



WINNING STUDENTS

FOR SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Phase I: Discovery and Immediate Recommendations

Overview and strategies to increase enrollment
to improve the financial stability of Saint Paul Public Schools

Katie Sterns

Winning Students, LLC

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sterns@winningstudents.com

www.winningstudents.com

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I. Executive Summary

Introduction

The past few years Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has faced large budget deficits and been forced to make cuts to the district both centrally and at the schools. These cuts have impacted its ability as a district to offer families the breadth and quality of academic and non-academic offerings they expect to receive and are able to find within the competitive educational marketplace in and around Saint Paul. This financial reality requires that SPPS become laser-focused on attracting and retaining students. Enrollment is the primary driver for revenue, with each student bringing approximately \$10,000 in revenue and every 100 students bringing \$1 million dollars.

The district is in financial crisis - increased competition has led to more non-SPPS options for parents and students and a decline in SPPS enrollment. At the same time, government funding has either failed to keep up with inflation or never been adequate to cover mandated services for the district's student population.

While adequate pupil funding from the government can and should be pursued by the district and Board of Education at the Capitol, the district has the capacity and authority to respond to competition and the decline in enrollment.

With the objective of increasing enrollment in the pursuit of financial stability, the district has undertaken a marketing study. The goal of the project is to develop understanding and adopt strategies to aid the district in increasing enrollment.

Becoming Parent Satisfaction-Focused is Key to District Success

Twenty-five years ago, Minnesota lawmakers quite intentionally pursued school reform via policies designed to introduce competition into the public K-12 market. The plan was to provide more tax-funded educational options for families and make schools compete against one another on "quality." Under the State's system, quality would be reflected by parent choice/demand. The thinking was that more kids would have access to better schools, mediocre schools would improve in order to remain desirable and viable, and "failing" schools (i.e. schools unable to attract sufficient numbers of students to cover operational costs) would close. Through the introduction of free market dynamics and the process of creative destruction, public education would continuously improve. Under the Minnesota system, the key measurement of school success would be "enrollment."

About 10 years later, the Federal government introduced its own school reform plan with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. As we know, the key metric in the Federal reform strategy became “proficiency” as measured by standardized test scores.

Lawmakers’ pursuit of high-quality public schools, although noble, has, unfortunately, muddied the waters at the implementation level, where Boards of Education must try to balance the potentially competing objectives of increasing enrollment and improving test scores.

In recent years, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has focused on standardized test scores as their success metric, giving little attention to monitoring parents’ assessment of the quality of its schools as measured by parental/student satisfaction and demand. SPPS would benefit by improving the district’s bonds with its families by systematically and efficiently soliciting their input using *sound survey methodology*, monitoring customer feedback, and acting on their ideas and suggestions.

Although a stronger overall district and school-level academic profile would greatly benefit SPPS enrollment by helping to attract more families currently not attending SPPS schools, research demonstrates that parents determine educational quality and where to enroll their child based on factors beyond average MCA test results. Academic quality can also be conveyed by highlighting high achievements and honors for even just a handful of students. Parents realize that if this school can produce these kinds of results for one child, then there is hope that their child can also do well. Additionally, non-academic offerings are very important to families (extracurricular activities, school “vibe”, welcoming environment, etc.). Finally, word of mouth and parent ratings of schools is tremendously influential.

Marketing and market research is essential to creating a district that is responsive to its users as well as understanding the market share the district hopes to attract. Marketing can help bridge the gap between what people want and what is offered. In an increasingly competitive educational marketplace it is crucial that SPPS develop expertise in marketing to compete effectively. Market research (market intelligence and potential/existing customer insights) leads to more reliable product development (school programming options) and marketing strategies which then inform programming, service, instruction, communications, branding and public relations. This data also then can help to guide policy and resource allocation decisions based on reliable information. By investing in marketing and listening to what customers and potential customers like and want, the district will also create stronger schools with better outcomes and more satisfied families. It is an investment that creates a win-win for the district.

In order to grow enrollment, SPPS must deliver on the key characteristics which multiple studies clearly show parents universally demand as a baseline in all schools, and then ensure it is offering the other desired characteristics that align with market segments’ desires. The two baseline requirements are:

- 1) High quality, well-rounded academics that meet their individual child's needs and help that child reach their individual potential.
- 2) Safe schools and orderly learning environments.

Despite the numerous suggestions highlighted in this report, SPPS already has most of the capacity it needs to reorient itself towards growth and competitiveness which will impact enrollment in a positive way. Primarily this will entail realigning existing resources, priorities, developing feedback systems and becoming more savvy and nimble in the district's operations and interactions with families and students. The key recommendations for SPPS are to become parent/student satisfaction driven, and to provide more opportunities for students to discover and express their strengths, in other words, to shine.

Priority Recommendations for the District:

Hold enrollment steady for 2018-2019 (currently projected to lose 600+ students)

Recommendation	Action	Outcomes
<p>Better meet parental expectations for well-rounded academics that maximize individual student growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish expectations, incentives, and measurable outcomes goals that focus on promoting the individual, over-the-year academic growth of each student. Adopt metric that measures individual student growth vs minimum proficiency. • Revise district policy with concrete, defined academic goals by subject for all K-12 standards in all schools. • Create plan that establishes district expectations for meeting individual needs of students by ability, achievement, skills attainment and readiness. (i.e. offer block math* and other differentiation strategies in all elementary schools in 2018-19) • Begin collecting parent satisfaction data by school regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved individual achievement. • Overall achievement increases. • Increased access to comprehensive educational offerings for all students. • Alternative comparable data that more fairly represents student success and school performance • Increased and equitable access to needed supports and challenges for all students. • Increased parent satisfaction in local community school; reduced demand for Capitol Hill. • Reduced # of families exiting SPPS. • Establish parental satisfaction data baseline that will track perception of quality programs and academics over time in pursuit of continuous improvement.
<p>Address school safety and climate concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all schools to participate in MSS. • Create plan informed by MDE Best Practices. • Communicate commitment to continuous improvement and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive student data from all schools • Decreased # of reported incidents of harassment and bullying. • Reduced # of families exiting SPPS. • Increased perceptions of student safety and welcoming environment.
<p>Expand Pre-K to accommodate demand</p>	<p>Identify and plan for expansion of Pre-K to meet demand across district as soon as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased waitlist for Pre-K. • Increased Kindergarten enrollment and retention. • Improved academic achievement.

<p>Deploy marketing and communications strategies with potential to improve retention and recruitment for 2018-2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create measurable goals and incentives for student recruitment and retention 2018-19. • Centrally list, promote and register for school open houses, shadowing, information events, and tours at placement website as well as school websites. • Improve online presence for every school (Facebook, Greatschools.org...). • Create easy-to-use, “Spotlight on Success” repository (online reporting form). Use to publicize compelling college and career success stories on main website and on schools’ websites. • Highlight individual students/graduates achieving success. Feature selective college enrollees, merit scholarships winners, paid internship recipients (e.g. Genesys Works)... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment holds steady or grows 2018-19. • Baseline measurement established for parental satisfaction with enrollment and placement process. • Measurements indicating public perception that SPPS produces high achieving and successful students prepared for college.
<p>Fill (add Pre-K, K-8, launch new, high-demand concepts to share space aka Jie Ming/Hamline, etc.) or consolidate low-enrolled schools to free up money to invest in program quality and new programs</p>	<p>Invest in high demand growth areas for 2018-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K • Universal access to music and art • Clear “traditional” pathways for all SPPS students (i.e. Eastside Middle) • Project-based learning (i.e. Montessori, OWL, Avalon, Upper Mississippi Academy...) • Universal access to acceleration opportunities K-12; High-ability program • K-8 sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed plan is completed for every school where consolidation is needed by October, 2017. • Relocation of families in consolidated programs for 2018-19. • New programs are seeded, or popular programs are expanded where space and resources are freed up.

<p>Become more flexible and nimble to respond better to demand and to promote enrollment growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with teacher’s union to help grow enrollment; negotiate flexibility in class size caps • Redirect funds from district programs that are not mandated and that do not contribute towards enrollment growth to invest in pro-growth initiatives • Create enrollment projections and placement to accommodate growth; incentivize growth • Create flexibility in how students are grouped and in staffing that allows for midyear adjustments or relocations • Offer more liberal busing where needed to fill and attract students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment increases. • Retention improves. • More teachers hired. • More financial stability when enrollment improves leading to better ability to serve all students. • Parent satisfaction increases.
<p>Provide universal, quality arts and music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to K-8 music & art and middle school band reinstated (as a minimum...elem. band ideally) in all schools by 2018-2019 school year with no cuts to any programs, electives or offerings in place during school year 2017-2018 • Create Music Task Force (community experts and advocates) to recommend high quality, unique to SPPS program, features, partnerships, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Task Force meets weekly in fall 2017 to recommend plan (including needed budget) and strategies to district before winter break. • Increase parent satisfaction in SPPS music offerings. • Increase participation in secondary music electives. • All elementary students receive high quality, school-day instruction in music and one other art option. • Highly qualified, music-certified teachers hired. • Parent satisfaction increases. • Veteran music staff report improved participation, support and quality of program.

II. Phase I Project Description and Deliverables

This project was proposed to Saint Paul Public School’s leadership by Winning Students, LLC with the goal of assisting the district in raising revenue by increasing enrollment. After the consultants participated in annual community discussions about district budget cuts and observed the effects cuts were having on students and their families, it became apparent that the district would benefit from assistance in understanding their enrollment situation better and developing strategies to increase enrollment. The district does not currently have a comprehensive, integrated marketing function and entered into a contract with Winning Students, LLC. The initial phase of the project is reported upon here. Phase I included a review of existing data, studies, and operations to determine if there was sufficient information to make recommendations that might impact growth, and also to determine where additional studies were needed. Funding for Phase I of this project was provided via a generous grant to the district from the Saint Paul Foundation.

This report covers the objectives and deliverables of Phase 1 of this project. Phase 1 had the following objectives:

Discovery:

- a. Establish working relationships with district staff and determine sources of information helpful to understanding Saint Paul families and their enrollment behaviors
- b. Seek information that will provide insight into the following:
 - i. Overview of enrollment and demographic trends
 - ii. Description of likely market segments; understand choice exercisers
 - iii. Dynamics of school choice particular to St. Paul demographics
 - iv. Enrollment barriers
 - v. Retention barriers
 - vi. Program features and characteristics St. Paul families desire; deal breakers
 - vii. Impressions and “brand” of SPPS
 - viii. Determine critical decision/access points in family and student enrollment life cycle
- c. Study and distill existing district data including exit survey; determine usability of data and additional information that is needed
- d. Find data to clarify low kindergarten enrollment and also if access to alternate schools was a factor for those who moved out of district.
- e. Explore outside data sources to find additional useful information (MDE, Census data, other educational market and school choice research)

- f. Propose additional areas requiring supplementation or new research (see section IV)
- II. Research Advisory Group:
 - a. Recruit staff and community members with skills and expertise in marketing and marketing and social science related research
 - b. Meet to review consultant's work, related research and preliminary findings, seek their input on proposed recommendations and next steps
- II. Supply Study: What SPPS currently offers:
 - a. Inventory current offerings and program features for programs in SPPS along known criteria used in making school choice decisions.
 - b. Determine capacity in every facility. Specify excess capacity locations as well as facilities/programs in high demand (waiting lists).
 - c. Identify high turn-over schools and low-enrollment schools
 - d. Identify geographic areas with low attendance among residents
- III. Competitive Analysis:
 - a. Determine academic competition (charters, other districts, private schools) and document their offerings and selling proposition
 - b. Learn the appeal and what might be desirable in their offerings vs SPPS offerings
 - c. If possible, determine competitors' draw (attendance) from St. Paul students.
- IV. Early conclusions roadmap and recommendations:
 - a. Report suggested action the district can take immediately based on Phase I work
- V. Identify additional needed research:
 - a. Define scope, requirements, timeframe, resources needed for any additional needed research
 - b. Prioritize new research projects based on input from Advisory Committee, district and leadership

Methodology:

For expediency and cost effectiveness, this study identified, reviewed, and summarized key findings from existing studies related to enrollment, especially studies that examined parent desires and expectations as related to K-12 education generally and SPPS specifically. Information was also gathered about methods being used in other urban districts around

the country facing enrollment declines. The source of most data was the district and MDE on enrollment, retention, trends, capacity, programming, instruction, achievement, etc. Winning Students, LLC Consultant conferred with many internal district staff across many departments in the district, local college academics, marketing and educational marketing professionals, teachers, principals, educational experts, SPPS Board of Education Members, Minnesota Departments of Education and Health staff, parents, students, and educational advocates to obtain information relevant to this study. Consultant also attended district and BOE meetings and heard presentations from PACs, School Administrators, demographer consultant, and community members.

The analysis and recommendations presented here have been deduced from a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research as well as the consultant's expertise on the district, as a long-time, engaged member of the community, as well as in marketing strategy, social science research, academic program evaluation, instructional methods, communications, sales, and entrepreneurialism. Not every suggestion, idea or recommendation is referenced directly in this report as this is a more informal study though all are based on evidence rather than purely opinion. Still, it is highly recommended the district confirms the accuracy, feasibility and suitability of many of these ideas through further study to better determine both their merit as well as their viability in SPPS.

