merged JJ Hill/Cherokee program to Obama once remodeling complete

- East tower: Montessori program
- West tower: Middle grades 6-8 (not Montessori)
 - 6th grade Montessori students districtwide pathway to Obama fall 2025 (Crossroads, JJ Hill, Nokomis North and South)

Chief Turner noted Obama was a service learning magnet with 266 students (k-5) and the building had a 40% utilization rate. In this recommendation, Obama would be repurposed as a combined school with JJ Hill and Cherokee while also adding a grades 6-8 middle school program at Obama fed by a Montessori program. Parents wished to have a middle school pathway for their Montessori students. With this configuration, the Obama building would reach an 85% utilization rate. The Envision SPPS team believed this plan would be supported by the community. Chief Turner added that a question would be when to move given the need for renovation at Obama.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Allen noted that having worked at JJ Hill she loved Montessori programs. She said it becomes a lifestyle and carries with you other elements of one's life. Director Allen added that she appreciated the merger and push to enhance Montessori and then asked what the correlation was between Obama and Montessori. Was there something about the name Obama?
- Chief Turner responded by saying that the Obama name would stay with the school -- naming the school after Obama was symbolic -- and the JJ Hill name would stay on Selby and be refurbished as an early education hub. Chief Turner added that the district did not want to move that name - Obama - as the past president and first lady were both very supportive of Montessori's hands-on learning philosophy that supports integration, with many languages, with students from all parts of the city in a stable, historic neighborhood. A Montessori teacher helped the Envision team develop this recommendation for the Obama name.
- Director Allen then mentioned that as a fourth generation Rondo kid, and the first in her family to cross the redline across Selby, she thought Montessori was the direction the district needed to go in with education in general. Director Allen then asked where the space was for creating the comfortable space for black and brown kids to achieve excellence in the Obama school.
- Chief Turner noted that people ask her where the Afro-centric excellence is happening in SPPS.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked Chief Turner and the Board of Education, and everyone involved, noting that everyone was similarly aligned here. The purpose of providing recommendations was to provide stability for the future. He added that starting with these increments the district can do education in a better way and this could then serve as the foundation to make more changes in the future.
- Director Vue returned to clarify questions about Parkway becoming a middle school for Hmong studies and when that would take place.
- Chief Turner said the changes would be implemented in fall 2022, when Parkway would welcome 6th graders from Phalen. She noted that the district had learned some things as it grew and the district could be thoughtful and methodical, such that initially the enrollment would be small and students could grow into the building.
- Director Vue then asked for confirmation that the middle school would have citywide bussing.
- Chief Turner responded affirmatively and said the district may look at other configurations in terms of grades assigned to a particular school (5-8 or 6-8). Decisions like that would be done in conversations with community.
- Director Vue followed up by asking whether there are workgroups now and why some schools had pre-plans while other schools did not.
- Chief Turner said the recommendations included 5 closed sites that did not yet have any immediate next steps proposed, so those next steps would be to see what those next steps may be. That process could include working with those communities as a whole including the neighborhood council and taking into consideration the facilities utilization study, and other factors. Chief Turner acknowledged other schools did have a recommended post-change plan and given the thousands of excess seats in the district's schools, it may be a multi-phase year plan. She then asked the board to consider the plans recommended now rather than the ones not yet included in Envision SPPS recommendations.

Area F Recommendation: Expanding Capitol Hill pathway from Highland Sr to other High Schools

- Capitol Hill 8th grade students pathway to community high schools
- Language programs pathways assessed for alternative locations besides Highland Senior, if needed
- Current 5th graders first to pathway to community high school for 2025
- Highland Senior capacity can accommodate community students and anticipated enrollment from Highland Bridge development (Ford Plant)

Chief Turner noted that all other high schools could accommodate Capitol Hill students' advanced placement coursework needs.

In summary, Chief Turner stated that Envision SPPS recommendations represented 2,949 SPPS students (~9% of total enrollment) in a district in which 70% of all students were students of color. She then reviewed the following slide:

How schools have been supported:

- Subsidizing school budgets
 - Fall/spring adjustments (building & district)
- Provided marketing and recruitment support
- Targeted outreach campaigns
- Facility enhancements
- Expanded/modified transportation
- Leveraged partnerships
- Expanded programming to increase enrollment

Chief Turner noted that why students are not attending a particular school was important, the focus of concern needed to be on students who were here now. She said that by doing that, other students would return for a well-rounded education. She emphasized that this was a competitive marketplace and that SPPS gets about 60% market share and that families choose with their feet. Chief Turner said that in the end the district needed to rise to the challenge of providing a well-rounded education in every school.

Recommendation Overview - At start of school fall 2022

- 10 Schools programs will have expanded or changed due to parent requests or program consolidations:
 - Bruce Vento
 - Cherokee Heights
 - Galtier
 - Hamline
 - JJ Hill
 - LNFI Upper
 - LNFI Lower
 - Parkway
 - Phalen
 - Riverview
- 1 high school pathway change due to neighborhood expansion: Capitol Hill
- 5 sites closed and available for future programs, community partnerships, early childhood expansion or temporary space during construction, or other district needs
 - Highwood Hills
 - John A Johnson
 - Jackson
 - LEAP
 - Wellstone
- 1 school temporarily closed for remodeling magnet PreK-8 site:
 - Obama

See enrollment slide fall 2020 versus fall 2024, which shows there are 9 unsustainable schools now, but they would increase by 2024 if no action was taken.