As SPPS welcomes a new Superintendent and looks to create a new strategic plan, now is an opportune time to take stock, assess the efficacy of the last Strategic Plan: Strong Schools, Strong Communities (SSSC) and create a bold, new vision for the district. This examination will assist the district in developing a stronger, financially healthier school system. And, most importantly, one that delivers on the promise of educational excellence and helping every child reach their potential.

Acknowledgements:

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of many people in the creation of this work. My work as a parent volunteer, SPPS member of multiple committees over many years, community organizer and educational advocate in Saint Paul over more than a decade has provided me with extensive knowledge of the district over time. I have had the good fortune of working with many amazing district and community members who have influenced and contributed to this work.

In particular, I wish to thank Board of Education members who were open to discussing the district's challenges and opportunities and who saw merit in a more in-depth analysis of its enrollment situation. Many thanks to Superintendent John Thein who recognized the need for this work and who has been a great advocate for better harnessing the strengths of SPPS. The district is fortunate to have a strong partner in the Saint Paul Foundation, which provided the generous grant that funded this project.

I reported to Chief Operating Officer, Jackie Turner. She and her Administrative Assistant, Paul Adams, were invaluable to my ability to access information. They responded to my queries in a timely manner and thoughtfully. Chief Turner's patience in helping me understand details regarding enrollment and placement were invaluable. Members of SPPS staff, both teachers and administrators, were extremely helpful and cooperated in acquiring and helping interpret information and data. Their detailed knowledge and explaining nuances were key to my greater understanding.

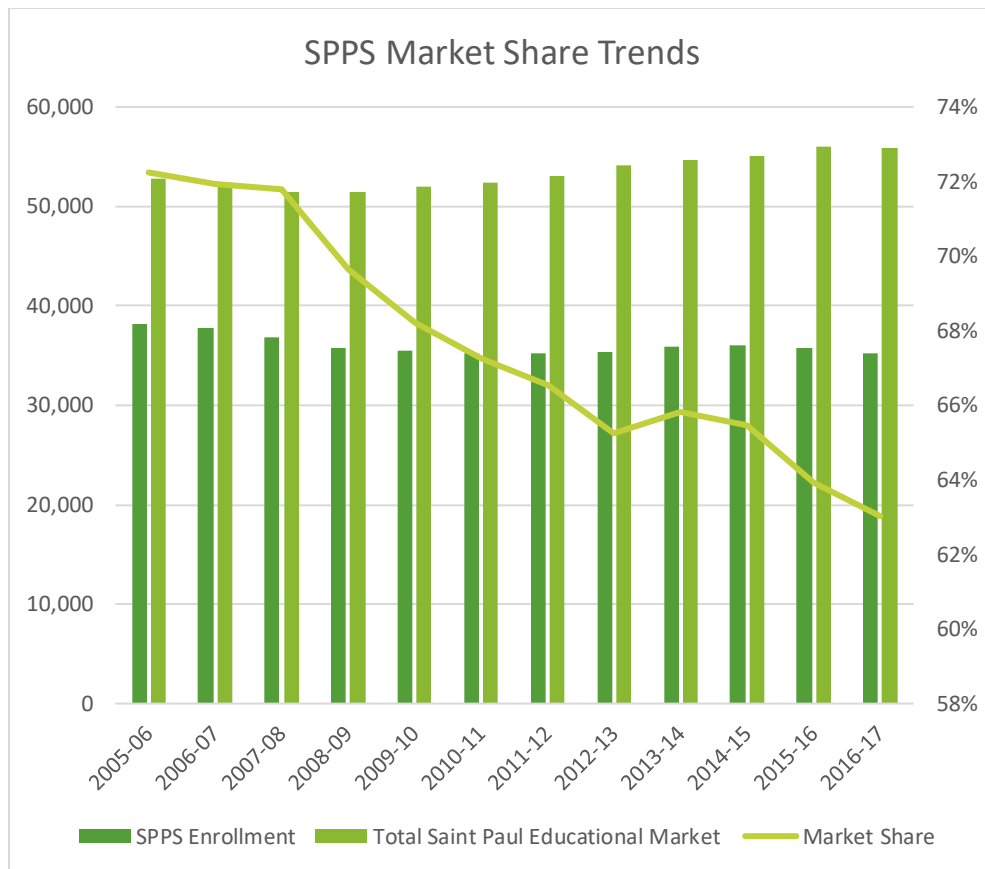
Special thanks to participants in the Enrollment Research Advisory Committee who acted as a sounding board and provided insight and shared their knowledge and expertise in marketing and research. The findings from this study however, are not those of the group, but of Winning Students, LLC. The group included SPPS staff as well as members of the Saint Paul community with expertise in marketing or related social science fields.

Additionally, many community members and advocacy groups also contributed by sharing their stories and insights. Parents from all around the district care deeply about making SPPS as successful as possible, not only for their own child, but because they care about all the kids in Saint Paul.

Last but not least, I wish to acknowledge fellow marketing professional, Melissa Dangaran, who contributed significantly to the formation of this project, assisted in administration of the Advisory Committee, and the research and editing of this report.

III. Enrollment Facts

Enrollment trends and analysis:



Source: Dr. Reinhardt, Demographer, Presentation to BOE, 2017. Original source Minnesota Department of Education.

As illustrated in the chart above, SPPS’ enrollment has been declining for the last 10 years both in total numbers served and as a share of the educational market (the percentage of Saint Paul school-aged children enrolling in SPPS). Families leaving the district have represented all demographic groups: two-thirds have been families of color and two-thirds have been families qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

After a brief stable enrollment period in 2012 and 2013, the last two years saw another fall in enrollment. This was due to increased competition from new charter schools and surrounding districts, but was also likely due to internal factors as suggested in the data the district has collected. The main factors included concerns over the ability of the district to meet student’s individual learning needs, and school safety and climate.

There was significant public outcry over continued cuts to popular programming such as electives, arts and music, ELL, Special Education and Gifted services. This trend started under the Superintendents Carstarphen and Silva administrations who made significant cuts to non-core programming in schools (e.g. music, art, gifted specialists, science, physical

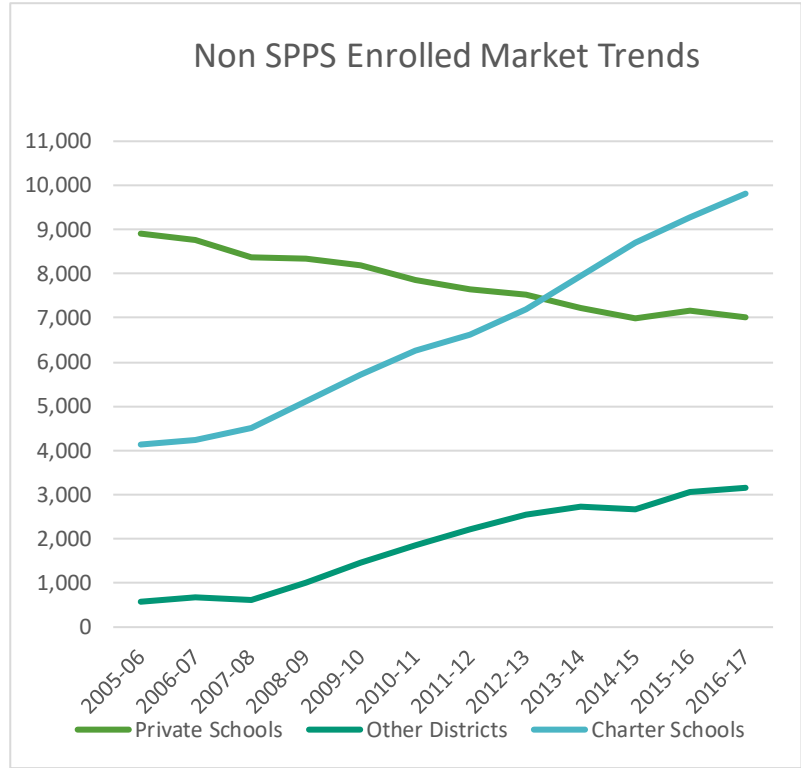
education, health, social studies) part of their budget balancing strategies. Some families have been negatively impacted by the regionalization of the district because the promise of a strong and equitable K-12 pathway has yet to be delivered to all students in all parts of the City. Finally, there were several district initiatives designed to improve equity, achievement and efficiencies which have yet to achieve their desired outcomes. These initiatives received significant negative publicity and may have had an impact on accelerating the numbers of families who have chosen to invest in education elsewhere. Regardless of the impact of internal decisions on enrollment decline, Saint Paul's situation is similar to most urban districts across the country facing increasing competition.

There were positive developments in the district during this time as well. The iPad initiative, while it had a rocky start, has proven to be successful and satisfying. The district's investment in the important work on racial and gender equity has helped create much more awareness and inclusiveness within the district even if the effects on achievement have yet to bear fruit. The district has also made important strides in work to create a more positive school climate including piloting responsive classroom and other positive behavior interventions. Saint Paul's teachers continue to be recognized for their excellence. The district conducted a highly inclusive community outreach strategy in the recruitment of its new Superintendent (which went a long way in restoring public trust). And, the Saint Paul community continues to be highly supportive of public education and engaged in the district and its schools.

The good news is that there is not strong evidence to suggest that the most recent enrollment decline was anything more than a "bubble". The district therefore has the opportunity to reverse the enrollment decline if it continues to take positive action, as it has in the past year, to correct some of the unintended consequences of previous initiatives. By proactively listening and responding to parents in Saint Paul, SPPS has the needed resources and can build upon its strengths to become a stronger, more stable, and sought-after public school district.

Current market share

SPPS' current market share is 62%. For perspective, the district's historic high of 80% was achieved just prior to the introduction of open enrollment and charter schools. As you can see from the chart, the remaining non-captured share (currently 38%) composition has changed over time. There are fewer private school enrollees. Now many more families are choosing charters, who have grown both in number and enrollment significantly over the past decade.



IV. The Saint Paul Educational Marketplace

The following study of the Saint Paul Educational Marketplace looks first at relevant demographic information about Saint Paul parents and youth, summarizes key findings from existing research about parents' (and students') educational expectations and desires, and reviews SPPS competitors and market share.

Demographics

Adult Educational Attainment – Saint Paul above average in number of highly educated adults

It has been a long-established finding in sociological studies that educational attainment of the parent (the mother in particular) is a strong predictor of educational achievement of the child ([Davis-Kean, 2005](#); Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2002; [Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994](#); [Haveman & Wolfe, 1995](#); [Nagin & Tremblay, 2001](#); [Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997](#)). A look at the educational attainment of Saint Paul's adult population should help the district understand both the educational expectations and goals Saint Paul parents have for their children.

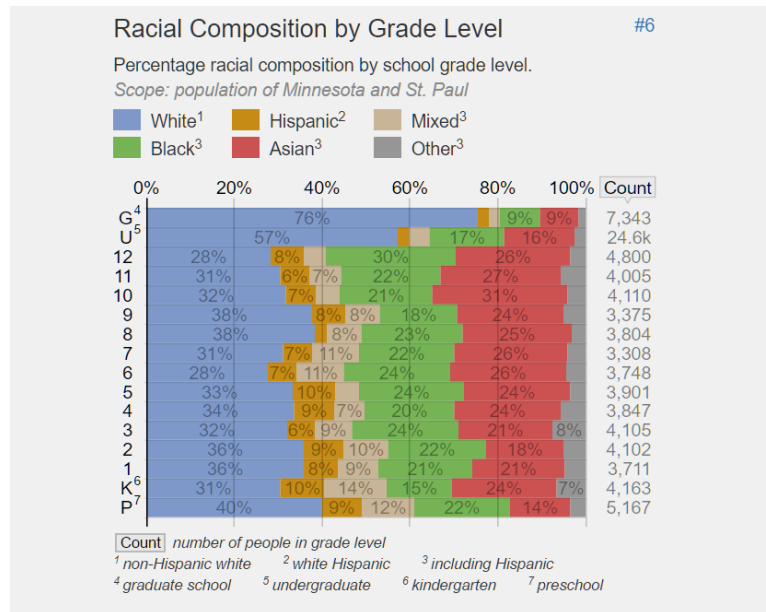
What follows are facts based on US Census data available via [statisticalatlas.com](https://www.statisticalatlas.com). While these data describe all Saint Paul resident adults, including those who do not have school-aged children, it can serve as a reasonable proxy for educational attainment of SPPS's parent population. Saint Paul's residents are more highly educated than the majority of highly-populated areas in the U.S. It should follow then that the achievement of our students in SPPS is high. Unless, of course, as a whole, more highly educated parents are not sending their children to SPPS.

- When compared with the 50 most populous places in the U.S., St Paul ranks 13th in the percent (38.3%) of the 25+ population with at least a bachelor's degree.
- Versus this same cohort, St Paul ranks 11th in the percent (5.6%) of the 25+ population with a doctorate or professional degree. (e.g. MBA, MD, PHD)
- Mac-Groveland is the neighborhood with the highest percent of population (age 25+) holding at least a Bachelor's degree (71% vs U.S. 29% and MN 33%)
- Minnesota's population mirrors the U.S. population in terms of the percentage holding a doctorate or professional degree (3.3%). Compare this with St Paul at 5.8% and even more strikingly with the 10%-17% living in western side of Saint Paul: Summit Hill, Saint Anthony Park, Mac-Groveland, Merriam Park & Highland.
- There is a significant educational attainment difference between white and non-white adults in Saint Paul. Saint Paul Caucasian adults are significantly more highly educated than Caucasian adults in Minnesota. Conversely, African American, Hispanic and Asian adults have lower educational attainment in Saint Paul as compared to the state as a whole. However, it should be noted that the census

historically has underrepresented urban minority and immigrant populations. Nevertheless, from a sociological perspective, a significant racial achievement gap would be expected therefore between Saint Paul youth. Saint Paul has thus far been unsuccessful in closing this gap. Clearly, changing this dynamic requires sustained effort and resources over time.

Racially Diverse Youth

Although the City of Saint Paul as a whole is very diverse racially, the district’s youth population is even more diverse.



Source: [Statisticalatlas.com](http://statisticalatlas.com) - Educational Attainment in Saint Paul, MN

The chart below is not meant to be used for comparison purposes as they are separate data sources with different methodologies. It is common knowledge that the census underreports minorities in urban areas. It is interesting to note the youth population by race represented in each however.

	White	Hispanic	Mixed	Black	Asian	Other
Total Saint Paul K-12 by race (census)*	50979	16678	3826	7592	11295	12515
Total Saint Paul K-12 % by race (census)*	50979	33%	8%	15%	22%	25%
Total District K-12 by race	36853	8273	5265*	11282	12034	
Total District K-12 % by race	37605	22%	14%	30%	32%	

*<http://statisticalatlas.com/place/Minnesota/St-Paul/Race-and-Ethnicity>
 SPPS Data Center

About half of Saint Paul's white, school-aged (K-12) children are not enrolled in SPPS. The number of Hmong Saint Paul children enrolling in SPPS has declined sharply over the past decade (charter schools). New Karen immigrants have masked (back-filled) the exodus as they are counted in the Asian category. Similarly, newer East African immigrants are included in the Black category which makes it difficult to see trends between different racial and ethnic groups. There are now popular charter schools that have attracted many East African students. It appears that populations in Saint Paul, across all measured demographic groups, are increasingly choosing and creating alternative educational options to SPPS.

In order to increase enrollment, the district must focus on both retaining families currently enrolled in its schools AND attract the 38% of the educational market that is currently NOT choosing SPPS schools as well as students from outside Saint Paul.

Winning the 38% student market not attending SPPS: Who are they and what are they choosing?

We do not have direct data to describe this group but we can infer their characteristics by comparing the citywide school population to the SPPS school population. Also, we can infer what non-attendees are interested in by examining the schools these families are choosing (SPPS competitors). Based on enrollment and census data the non-SPPS market share appears to be:

- The distribution by race among non-attendees likely varies by type of schools selected. For example, students attending private schools are mostly Caucasian. There is much greater racial representation among those choosing charter schools with the largest participating groups being more recent immigrant groups including Hmong and Somali/East African. There is also a sizeable White population attending charters. The racial composition of out-of-district enrollees into surrounding districts is unknown. It is assumed that this group is dominated by White students, though there may be regional differences. In summary, among non-attendees there is a higher concentration of White, and a growing number of Immigrant students than the SPPS population.

“Compared with U.S.-born parents, immigrant parents have higher expectations for their children’s educational attainment. Among immigrant parents, 72 percent of those with native-born children, and 73 percent of those with foreign-born children, expect their child to earn a bachelor’s degree or higher. Among native-born parents with native-born children, the comparable figure is 61 percent.” - Child Trends Data Bank, “Parental Expectations for Their Children’s Academic Attainment”, Oct. 2015

- The non-SPPS attending group is, on average, likely higher income than the SPPS population as a whole. SPPS is considerably lower income than the City as a whole and Saint Paul children as a whole. 70% of SPPS students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Parental expectations for their child’s college attendance increase substantially in higher income levels. (See chart below.)
- Similar to income level, non-attender parents are likely highly educated although we do not have educational attainment for SPPS parents. Due to the overall high educational attainment among St. Paul adults in general, it is likely that many SPPS parents are highly educated. It is likely the non-SPPS attending parents are, on average, at least as highly educated. National research indicates that the educational attainment of the parent establishes expectations for the educational attainment of the child. College educated parents are approximately 6 times more likely to expect that their child will attend and graduate from college than parents with a high school education or less.

Appendix 1 - Percentage Distribution of Parental Expectations of Academic Attainment for Children in Grades 6 through 12: Selected Years, 2003-2012

	High School or Less			Some Postsecondary Education ¹			Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
	2003	2007	2012	2003	2007	2012	2003	2007	2012
Total	9.1	8.8	10.1	25.5	21.5	25.7	65.4	69.7	64.2
Gender									
Male	11.5	11.0	12.7	26.7	23.2	28.0	61.8	65.8	59.3
Female	6.6	6.5	7.4	24.3	19.7	23.3	69.2	73.8	69.3
Race/Ethnicity									
Non-Hispanic white	8.1	6.8	9.6	25.8	21.0	27.1	66.1	72.2	63.4
Non-Hispanic black	10.5	13.2	14.3	25.8	24.4	28.1	63.7	62.4	57.5
Hispanic	11.2	10.7	9.3	24.8	22.8	24.5	64.1	66.5	66.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.4	4.8	5.1	16.0	5.8	11.1	79.6	89.4	83.7
Current Grade Level									
Sixth through eighth grade	8.8	8.5	8.3	23.0	19.0	24.5	68.2	72.5	67.2
Ninth or tenth grade	11.0	10.3	11.7	26.9	20.8	26.6	62.2	68.9	61.7
Eleventh or twelfth grade	7.5	7.8	11.4	28.2	26.0	26.8	64.3	66.2	61.8
Household Income									
\$25,000 or less ²	17.2	19.3	18.9	31.9	30.8	33.2	50.9	49.9	47.9
\$25,001 to \$50,000 ²	11.0	11.8	11.2	33.0	28.4	31.9	56.0	59.8	56.9
\$50,001 to \$75,000	5.2	6.2	7.3	25.1	23.9	29.5	69.8	70.7	63.3
More than \$75,000	3.6	2.2	5.9	13.7	11.2	17.2	82.7	86.5	77.0

Source: Child Trends Data Bank, "Parental Expectations for Their Children's Academic Attainment", Oct. 2015
<https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/parental-expectations-for-their-childrens-academic-attainment/>

- Based on a review of the major competing schools that non-SPPS groups are choosing, (the largest charters, privates, and surrounding district schools that attract large numbers of Saint Paul kids... see Section V. Competition), ***the majority of non-SPPS Saint Paul families seem to be drawn to schools promoting:***
 - ***high academic achievement***
 - ***rigorous, college preparatory and well-rounded curriculum***
 - ***options for enriching electives and activities***
 - ***a safe, calm learning environment.***

(Whether or not these schools are delivering on these promises is another question.)

According to research on parents' desired school characteristics in Saint Paul and elsewhere, these features are highly desired by most families, therefore, SPPS's pattern of loss and non-enrollment may have more to do with the ability to exercise choice, which may be tied more to economic status (income, stability) and/or knowledge of, and access to, other options than any other factor such as a desire to participate in a socio-economically homogeneous (affinity based/non-diverse) environment. These trends also mirror what is happening in urban districts nationally.

Take away: It is likely that, on average, the non-SPPS parent population is: higher income than the SPPS parent population, has high education levels, and dominated by White and Immigrant groups although all groups are represented. Based on national research, high parental income, high educational attainment, and immigrant status strongly align with a strong parental expectation for high educational attainment for their children. It follows then that parents with college-level expectations for their children will be seeking educational settings (schools and enrichment programs) that will best prepare their child academically to do well in accelerated courses in middle and high school which, in turn, help students gain admissions in the competitive college application process, and succeed in college once enrolled. As we can see, the academic environments where the majority of non-SPPS families are enrolled reflects this as these competitors tend to emphasize college preparatory, accelerated, rigorous academics and other offerings favorable to college admissions and success. Therefore, it may be safe to assume that strengthening and expanding these offerings in secondary schools, and fortifying elementary programs that prepare for success in accelerated courses in secondary schools, would help to attract more of the non-SPPS enrolled families to the district.

What Do All Saint Paul Parents Want (not just SPPS Parents)?

For the purposes of this study, existing K12 market research studies from national, regional and SPPS were identified with consistent themes emerging. In SPPS, as elsewhere, parents want similar things. (See summary of research findings in appendix.)

SPPS offers some of what parents want, but not enough, and not consistently in every building. This really boils down to each school and each classroom within each school. As a parent commented, “The district could be crashing all around me, but, so long as my school is good and my child is growing and happy, I am satisfied and won’t be looking anywhere else.”

There are two baseline school characteristics that are desired universally by all parents: their child’s individual potential is realized, and their child is in a safe and orderly environment. These two characteristics are outlined below:

1) Parents want their child to reach their individual potential.

- Student’s abilities recognized and developed into talents via APPROPRIATE CHALLENGE for that child
- CHILD ASSISTED when they experience challenges or struggles
- Expressed desires: strong academics, quality teaching, small class sizes... all this is about SEEING and HONORING EACH CHILD

- WHOLE CHILD developed and provided opportunities to explore interests, are supported socially and emotionally, and have access to quality enrichment

Parents understand that each individual has unique abilities and interests, strengths, aptitudes, and areas of struggle and challenge. Parents desire that teachers work with their child, wherever they are, to help bring out the best in their child and address their challenges. Parents also want their children to enjoy school and for the school experience to foster a love of learning. As one parent reported, “I want my daughter to achieve academically, but I also want her to be whistling in the morning as she’s getting ready for school.”

The data SPPS has collected from parents over the past few years indicates that many of the families who left SPPS did so because they didn’t feel the district was meeting the individual needs of their child, or they lacked confidence that the district would.

2) Parent’s want safe and orderly learning environment.

- Commitment to schools free of chronic bullying and harassment and a plan for continuous improvement
- Schools and classrooms are places of respect and learning; disruptive behavior must be minimal
- Clear and consistent policies and enforcement
- Teachers and Building Administrators who take the matter seriously as demonstrated by measurement that documents responsiveness and accountability

SPPS data indicates there is distrust among many stakeholders that district schools are reliably safe. In the past few years there have been highly publicized altercations in district schools. The Minnesota Student Survey indicates that SPPS schools are, on average, similar in reported frequency of bullying or harassing behavior as the Statewide averages. Nevertheless, due to the high level of media scrutiny SPPS receives as a large, urban district, it is imperative that SPPS reassure families in both word and deed that safety and continuous school climate improvement is a paramount concern to the district. Parents also want to know that classrooms will be mostly free of disruptive behavior so the focus remains on learning and building positive community.

Desired School Characteristics and Trade-offs:

Parents value and would like ALL elements to be available to their child: high quality teachers, safety, transportation, appropriately challenging courses, arts, athletics, etc. Where *everything* they want is not available, parents are willing to make trade-offs for characteristics that have a higher priority for them at a given time (see below). Parents will move, change districts, go to charters, homeschool, etc. to get what they deem most important if it is not available to them locally and if they are able to do so.

In addition to the universal primary desires parents look for in choosing schools (individual academic growth and safety), what else does research show about the relative importance of other school characteristics when parents are choosing schools (both private and public)? The following list is an estimate based on studies that were reviewed for this project, both nationally, regionally, and in Saint Paul (see appendix of summary of studies referenced). The findings in all of the research is consistent. *All of these factors are important* to families when picking schools. However, in many cases, after critical factors are met, *each parent then evaluates options based on their own list of most important factors and make compromises, or trade-offs, to find a best fit for their child.* This list is meant as a guide of “relative” importance. It is recommended that SPPS conducts research such as this on Saint Paul parents of school aged children to confirm what is most important to its market. This data would be highly beneficial in shaping a district portfolio of schools that reflects the desires of its “customers” - families and students.

Relative ranking of characteristics in school choice

CRITICAL: These are fundamental characteristics for nearly all parents actively engaged in school choice.