Engagement Dates: See slide in online BoardBook and additional details on Envision SPPS website.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Director Allen had a request that Chief Turner provide the board with the alternative ideas that did not work during this process. That is, possible scenarios that were not part of a final recommendation. Director Allen if those could please be provided to the board and to the public.
- Chief Turner said those ideas would be provided and then reviewed Board member requests for additional information.
- Director Brodrick expanded on Director Allen's request to mention that we would not be having this discussion at all if we were not in an enrollment decline that had continued for at least the last 6 years. He said tonight we were looking at optimal school size to have us have better overall achievement and hopefully to actually take a real stab at alleviating the achievement gap. A better deliverable of services across the district would improve enrollment. He said he believed the loss of faith in the district was more fundamental, an organic root of the issue, than optimal size of schools. He said we needed to find out why families leave SPPS, which could be asked during community engagement meetings. Until the question was answered the district would continue to seek a magic bullet to grow enrollment. He said he hoped that when the district talked about Envision SPPS with SPPS communities that that talk would focus on their main concerns. Director Allen's comments said the district needed to have all of our schools be safe and welcoming for all of students -- race, ethnicity, gender, religion. Director Brodrick continued that the district was in this situation due to enrollment declines for years because families had chosen other schools. He said the district could try all kinds of things but he had seen a lot in his education career which basically boils down to what our families want. Basically, families want a safe, culturally relevant space and nothing else would solve the district's enrollment decrease.
- Director Carrillo echoed Director Brodrick and used a football analogy by adding the district was missing its projected enrollment targets and he was concerned that the district was calling running plays on a long 3rd down rather than addressing why people were leaving, which represents passing the buck of responsibility to schools. He added that the district needed to take ownership of the decision coming and own the environment the district had created asking: Why didn't the district support schools while enrollment decreased? He said it was necessary to listen to parents because parents had valid comments to say. Director Carrillo said an open-mind was needed in order to be transformed by their comments, otherwise more people would leave the district. Not all decisions can be well-received but the board owes the community it serves to provide a well-rounded education and improve student outcomes with a joy of learning and a commitment to serve the community that served them.
- Director Kopp noted that there are many people who would not come to public meetings or send an email and that the board's commitment needed to be make the hard decision at this very hard time. She expressed appreciation for Director Carrillo's comments about being transformed, but noted she didn't want the silent to be forgotten. She said she trusted it was possible to get there in the end.
- Director Vue thanked his board colleagues and asked for clarifications on engagement dates and what outcomes should be expected from those meetings, especially the Public Information Sessions.
- Chief Turner noted Public Information Sessions were 90-minute virtual meetings with most of that time dedicated to community questions.

- Superintendent Gothard added that the format would be similar to virtual meetings related to Covid-19.
- Director Vue then asked how Listening Sessions were different from Information Sessions.
- Chief Turner said Listening Sessions would be held in-person and would likely be held in the Board of Education meeting room, from 5:30 to 7:30, on October 28 and November 11. She added that speakers would sign up like they do for regular meetings.
- Director Vue asked whether the language specific meeting dates were set.
- Chief Turner said not yet though the dates picked would be the most appropriate date for a given community and in those languages.
- Director Vue then asked who would participate in Affected School Communities meetings.
- Chief Turner mentioned that principals would be setting up those meetings and the format of the meetings would be determined by each school's current meeting format (virtual or in-person).
- Director Vue sought clarification on workgroups mentioned in previous meetings and where their progress stood today.
- Chief Turner responded first by noting language specific meeting dates were actually finalized and would soon be published and then noted two workgroups were still in their final stages -- 1. Enrollment Workgroup, with a focus on the impact of class size on enrollment, would be done within the next week; 2. The Montessori group, which took a summer break, was currently on hiatus as a result of the emotional response to their preview of the Parkway recommendation. The Montessori workgroup would continue and outcomes would be completed prior to November 16th.
- Director Allen asked when the Affected School Communities meeting would take place and whether board members could attend.
- Chief Turner said that as dates were confirmed they would add them to the Envision calendar. She encouraged visits to the Envision website to view all the data, presentations, meeting dates, workgroup information and more. She emphasized that the recommendations had come from many different participants, including district families who want a well-rounded education.
- Director Carrillo asked when the bi-lingual Spanish meeting was happening.
- Director Turner asked Dr. Agbamu to respond to this question.
- Chief Agbamu said the intention was to finish the French immersion conversation this week and schedule the bi-lingual Spanish meeting next.
- Director Carrillo said he hoped this work would be done before November 16th.
- Chief Turner said the question was how can SPPS maintain a strong bi-lingual Spanish program and noted that she would work to make sure that meeting took place.

Superintendent Gothard then thanked Vice Chair Vue and Board members for their thoughtful deliberations tonight. He said it goes without saying none of us wants to be in this position. He said the goal was to strategically use resources in a consistent, equitable manner to achieve a well-rounded education for all. Thank you for all of your work.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Vue provided a reminder that the Board of Education would hold two meetings on Monday, October 18th: a Special (Closed) meeting at 4:30 p.m. and a Special Envision SPPS meeting at 5:30 p.m., and that the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education would be held on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with public comment.

Vice Chair Vue, seconded by Director Ellis, then moved to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was approved by roll call order:

Carrillo	Yes
Ellis	Yes
Foster	Yes
Vue	Yes
Brodrick	Yes
Allen	Yes
Kopp	Yes

The motion was approved unanimously by a 7-0 vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

For clarity and to facilitate research, these minutes reflect the order of the original Agenda and not necessarily the time during which the items were discussed.

Prepared and submitted by:

Brian Hammer

(Interim) Board Secretary, St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education