- Safe and orderly environment
- Rigorous, well-rounded academics (meeting K-12 academic standards) that includes **core** (tested) **and non-core** (arts, music, social studies, physical education, health) subjects
- Strong STEM
- Strong education in life skills
- Extremely high academic standards (well beyond minimum proficiency)
- Programs for advanced students/gifted programs
- High standards for student behavior
- Technology used as a learning tool
- Emphasizes character development, ethics and/or morality
- Hands-on, project-based learning

“Parents reject the current narrowing of the curriculum, and say it is important to continue offering courses in subjects such as art, music, and physical education. Only 18% agree that schools should focus more on math and reading and spend less time on subjects that are less important for success in college, while 74% favor a more balanced curriculum. Similarly, parents say by a 19-point margin that “schools should focus on teaching the whole child, including their emotional and social development,” rather than “schools should focus more on teaching basic academics, like math, science, and reading.” -National Survey of Public School Parents conducted by the AFT, Hart Research Associates, 2013

VERY IMPORTANT

- Groups students by ability levels/skill attainment for instruction
- Offers vocational classes or job-related programs
- Offers programs for struggling or special needs students
- Traditional, teacher-led approach to learning
- Teacher supported, technology enabled personalized learning allowing more self-pacing and self-direction
- Offers many electives, especially at the secondary level
- Offers a variety of extra-curricular activities other than sports
- Academic competition as much as collaboration
- Emphasized citizenship
- Parental involvement
- Low student to teacher/instructional staff ratio

IMPORTANT

- High test scores
- Test prep
- Diverse student body
- Strong music and arts programs
- Compatibility w personal beliefs
- Addressing students’ social, emotional, economic, and health needs

SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT

- Free transportation* (estimate of importance... given that most private, out-of-district, many charter attendees, and many families within SPPS already provide their own transportation indicates that many are willing to make this trade-off)
- Small environment
- Close to home
- After-school care/programs
- Strong athletics
- Updated buildings
- Longer day/year
- Little homework

What is especially important to note here is that *all of these factors come up as very important* when you poll parents without requiring them to rank relative importance. When you ask parents to prioritize what is important to them, you find that nearly all parents prefer the same basic characteristics above all others (as previously mentioned). But after the basic requirements are met, parents have differences in what matters most, weigh factors, and make trade-offs based on their own personal values as well as what would be the best fit for their child. For example, even though many parents deeply value diversity in their schools, they seem willing to trade-off that characteristic for ones they feel are more critical to the success of their child.

Given this perspective, it is important SPPS does not attribute the recent exodus of families to affinity based (racially very homogeneous) charters as an indicator that parents dislike racial diversity and were attracted to non-diverse schools because they wish to isolate themselves racially and/or culturally. It seems just as likely that parents chose these schools for other qualities and characteristics that appealed to them (most likely strong academics and safe/calm learning environment), and they learned about these other schools through their social networks (which tend to be not very diverse among most of the population). Perhaps then, the lack of diversity in the student body was a trade-off parents were willing to make in order to access characteristics they feel are more critical to their child's success. Further study of groups and their preferences would shed more light on what's driving parent's school choice behaviors.

Parent's enrollment patterns are also important to inform SPPS communications strategy. Though the values of equity and diversity are important to many Saint Paul families, diversity of the student population in schools has not been a strong deciding factor for many families. Even as the district remains committed to promoting diversity, racial equity and closing the achievement gap as central tenets of its institutional vision, making these the centerpiece of the district's communications and public relations campaigns will likely not have a strong impact on enrollment. Parents are more likely to prioritize a safe environment, a welcoming staff, and evidence that their child's academic growth will be accommodated.

Market Segments:

Although all parents across all demographic and market segments are quite similar in the characteristics they deem most important, there are some variations on preferences once the core characteristics are met.

The following market segments have been defined as part of a national research project sponsored by the Fordham Institute in their 2013 national study of K-12 parents, “*What Parents Want: Education Preferences and Trade-Offs*.” As discussed above, although all parents across all demographics and market segments are quite similar in the characteristics they deem most important, there are some variations on preferences once the core characteristics are met. What is interesting about this study is that it helps districts better understand, in a system where not everything is possible everywhere at all times, what parents are willing to trade-off. For example, everyone rates small class sizes as important, but in a trade-off situation, they may say that while small class sizes are important having one or two more students in their child’s class may be worthwhile if it also means they get to have a music teacher (which is exactly what’s happened here in SPSS with the hard class size caps).

Here’s a breakdown of national market segment by type from the study. Seeing how Saint Paul parents, and its current offerings map to these segments would be invaluable to the district.

Pragmatists (36 percent of K–12 parents) assign high value to schools that, “offer vocational classes or job-related programs.” Compared to the total parent population, Pragmatists have lower household incomes, are less likely themselves to have graduated from college, and are more likely to be parents of boys.

Jeffersonian (24 percent) prefer a school that “emphasizes instruction in citizenship, democracy, and leadership,” although they are no more likely than other parents to be active in their communities or schools.

Test-Score Hawks (23 percent) look for a school that “has high test scores.” Such parents are more likely to have academically gifted children who put more effort into school. They are also more likely to set high expectations for their children, push them to excel, and expect them to earn graduate degrees. Test-Score Hawks are also more apt to report that their child has changed schools because, as parents, they were dissatisfied with the school or its teachers.

Multiculturalists (22 percent) laud the student goal: “learns how to work with people from diverse backgrounds.” They are more likely to be African American, to self-identify as liberal, and to live in an urban area.

Expressionists (15 percent) want a school that “emphasizes arts and music instruction.” They are more likely to be parents of girls and to identify as liberal; they are less likely to be Christian. (In fact, they are three times more likely to self-identify as atheists.)

Strivers (12 percent) assign importance to their child being “accepted at a top-tier college.” Strivers are far more likely to be African American and Hispanic. They are also more apt to be Catholic. But they do not differ from the total population in terms of their own educational attainment.

What is missing from this list and wasn’t obtained in the questionnaire?

Generalists: parents who value a well-rounded education based in the liberal arts and sciences, college-prep and which is highly comprehensive and inclusive of music and arts education. Would likely be a combination of Jeffersonians, Test Hawks and Expressionists and perhaps Strivers too.

Other questions it would be helpful to ask in a “ranked preferences” survey include:

- *Strong arts and music program/offerings* (like what people associate with Capitol Hill and Central High School) and which might yield different results from a program *emphasizing arts and music* (which would be like a conservatory.))
- Transportation provided
- Start time
- Year-round school
- Particular specialized curricula: language immersion, Montessori, IB, AP, etc.
- Smaller Class Size
- Low student to instructional staff (teacher) ratio
- Excellent quality lunches
- Distinction between STEM tracks... two types... more vocationally-oriented or more college-bound/theoretically oriented.

Understanding what SPPS is offering now (Supply) and where the district needs more, better, or different:

SPPS has a strong tradition of offering both traditional programs as well as specialized magnet programs. SPPS does not, however, have a system to track specifics about what it offers where at a given time. It takes a great deal of effort and searching to pull together this kind of detailed information. The school choice catalogue only offers limited information. School websites are inconsistent and key information about what is available in the school is often missing. Both internal staff at the district, as well as families need visibility to what is happening in schools that is clear, consistently formatted across all schools, and up-to-date. And, this data needs to be available in convenient and multiple formats; in person, in print and online.

Upon this study's initial feasibility review, it appears that SPPS may be able to leverage the district's existing data systems (e.g. Infinite Campus) which are currently used to store information about all the courses offered in each school. This database could be used to create a comprehensive information system that could track activities and extracurricular offerings and participation by secondary site. There is work underway now by district staff to track instruction by subject in all elementary schools. (This work was initiated by a small group of SPPS parents who wish to ensure equitable access to a well-rounded curriculum for all students in Saint Paul.) This data could also be feed into a data system.

Although it will require an upfront investment to develop and integrate into the district's site operations, developing such a data system in a large, complex and ever-changing district is essential to growing intelligently. By developing a robust "supply side" data tracking system SPPS will be able to:

- Monitor interest (demand) and guide programming decisions. (i.e. allow school shoppers to filter and search programs by wide variety of criteria that matter to them.)
- Use web analytics to monitor search behavior as an indicator of what people want (demand).
- Track and report demand (via web search analytics, registration for courses/activities, etc.) and feed into decision-making on program participation expansion and contraction.
- Help schools and administrators track what is happening and participation in their building. This information can then be used to improve the district's "product quality".
- Improve access to information for families and the public such as providing a school search option where families can select features and offerings they are interested in

for their child when shopping for schools. For example, a parent could create filters to search for schools with transportation provided, intermediate Spanish, volleyball, honors English, AVID, robotics and orchestra.

In addition, by better understanding the details of what is offered at each school, SPPS could use this information to measure against how its schools currently attract market segments. This will help SPPS to further refine, enhance and expand its schools and create a school “product portfolio” to meet untapped demand not only among Saint Paul’s population, but in the region as a whole.

Understanding where SPPS has room to grow and where more capacity is needed

Schools with Excess Capacity								
School / Building	Grades Served (K-5, K-8, 6-12, 9-12)	Area	Historic High Enrollment	Target Capacity	Maximum Capacity	2016-17 Current Enrollment	Calc Space Available (Targ - Cur)	Occupied % (Cur/Max)
Obama	PreK-5	F1	1122	963	1026	329	634	32%
Galtier Elementary	PreK-5	E	341	469	500	170	299	34%
Maxfield Elementary	PreK-5	F1	529	593	631	250	343	40%
Highwood Hills Elementary	PreK-5	B	578	642	684	300	342	44%
Dayton's Bluff Elementary	PreK-5	B	572	543	579	300	243	52%
Riverview Elementary	K-5	D	342	730	730	383	347	52%
Eastern Heights Elementary	PreK-5	B	598	494	526	330	164	63%
Mississippi Elementary	K-5	C	656	755	808	518	237	64%
Jackson Elementary	PreK-5	F1	547	519	552	361	158	65%
Bruce F. Vento Elementary	PreK-5	C	908	766	816	539	227	66%
American Indian Magnet	PreK-8	B	756	829	882	595	234	67%
Wellstone (@ Washington)	PreK-5	E	783	741	789	550	191	70%
Phalen Lake Elementary	PreK-5	A	839	914	973	700	214	72%
J.J. Hill Elementary	PreK-5	F1	555	505	554	400	105	72%
Four Seasons (@ Longfellow)	PreK-5	F1	538	618	658	479	139	73%
LNFI- French Immersion	K-5	DM		732	732	534	198	73%
Creative Arts	6-12	DM		600	600	440	160	73%
Saint Paul Music Academy	PreK-5	C	941	766	816	620	146	76%
The Heights Elementary (Hayden Heights)	PreK-5	A	676	618	658	508	110	77%
Chelsea Heights Elementary	K-5	E	761	604	646	500	104	77%
Groveland Park Elementary	K-5	F1	560	529	565	440	89	78%
John A Johnson Elementary	PreK-5	C	383	445	474	370	75	78%
Farnsworth Upper	6-8	C	638	707	782	623	84	80%
Johnson High School	9-12	A	1601	1451	1608	1285	166	80%
Murray Junior High	6-8	E	806	788	869	698	90	80%
Farnsworth Lower	PreK-5	C	581	543	579	470	73	81%
Central High School.	9-12	F1	2167	1987	2181	1783	204	82%
Como Park High School.	9-12	E	1614	1436	1577	1295	141	82%
Harding High School.	9-12	B	2162	1918	2106	1768	150	84%
Nokomis Elementary	PreK-5	A	525	798	798	720	78	90%
Open World Learning (Humboldt Middle)		D		470	470	430	40	91%
Cherokee Heights Elementary	PreK-5	D	560	543	579	543	0	94%
Hazel Park Prep	PreK-8	A	960	690	755	750	-60	99%
Benjamin Mayes	K-5	RM						#DIV/0!

More information needed Enrollment:Capacity too low Enrollment:Capacity at risk Enrollment:Capacity is good

Schools at Full Capacity								
School / Building	Grades Served (K-5, K-8, 6-12, 9-12)	Area	Historic High Enrollment	Target Capacity	Maximum Capacity	Current	Calc Space (Targ - Cur)	
Capitol Hill	1-8	DM		1271	1350	1271	0	94%
Washington Technology	6-12	C	1912	2129	2300	2129	0	93%
Highland Park High School.	9-12	F2	1416	1196	1323	1196	0	90%
Highland Park Junior High	6-8	F2	832	837	968	837	0	86%
St. Anthony Park Elementary	K-5	E	674	579	619	579	0	94%
Crossroads Elementary	PreK-5	E		716	763	760	-44	100%
EXPO Elementary	PreK-5	F1	782	716	763	675	41	88%
Humboldt High School.	6-12	D	1030	1235	1350	1235	0	91%
Highland Park Elementary	K-5	F2	383	378	404	378	0	94%
Adams Elementary	K-5	F2	728	680	727	680	0	94%
Mann Elementary	K-5	F2	403	378	404	378	0	94%
Randolph Heights Elementary	PreK-5	F1	500	420	447	437	-17	98%
Battle Creek Elementary	K-5	B	583	579	619	579	0	94%
Como Park Elementary	PreK-5	E	884	790	842	790	0	94%
Linwood Elementary	K-3	F1	363	341	364	341	0	94%
Linwood Monroe Upper	PreK, 4-8	F1	817	632	664	632	0	95%
Battle Creek Middle	6-8	B	1154	854	968	736	118	76%
Parkway	6-8	A	793	484	543	528	-44	97%
Ramsey Junior High	6-8	F1	805	679	749	679	0	91%
Jei Ming Chinese Immersion	K-5	DM				205	205	#DIV/0!
Hamline Elementary	K-5	E	604	705	754	705	0	94%
Frost Lake Elementary	K-5	A	613	705	754	705	0	94%

More information needed Enrollment:Capacity too low Enrollment:Capacity at risk Enrollment:Capacity is good

Capacity by Area

School / Building	Grades Served (K-5, K-8, 6-12, 9-12)	Area	Historic High Enrollment	Maximum Capacity	2016-17 Current Enrollment	Calc Space Available (Targ - Cur)	Occupied % (Cur/Max)
Frost Lake Elementary	K-5	A	613	754	705	0	94%
Hazel Park Prep	PreK-8	A	960	755	750	-60	99%
Johnson High School	9-12	A	1601	1608	1285	166	80%
Nokomis Elementary	PreK-5	A	525	798	720	78	90%
Parkway	6-8	A	793	543	528	-44	97%
Phalen Lake Elementary	PreK-5	A	839	973	700	214	72%
The Heights Elementary (Hayden Heights)	PreK-5	A	676	658	508	110	77%
Battle Creek Elementary	K-5	B	583	619	579	0	94%
Battle Creek Middle	6-8	B	1154	968	736	118	76%
Dayton's Bluff Elementary	PreK-5	B	572	579	300	243	52%
Eastern Heights Elementary	PreK-5	B	598	526	330	164	63%
Harding High School.	9-12	B	2162	2106	1768	150	84%
Highwood Hills Elementary	PreK-5	B	578	684	300	342	44%
Bruce F. Vento Elementary	PreK-5	C	908	816	539	227	66%
John A Johnson Elementary	PreK-5	C	383	474	370	75	78%
Mississippi Elementary	K-5	C	656	808	518	237	64%
Saint Paul Music Academy	PreK-5	C	941	816	620	146	76%
Washington Technology	6-12	C	1912	2300	2129	0	93%
Cherokee Heights Elementary	PreK-5	D	560	579	543	0	94%
Humboldt High School.	6-12	D	1030	1350	1235	0	91%
Open World Learning (Humboldt Middle)		D		470	430	40	91%
Riverview Elementary	K-5	D	342	730	383	347	52%
Chelsea Heights Elementary	K-5	E	761	646	500	104	77%
Como Park Elementary	PreK-5	E	884	842	790	0	94%
Como Park High School.	9-12	E	1614	1577	1295	141	82%
Galtier Elementary	PreK-5	E	341	500	170	299	34%
Hamline Elementary	K-5	E	604	754	705	0	94%
Murray Junior High	6-8	E	806	869	698	90	80%
St. Anthony Park Elementary	K-5	E	674	619	579	0	94%
Benjamin Mayes	K-5	F1					#DIV/0!
Central High School.	9-12	F1	2167	2181	1783	204	82%
EXPO Elementary	PreK-5	F1	782	763	675	41	88%
Groveland Park Elementary	K-5	F1	560	565	440	89	78%
J.J. Hill Elementary	PreK-5	F1	555	554	400	105	72%
Jackson Elementary	PreK-5	F1	547	552	361	158	65%
Linwood Elementary	K-3	F1	363	364	341	0	94%
Linwood Monroe Upper	PreK, 4-8	F1	817	664	632	0	95%
Maxfield Elementary	PreK-5	F1	529	631	250	343	40%
Ramsey Junior High	6-8	F1	805	749	679	0	91%
Randolph Heights Elementary	PreK-5	F1	500	447	437	-17	98%
Highland Park Elementary	K-5	F2	383	404	378	0	94%
Highland Park High School.	9-12	F2	1416	1323	1196	0	90%
Highland Park Junior High	6-8	F2	832	968	837	0	86%
Mann Elementary	K-5	F2	403	404	378	0	94%

District Magnets Capacity by area	Grades	Regions	Historic High Enrollment	Maximum Capacity	2016-17 Current Enrollment	Calc Space Available (Targ - Cur)	Occupied % (Cur/Max)
LNFI- French Immersion	K-5	A		732	534	198	73%
American Indian Magnet	PreK-8	B	756	882	595	234	67%
Creative Arts	6-12	C		600	440	160	73%
Farnsworth Lower	PreK-5	C	581	579	470	73	81%
Farnsworth Upper	6-8	C	638	782	623	84	80%
Crossroads Elementary	PreK-5	E		763	760	-44	100%
Jei Ming Chinese Immersion	K-5	E			205	205	#DIV/0!
Wellstone (@ Washington)	PreK-5	E	783	789	550	191	70%
Capitol Hill	1-8	F1		1350	1271	0	94%
Four Seasons (@ Longfellow)	PreK-5	F1	538	658	479	139	73%
Obama	PreK-5	F1	1122	1026	329	634	32%
Adams Elementary	K-5	F2	728	727	680	0	94%

More information needed Enrollment:Capacity too low Enrollment:Capacity at risk Enrollment:Capacity is good

V. Competition

Where are Saint Paul families going to get what they want?

A review of FY16 enrollment data sourced from SPPS's Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, provides insight into where Saint Paul resident students attend school.

SPPS Still Educates the Majority of Saint Paul Students

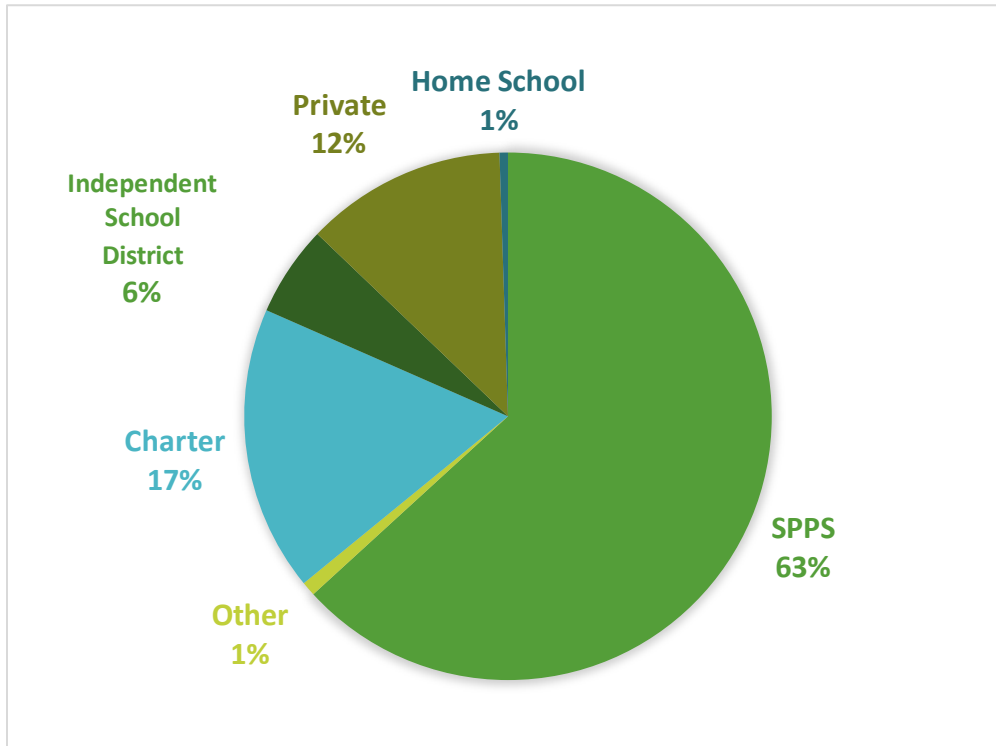
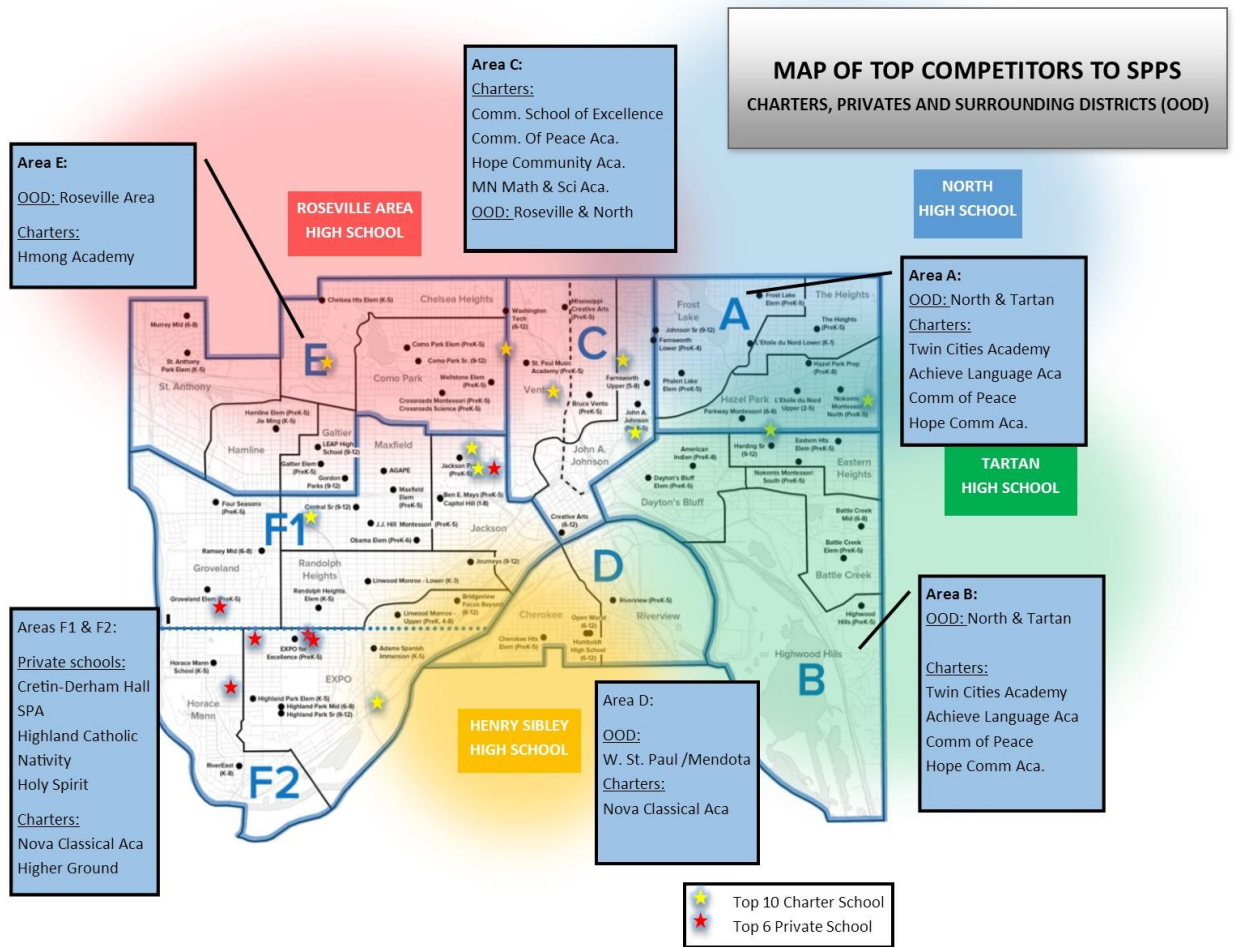


Figure: Saint Paul resident student distribution by school type



In FY16, approximately 56,000 K-12 students lived in Saint Paul. While a full 63% of these students attended SPPS, the district’s greatest enrollment challenge came from the charter school segment, which accounted for the biggest share of non-SPPS students at 17%.

Despite being tuition-funded, private schools accounted for the third largest share of the Saint Paul resident student market (12%). While the private school market in Saint Paul has decreased significantly since the introduction of charters, it seems reasonable to assume there is a segment of Saint Paul parents who consider a private school – in particular a private Catholic school – as the only appropriate option for their kids.

Neighboring Independent School Districts, such as West Saint Paul, were attended via open enrollment by 6% of Saint Paul resident students, making that segment the third largest tax-funded option in the City’s educational market.

While a large, densely populated area such as Saint Paul is a desirable market for charter schools and an easy target for neighboring districts that sit a short walk or car ride from big swaths of Saint Paul’s residents, SPPS’s dominance of the Saint Paul market hints at a

significant psychological advantage public school districts have right now, that will likely not exist in another 20 years – that is that most contemporary parents of school-aged kids were educated in a public school. Being a known entity versus an unknown entity such as a charter, the local public school district is not only the default first choice for many parents, but perhaps the only choice they feel they fully understand. That psychological “switching cost” will likely disappear as the market morphs into one in which more and more parents have been either fully or partially educated in a charter school.

Charter Schools – A Few Big Players, but Otherwise Highly Fragmented; Hmong-focused Most Popular

In FY16, charter schools accounted for 17% of the Saint Paul resident K-12 student market. This equated to 9,800 students attending 50 different charter schools. Most of these students are concentrated in just 10 charter schools. These top 10 charters attracted 5,800 Saint Paul pupils, or 60% of the Saint Paul resident students attending charters. The remaining of the St Paul charter students were highly fragmented across 40 different schools.

The table below lists these top 10 charters and the number of Saint Paul resident students enrolled in FY16. It also highlights each school’s programmatic focus based on profiles with the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and the schools’ own websites. Finally, the table provides student demographic information by school.

School	St Paul Enrollment	Programmatic Focus	Demographics
Hmong College Prep Academy	1,049	College Prep	99% Asian (Hmong)
Community of Excellence	864	Hmong language & Culture; International Baccalaureate	99% Asian (Hmong)
Community of Peace Academy	704	Whole-person education	90% non-White; 45% Asian
Nova Classical Academy	561	Classical Education	76% White
HOPE Community Academy	487	Hmong Language & Culture, technology, academic rigor	93% Asian (Hmong)
Higher Ground Academy	472	Multicultural; College Prep	100% Black/African American (Somali)
Twin Cities Academy	433	Academic rigor; character building	41% White/21% Black/18% Hispanic
Minnesota Math & Science Academy	428	STEM based college prep	91% Black/African American (Somali)
St Paul City School	417	Balanced Literacy; SIOP/Turn Around Protocols, College Readiness	46% Hispanic/29% Asian/22% Black
Achieve Language Academy	394	Language Literacy (Hmong, Spanish & English)	37% Asian (Hmong)/35% Hispanic/13% Black/12% White

In reviewing this table, it is difficult to miss the large number of Asian students (likely Hmong) attending these schools. Of the top 10 schools, four – Hmong College Prep Academy, Community of Excellence, HOPE Community Academy and Achieve Language Academy – are focused on Hmong language and culture. Obviously, to regain market share from charter schools, SPPS would be wise to deeply understand the educational desires of Hmong families and tailor programs and marketing strategies to better meet the needs of, and communicate with, these families.

Following is a list of all charter schools in Saint Paul that enroll more than 200 students. It would be worthwhile for SPPS to consider how the district might offer a competitive alternative for charter schools students and families. It becomes cost effective for the district to operate schools after enrollment reaches approximately 350 students. Examining these programs can provide the district an opportunity to consider these competitors as “pilot sites” for potential new SPPS programs. Determining the qualities charter enrollee families are looking for, what attracted them to these schools, and offering these qualities in SPPS could help attract families looking for something the district is not currently offering.

Charters in St. Paul w 200+ enrollment	Grades	Total Enrollment	Programmatic Focus
Hmong College Prep Academy	K-12	1469	Hmong College Prep Academy's mission is to provide the best integrated, challenging, and well-rounded educational experience to students in grades K-12.
Nova Classical Academy	K-12	946	Classical education
Community School of Excellence	K-8	920	Hmong language & International Baccalaureate
Community of Peace Academy	PreK-12	782	Our desired outcome is to educate the whole person - mind, body and will - for peace, justice, freedom, compassion, wholeness and fullness of life for all.
Higher Ground Academy	K-12	761	Multicultural, college preparatory
Twin Cities Academy	6-12	602	Academic rigor, character building
Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists	9-12	577	Performing arts
Twin Cities German Immersion School	K-8	520	Bilingual education (German & English)
HOPE Community Academy	K-8	511	Provide PreK-8 students a rigorous academic foundation, focusing on mastery of fundamental and higher-order thinking skills that prepare them for life-long learning, while instilling in them the finest Hmong and American values.
Minnesota Math & Science Academy	K-6	469	STEM-based College Preparatory School
St. Paul City School	PreK-5	469	Balanced Literacy; SIOP/Turn Around Protocols, College Readiness
Academia Cesar Chavez	PreK-6	459	Dual Immersion and Dual Language Enrichment Program (Spanish and English)
Achieve Language Academy	PreK-8	457	Language Literacy (Hmong, Spanish & English)
Great River School	1-12	430	Montessori: 1-12; International Baccalaureate: 11-12. We are primarily a Montessori school, so everyone benefits from this philosophical focus. An additional focus for grades 11 & 12 is the IB.
College Prep Elementary	K-6	357	STEM: science, technology, engineering, mathematics
High School for Recording Arts	9-12	318	Music, recording arts, quality academics, college prep, community involvement & service
LIFE Prep	PreK-6	312	Lifeprep is a tuition-free charter school located in Saint Paul, Minnesota on the East Side. We serve children in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.
Urban Academy Charter School	K-6	304	Multicultural, urban-based teaching, learner-centered
Dugsi Academy	K-8	295	East African community, limited English proficiency
Universal Academy	K-8	293	Using multiple curricula and resources with a learning program responsive to individual student needs in order to accelerate the learning of the state standards for all students
Cyber Village Academy	K-12	253	Kindergarten-12th grades blended on-campus/online. Grades 6-12 fully online program also available
Upper Mississippi Academy	6-12	250	Upper Mississippi Academy provides a unique setting for teaching and learning in which students are engaged in learning opportunities that are rigorous, relevant, and relational.
Avalon Charter School	6-12	216	Community Engagement, interdisciplinary seminars, and project-based learning

Catholic Education Most Popular Type of Private School

In FY16, although lagging behind charter schools' share of Saint Paul resident students (17%), tuition-funded private schools accounted for a bigger share of the Saint Paul resident student market (12%) than public schools in neighboring ISDs (6%).

Private school share equated to approximately 7,000 St Paul resident students. As with the charter school segment, the majority of private-enrolled Saint Paul students were highly concentrated in a few schools, with 62% attending just six of the 46 identified private schools.

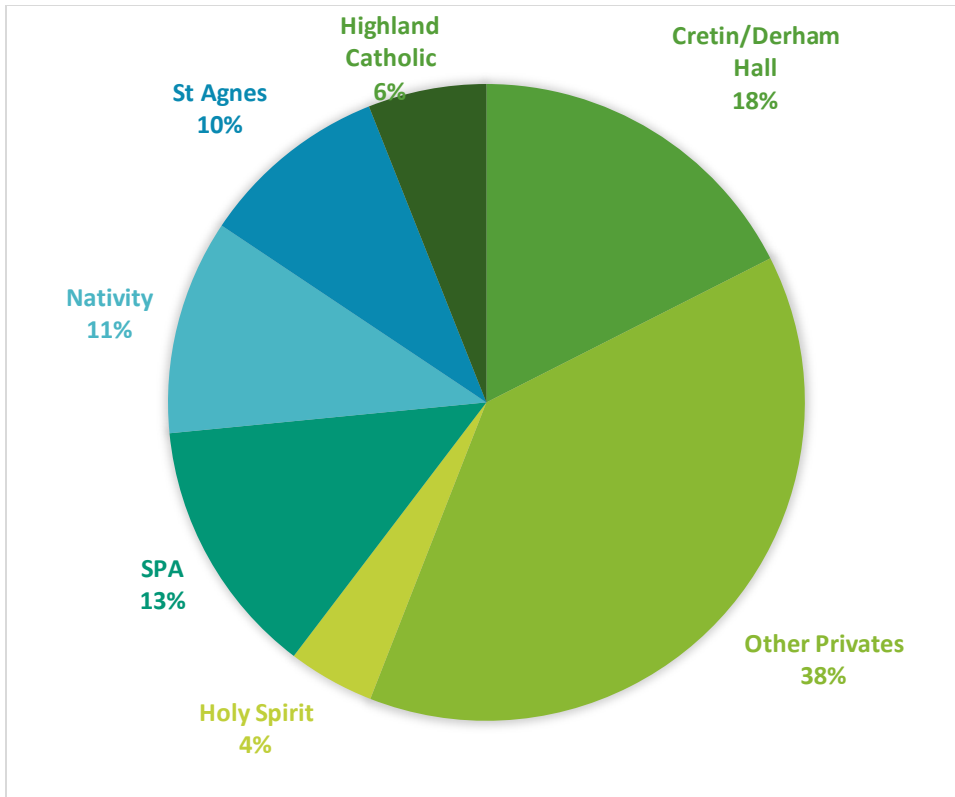


FIGURE: SAINT PAUL RESIDENT PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENT DISTRIBUTION

The table below lists the six largest private schools as well as the count of Saint Paul resident students enrolled in FY16.

School	St Paul Enrollment	Grades	Religious Affiliation	Average Class Size	Student:Faculty Ratio	College/Post-Secondary/Military	Students of Color
Cretin/Derham Hall	1207	9-12	Catholic	22	15:1	97%	23%
SPA	903	K-12	None	14	8:1	100%	28%
Nativity	752	PreK-8	Catholic	22	21:1	n/a	-
St Agnes	662	K-12	Catholic	-	~15:1	100%	27%
Highland Catholic	414	PreK-8	Catholic	-	-	n/a	-
Holy Spirit	303	PreK-8	Catholic	18	13:1	n/a	20%

Noticeable within this listing is that all but one (Saint Paul Academy/SPA) of the six schools are affiliated with the Catholic church. The data fields are based on features these schools seemed to highlight on their websites, pointing to a target market segment of parents

focused on individual attention (as measured in class size and student:faculty ratios) as well as post-graduate pathways focused on college entry above diversity within the student body.

Open Enrollment Takes 6% of Saint Paul Resident Students Out-of-District

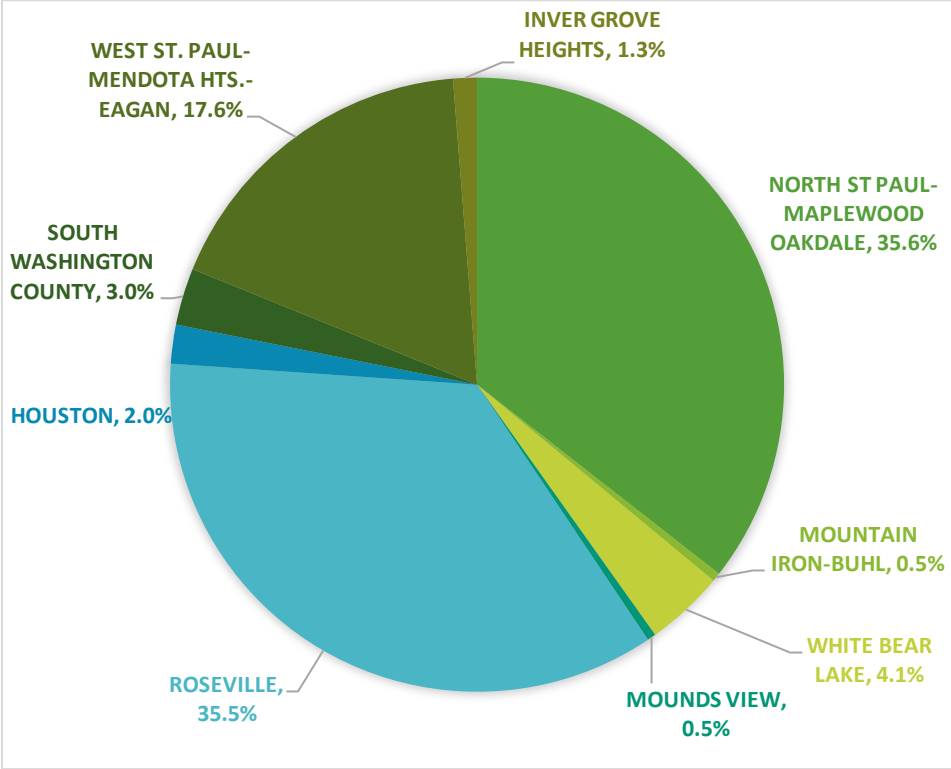


FIGURE: SAINT PAUL RESIDENT OUT-BOUND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENT DISTRIBUTION

Six percent - or about 2,700 - of Saint Paul resident students attended neighboring school districts in FY16. The most popular districts were North St Paul-Maplewood and Roseville, each enrolling 36% of Saint Paul’s outbound open enrollment students. The third most popular ISD was West St Paul-Mendota Heights with 18%.

The table below lists the six most popular out-of-district, non-charter public schools. What this figure reveals is that rather than competing with neighboring districts as a whole, specific schools within SPPS are competing directly with specific open enrollment schools for certain segments of Saint Paul students, for example Roseville Area Senior High School is competing against Como Park High School for 9-12 students in Area E.

School	St Paul Enrollment	District	Proficiency (2016)	Graduation Rate	Grades	Demographics (2017)	FRL	Competing SPPS Schools
Roseville Area Senior High	337	623	Math - 41%; Reading - 55%; Science - 56%*	93%	Grades 9-12	White - 50%; Asian - 20%; African American - 16%; Hispanic - 10%	42%	Como Park (Area E)
North Senior High	221	622	Math - 39%; Reading - 45%; Science - 53%*	80%	Grades 9-12	White - 45%; Asian - 21%; African American - 15%; Hispanic - 14%	53%	Johnson Sr. Harding Sr. (Areas A & B)
Tartan Senior High	198	622	Math - 60%; Reading - 65%; Science - 63%*	87%	Grades 9-12	White - 51%; Asian - 16%; African American - 17%; Hispanic - 12%	46%	Harding Sr. Johnson Sr. (Areas A & B)
Harambee Elementary	165	623	Math - 40%; Reading - 47%; Science - 31%**	N/A	K-6; year-round	White - 24%; Asian - 20%; African American - 33%; Hispanic - 11%	66%	Mississippi Creative Arts, St Paul Music Academy, Bruce Vento (Area C)
Henry Sibley High	152	197	Math - 57%; Reading - 61%; Science - 76%*	88%	Grades 9-12	White - 51%; Asian - 5%; African American - 9%; Hispanic - 30%	38%	Humboldt H.S. (Area D)
Heritage E-STEM Magnet	122	197	Math - 47%; Reading - 55%; Science - 53%^	N/A	Grades 5-8	White - 44%; Asian - 2%; African American - 8%; Hispanic - 38%	52%	Humboldt H.S. , Open World (Area D)

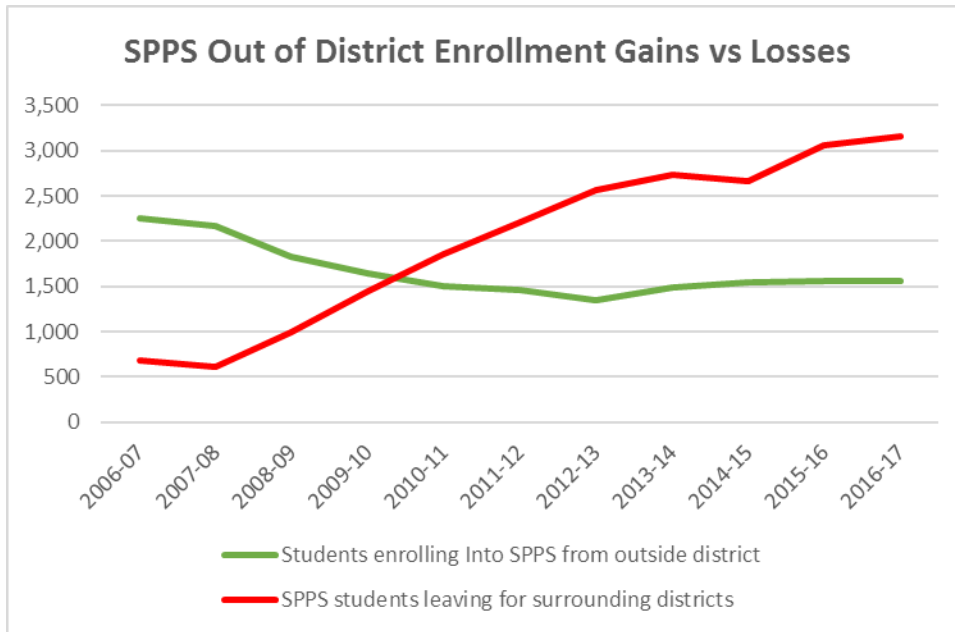
*Statewide: Math - 47% (11th Grade); Reading - 59% (10th Grade); Science - 56% (HS) **Statewide: Math - 60% (3rd-6th Grade); Reading - 60% (3rd-6th Grade); Science - 62% (5th Grade) ^Statewide: Math - 60%; Reading - 60%; Science - 55% (5th - 8th Grade)

It is important to note that most of the district’s outbound open enrollment students are high school-aged. It would be a wise step for SPPS to better understand the desires of high school families in Areas A, E & B and take inventory of how well the offerings at Como Park, Johnson Sr. and Harding Sr. match those desires. What can SPPS offer as a competitive advantage in the district’s high school market?

Free market enrollment or controlled student distribution:

The school district competes in a regulated market that is legislature-controlled. It must accept all resident students. 20+ years ago the legislature adopted policies to increase competition – open enrollment to other districts and publicly funded independent charter schools. What is critical to remember in understanding competition and enrollment is that SPPS is not operating in a closed system. Roseville is not competing with SPPS as a district, rather specific schools are competing for specific students. The same dynamic is true with charter schools. SPPS schools need to compete with all other schools, **including SPPS schools as individual entities**. Attempting to control this is fruitless and only leads to dissatisfied families. The district must adopt strategies to more nimbly respond to the desires of families in a cost effective way. New pathways have developed to non-SPPS schools where the district has failed to monitor and address the desires of families. This has allowed for bonding to other schools to occur in particular parts of the City where it is the norm for families to leave SPPS.

Lack of strategy to compete successfully for Saint Paul students has resulted in significant losses in revenue.



Our numbers of students enrolling in SPPS from out of district has dropped by a third over the past decade (2006-07= 2,253... 2016-17=1,555). This is most likely attributed to a reduction in programs and offerings and a reduction in magnets and specialized programs that attracted out-of-district students. During the same time period, the number of SPPS students who have left for surrounding districts has quintupled from 688 to 3,154.

SPPS is losing 337 students to Roseville Area High School. That is approximately \$3.3 million dollars in lost revenue that could be used to upgrade the facilities and offerings at Como High School to retain these students in the district.

419 former SPPS kids are now enrolled in Tartan and North High Schools. This represents \$4 million in lost revenue for Harding and Johnson.

Frost Lake and The Heights elementary families do not have a pathway middle school in their area A. Students from these schools are not guaranteed enrollment in any SPPS middle school. The closest middle school is Parkway, but it is a Montessori districtwide magnet and doesn't offer a traditional program. In fact, there are no traditional programs within SPPS available nearby to students living in this part of Saint Paul. This has caused the parents to look elsewhere and they are. Significant numbers of families are attending school in Maplewood/North Saint Paul and at Twin Cities Academy as a result of inadequate options in SPPS. These were loyal SPPS families. By building a new middle school in this area with great offerings, SPPS could attract these families back, and possibly many from surrounding areas.

Areas to focus on for further research and target enhanced offerings, investments and marketing to close the student pipelines to surrounding districts include: North End, Como/SAP, North East, East, West Side. The district needs to better understand what

appeals to families living in these areas, what the surrounding schools offer, (and what SPPS lacks) so SPPS can improve offerings, devise effective marketing campaigns and attract and retain students in its schools. At first glance it appears these are traditional schools that emphasize academic achievement, and in some cases, also provide strong music, activities and athletics offerings.

From a positive perspective, SPPS is much bigger than any of its surrounding districts and has many other competitive advantages so SPPS should be able to offer unique, specialized programs that could attract many more students from outside SPPS than it does currently.

How Can Saint Paul Public Schools Compete?

There are three primary strategies SPPS can use to leverage the district's major competitive advantage; its size. Because SPPS is large and has so many programs and buildings, it can provide in-demand programming families want. Other districts or charters don't have the capacity to offer these innovative programs efficiently. These strategies include:

1. Provide in-demand programs that serve **specific learning needs of students with special needs** (i.e. English language learner academies, highly gifted, deaf and hard of hearing, dyslexic, etc.). SPPS can attract lots of local and out-of-district students looking for a fit for their specific academic learning needs.
2. SPPS can offer dynamic, **niche programs that appeal to particular market segments** looking for a particular curricular model. (i.e. language immersion, cultural immersion (Hmong, Native American...), Montessori, OWL, in-demand vocationally oriented, STEM, STEAM, Post-Secondary partnerships, hands-on learning, Mississippi River focused experiential environmental magnet, urban experiences-based magnets that leverages partnerships with government/higher ed/cultural/and business connection, etc.). These programs can create a substantial draw for out of district families as well as hometown students.
3. The district can also **strengthen its more "traditional", neighborhood-based programs** to capture a greater share of the district's home market.

By conducting research to better understand the City's market segment types' desires (parents who share similar preferences in school characteristics), SPPS can maximize the alignment of its product offerings (school options) with specific preferences of market segments. This will also allow SPPS to develop and market its distinctive and traditional school program options in a more targeted, effective and efficient manner.

SPPS's Competitive Advantages:

Understanding and leveraging the district's distinctions can provide it with a competitive advantage in the educational marketplace. In addition to its size, these qualities make Saint Paul unique and, after families feel confident their basic desire for strong academics geared toward their child's needs, and school climate/safety are addressed, these distinctions can help to set SPPS apart from its competitors.

- **Size:** Provides the ability to differentiate, be scalable, and flexible; within the system as a whole SPPS can offer a diverse school "product portfolio" which includes many options and variety which can thereby appeal to a wide variety of market segments both within Saint Paul and also attracting out-of-district students. Saint Paul has sufficient population and demand to appeal to educational consumers wanting a more niche program.
- **Experienced and Committed Teachers:** SPPS educators are among the best in the State. Saint Paul teachers are consistently among those nominated and award-winning in best teacher competitions.
- **Committed and Supportive Community:** school, political, financial and moral support for public education is high among Saint Paul tax payers.
- **Urban, Central, Capitol City:**
 - SPPS can tap into partnership opportunities from the many profit and non-profit organizations based here.
 - SPPS is easy to access from surrounding districts. Many people work here from out of Saint Paul and could bring their child with them to attend school here while they work.
 - Tapping into and expanding our public transit options expands access, equity and opportunities for all Saint Paul students. This can help set SPPS apart as a district and help our City as a whole as well.
- **Talented and Diverse Students and Families:** Saint Paul's talented, hardworking, community-minded and diverse student population is one of its greatest strengths; the district can use this to its advantage more than they currently do. Only in Saint Paul do students have such a rich and incredible opportunity to gain multi-cultural competencies. The ability to learn from one another and to feel comfortable and confident in an increasingly multi-cultural society and workplace is highly advantageous for Saint Paul graduates. SPPS students themselves are motivated and want to help the district and its schools succeed. They can be part of the effort to lead initiatives that will increase opportunities for SPPS students and improve the attractiveness of the district overall.
- **Rich in the Arts:** Saint Paul loves the arts. We are home to some of the region's best, most world-renown art and music. Our citizens love, appreciate and participate in

the arts and value it for their children. Our local, diverse arts community loves to partner with our public schools.

*In a district with over 100 languages spoken,
music provides a common one.*

The arts allow families and the community to experience, collaborate and appreciate one another and come together to celebrate our unique experiences and cultures like nothing else. Performances and exhibitions celebrating SPPS students' creative expressions bring communities together, engage families and create welcoming and inclusive school communities in a powerful and profound way. Much more can be done to drive excellence, access, and to create a district known for its unique and outstanding arts and music opportunities. This can truly help SPPS distinguish itself in an exciting and positive way.

- **Wilderness/Environmental Spaces in our City:** Saint Paul is unique as an urban area in the wilderness that surrounds us. This can create many opportunities for our district and students. Also, SPPS can promote and make even better use of the incredible resource, Belwin Environmental Learning Center.

As a whole, Saint Paulites are very “green-minded” and environmentally friendly. As the City pursues its plans for the *Great River Passage* and redevelopment in other areas of the city (i.e. the Ford Plant, Bruce Vento trail area, etc.), the district should enter discussions with the City to ensure that SPPS students could benefit from these efforts as well. Could the district and City create special programs and opportunities for learning in these unique urban/wild spaces? The possibilities are endless.

- A new experiential/environmentally focused magnet program (see Upper Mississippi Academy charter school) might be an opportunity for SPPS to explore.
- SPPS could add crew (rowing) to district athletics offerings.
- An outdoor performance space for school groups.
- Teach hands-on science and history units on the river.
- Physical education canoeing and kayaking classes.
- Build school gardens to teach students about food, cooking and healthy eating.
- SPPS Farmer's Market stand.
- **Access to many higher education opportunities:** SPPS students have access to many PSEO providers and district/higher ed partnerships that many students are able to participate in both full-time and part-time. These programs could be expanded to offer even more access and opportunities for Saint Paul youth.

- **History and culture of educational innovations:** SPPS has a long successful history with creating first of its kind and successful innovations. The first Spanish Immersion school in the State, the first Gifted and Talented Magnet program. SPPS developed and implemented one of the best ELL programs in the country. This culture needs to be nurtured, incentivized and allow to thrive. Innovations should meet excellent planning, piloting and evaluation protocols to ensure success and/or revision.

vi. Moving Forward

Key Barriers to Growth:

In order to move forward, it is important to address factors that inhibit growth.

Geography, Population distribution:

Saint Paul is a very socio-economically diverse city as a whole but our population is very geographically segregated along economic and racial lines. Areas with higher concentrations of wealth tend to attract strong school enrollment. The SSSC plan to create stronger neighborhood/community schools with more limited bussing options seems to have had the effect of creating more segregated schools and limiting access to some of the more popular programs. This has led to a system that is more (economically) Strong Communities, Strong Schools than Strong Schools, Strong Communities.

All schools in area F1 are fully enrolled. It seems this area could support more or larger schools as the demand is high (at least under the regionalized system the district currently has). Other regions seem to be suffering in the regionalized system. Areas B has been hit the hardest and areas C, E, and F1 have very mixed results with some very popular programs and other schools with significant capacity.

Another feature of geography is competition from surrounding districts. The West Saint Paul-Mendota school district heavily attracts Westside students. Maplewood and North Saint Paul draws from the Eastside. And, Como and North End families are attracted to Roseville area schools. SPPS does not lose many families to Minneapolis from our western families however. (See section on Competition.)

Possible solutions:

- Evaluate revisions to the regional/community model. Ensure SPPS has equity and access to comparable programs for all SPPS students. If SPPS does not have it, invest in it.
- Each school in the red (low market performers) and blue (at risk) categories needs a SWAT analysis and marketing product strategy completed.

- Transplant successful, growing programs into areas where the district needs to create high demand schools. Simply replicating popular programming concepts (second campuses) without importing the existing community to “seed” the school hasn’t always been successful. Opening a “second campus” with the exact same programming essentially causes the two schools to compete very directly against one another. Of course parents will choose what is already proven and successful, over a startup... unless there is a high reward potential. When the high reward potential is equivalent, people will always pick the lower risk option. Caution should be exercised in thinking that simply importing the educational model will be enough. It is unknown whether OWL, for example, would automatically succeed in a second location.

Arlington High School is a good example of this. Simply replicating Washington Technology programming there did not work. Closing Arlington, remodeling it, and importing the Washington community intact did work. Galtier is a similar situation. Simply offering STEM and innovative programming in that location was not enough to attract sufficient families even when heroic efforts were made to recruit families there. It is possible that the Galtier model could have been successful in another part of town. The district should investigate whether the neighborhood location of a new program and the relative affluence of the surrounding area influence start up success and likelihood that a program can be successfully exported to another part of the City intact.

There are some potential concepts, however, with sufficient demand to grow from the ground up. Jei Ming Chinese Immersion is a good example. Another likely successful startup concept might be a magnet for highly gifted students. This could attract many out of district students as well. In such instances a strong marketing plan with strong demand and growth projections needs to be established. Additionally, it is critical sufficient start up investments are made to ensure viability. When a new concept is not meeting the required goals, however, it needs to be abandoned or reformatted.

Limited growth model:

Students are currently offered spots and placed into schools based on enrollment projections from the previous three years as well as other considerations such as:

- class size limits,
- over the year attrition rate trends (including those who enroll in the spring but then go elsewhere),

- building's physical capacity,
- reserving space for neighborhood/pathway/reflecting Saint Paul students (where the district has data to support those students will come),
- consideration of the effect on other district schools when students are transferred from one school to the other within district, and
- consideration of Special Education and MLL (Language Academy) needs.

All of these forces combine to suppress growth and make it challenging to grow programs.

Possible solution:

Build projections with an eye towards growth and then invest in recruitment activities to fill the growth goals. This is similar to how a sales-based organization operates. Develop capacity for more flexibility for expansion and contraction within the system.

Class Size Limits:

The hard cap on class sizes has had a major impact on enrollment growth in a school. The reason for this is that it is highly unlikely that in any one year a school will attract a sufficient class (grade level) cohort (10-16 per grade needed) to make it economical to add a new section (grade level class) to that school, even when there is physical space to do so.

Other issues result when a school traditionally has a high attrition rate or many fewer students actually attend in the fall compared to who enrolled in the spring. Even if there is excess demand at time of enrollment (spring) and extra physical space in the building that could theoretically hold more classes, when there is a high attrition pattern in the school it is not possible to enroll more students and provide additional staff because midway through the year, as students leave, the classes and school are then over staffed per the reduced population (and it's unlikely SPPS can then fill these extra spaces during the year). This, of course, would lead to major budget problems.

Regarding managing demand and distribution of enrollment across district schools, the philosophy of the district to date has been that if the district allows the market to operate unfettered and without any constriction on demand, (more like a first come, first served model), it would end up with schools being under-enrolled (but staffed for higher enrollment) because the district would be basically taking from one of its schools to fill another. SPPS would end up with a lot of angry families who expect to get into their neighborhood school and now cannot because they moved in after the deadline and all the spots were taken. So the idea was to try to manage and more evenly spread enrollment across the district. The issue here is that SPPS is not giving people what they want and they seem to be voting with their feet. Parents choose among SPPS schools, but also charters, privates and other districts. So the quandary is, if SPPS allows for unfettered placement,

where space allows, into all of its schools, how does the district manage for this kind of churn and minimize the chaos it causes in the district?

Potential solutions:

- Negotiate blanket class-size waivers when growth is needed/desired.
- Use student to instructional staff (or teacher) ratio targets by building.
- Group students by ability/skill level attainment rather than strictly by age to achieve greater flexibility in student distribution in the school.
- Return to the practice of midyear staffing adjustments to deal with shifts in enrollment.

Growing Smart

If the goal of enrollment growth is to improve the district’s revenue and thereby create a stronger, more effective and more stable district that better meets the needs of SPPS students, then the district’s marketing needs to be effective at targeting growth to achieve this result. SPPS needs to target its efforts, therefore, to attract more students who have a relatively lower cost to educate (fewer needs for support) than students who require more and higher cost interventions and supports to educate. This does not mean that the district should ignore or discourage promoting the district and assisting *all* families in Saint Paul to find a great fit and a great home in its schools. It is their moral and legal obligation to do so. Rather it is about creating additional recruiting campaigns to help create a financially healthier and more sustainable district that better reflects and serves the City’s youth as a whole.

Under the current funding situation, SPPS does not receive adequate governmental funding to appropriately meet the needs of the district’s Special Education populations, many ELL students, and/or students who require additional services due to extreme poverty such as homelessness. Even with the additional funds these students receive via Title 1 and other programs, the costs to provide adequate support far exceed the funding. As a way to address this SPPS has a long tradition of redistributing funds from lower needs students to higher needs students. This can be seen in the district’s wide-ranging per pupil allocations by school.¹

If SPPS does not have a representative or balanced mix between lower and higher needs students, it leads to instability and system imbalance over time that is difficult to turn around. Therefore, it is critical the district focuses on finding equilibrium by attracting and

¹ Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet (grades 1-8) for example, has the lowest per pupil allocation of any other school in the district at around \$5000 per pupil, yet has very high retention and academic achievement.

retaining lower cost students to help create system stability and balance and, most importantly, to better meet the needs of *all* of its students.

Who and where does SPPS target its efforts?

To achieve economic stability, SPPS needs to focus additional enrollment efforts on attracting and retaining students who cost less in relative terms and who bring in more funding than they require to achieve well. The district needs to do further research to better understand the segments within this targeted group, however, the district can start by acknowledging and working to attract and retain those who are likely to be in this group. These students include:

Students who can, or are likely, to perform at and above grade level

Generally speaking, more highly achieving students require fewer interventions to educate. They also score higher on standardized tests. These students bring with them both revenue that can be shared with higher needs populations, and increase the district and school performance, as demonstrated by higher academic achievement. This creates a positive feedback loop, making SPPS schools more attractive to school shoppers.

Additionally, ensuring the needs of more highly achieving students are accommodated in all schools would assist the district in retaining current families. Most of the district's schools in highest demand offer some kind of focused services or accommodations to meet the needs of higher ability/achieving learners. With the waiting list at Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented (GT) Magnet at approximately 400 students, SPPS can see that demand is far exceeding supply in terms of providing programming in many of the district's schools for higher ability students. Of the wait-listed, GT-flagged students, SPPS sees far fewer applications from students coming from schools with strong offerings for such students (who benefit from ability-based instruction and acceleration opportunities (such as St. Anthony Park)).

Upon examination of advertised offerings in SPPS elementary schools via their websites and in parent interviews, it appears that SPPS is not consistently providing instructional differentiation strategies in all schools (flexible, ability-based groupings by subject, acceleration, etc.) which help to appropriately challenge each student. Students in less affluent school communities with the highest concentrations of lower income and students of color are the most at risk as these students are least likely to have access to differentiation or appropriate academic challenge in their neighborhood school.¹ Ensuring the needs of higher achieving or potential students are accommodated would benefit the district in its enrollment growth objectives (as well as helping all children reach their potential).

Active Choice Exercisers (ACEs), especially those NOT choosing SPPS currently.

ACE families place a high priority on finding the best school option for their child. They tend to include:

- Families who apply to SPPS on-time
- Non-SPPS attending families (they actively chose a private, charter, online or out-of-district option)
- Families who change schools within SPPS schools for voluntary reasons (i.e. to find a better fit for their child versus because of instability in housing issues which is more of an involuntary cause)
- Families who open enroll into SPPS from outside of the district
- Secondary indicators of ACE:
 - Families who attend the school fair
 - Families who do online research to find a school
 - Families who ask friends and family for recommendations
 - Some families who apply late because of lack of information but once they become engaged in enrolling, closely examine all options in and out of SPPS
 - Families seeking non-traditional, niche or specialized programs not offered elsewhere

Non ACEs include families who are either more passive attendees (meaning they will attend where directed and don't take as proactive a role in placement). These families tend to be more passive because they likely they are not aware of options, how accessing the school system works, or are dealing with other substantial barriers which limit their ability to engage in the school choice process. These families most likely include new immigrant families and families facing extreme economic hardship; i.e. homelessness, etc.. Students from these populations also tend to require remedial academic supports due to language barriers and issues related to poverty.

Understanding better the wants and nuanced desires of likely active choice exercisers (ACEs), as well as finding more ways to interact and develop relationships with them, will be the best way to grow the district.

Key Strategies to Enhance Enrollment

Impacting enrollment is a district-wide effort and requires reorientation towards focus on customer satisfaction, quality consistency, and prioritizing that which will help the district and schools compete effectively.



The following strategies are intended as suggested ideas and launching pads for further discussion, feasibility assessments, community input, etc. (in the next phases of this work, as part of the district’s strategic planning process, etc.) and are not directives per se. They are grouped by area of improvement:

- Organizational and foundational changes
- Modifications in customer interactions
- Better understanding of, and responsiveness to the educational market

Some of the tactics require a longer term approach and implementation. Some tactics can be pursued immediately as they involve a change in practice in current district functions.

Feasibility and investment estimates for these recommendations as yet need to be completed.

Where investments would be required, it is important to understand that recommendations are intended to bring a financial return to the district that exceeds the upfront cost by increasing enrollment. 100 new students bring about \$1 million with them to the district. If SPPS expands the marketing function to employ an additional 6 staff, they would cover the costs of that investment by growing enrollment by about 100 students from this year's enrollment number. If the district changes nothing to stem the tide of families leaving on its current trajectory, it will lose another 500-600 students next year so will be faced with another \$5 million loss minimum on top of any shortfall from the state budget.

Summary of strategies to improve enrollment:

Big Picture:

- Become parent satisfaction-focused (parents represent students)
- Become SMART growth-focused
- Become competitive
- Establish clear leadership vision and expectations
- Build on-going parental desires, experience and satisfaction measurement into operations to enhance and inform decision-making
- Improve academic quality and offerings to meet PARENT expectations
- Organizational culture: more interdepartmental, more "customer" focused, more flexible
- Attract and retain at key transition times: PreK to K, 5th grade to 6th grade (middle school), middle to high school.

ORGANIZATIONAL/FOUNDATIONAL SUGGESTED CHANGES:

Strategy #1: Strengthen Leadership and Vision from the Board of Education.

- Create Clarity in Board Policy and Procedures that clearly articulates and codifies district's vision, deliverables, and institutionalizes the district's "customer guarantees" for quality and consistency in quality across the district.
- Review District Policies in successful area districts to compare SPPS's section 600 (Educational Programs) to others. Note District 196 (Eagan-AV-Rosemount) clear description of articulated goals.
- Articulate a vision that expresses the districts commitment to non-academic activities, that is inclusive of athletic as well as non-athletic activities.
- Create a budget that starts with the district's school programmatic offerings and educational minimums for every building. This will help ensure greater consistency in SPPS's educational offerings and establish quality controls. Minimize funding allocations based on a per pupil basis.
- Require collection of customer feedback data to assess outcomes and user satisfaction and then use data to align budget and policy toward student and family (customer) desires.

Strategy #2: Establish a Centralized Coordinated Marketing Function

It is recommended that SPPS immediately develops a stronger marketing capacity. Developing this capacity is essential for the district to leverage its points of distinction, areas of leadership, positive outcomes for students, and features that place SPPS among the best districts in Minnesota. SPPS should take steps both to communicate that SPPS is among the very best public school systems and highlight the district and its schools' points of distinction for prospective students, their parents, our community, and funders.

Tactics:

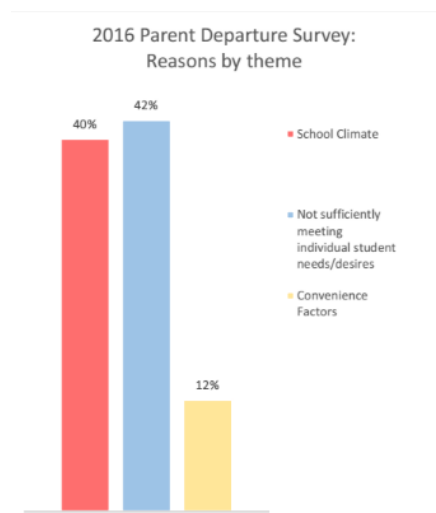
- Create Office of Marketing and Communications with focus on recruitment and retention. Reorganize the marketing functions currently located across departments, including Placement and Communications. Ensure cross-departmental work with Grants, Finance, Technology Services, Research, Evaluation and Assessment, and Academics.

- Hire an Executive Director of Marketing and Communication with a professional background in large organizational marketing and communications in a competitive marketplace. Does not have to be an educator or come from an education background.
- Develop and implement an integrated institutional marketing plan including product strategies for each school with marketing plans inclusive of competitive analysis for each.
- Hire recruiters and oversee recruitment efforts.
- Develop a brand story and messaging for marketing SPPS to prospective students. Tell the compelling SPPS story that considers a broader perspective than standardized testing. Focus includes academics, choice, financial responsibility, student opportunities in leadership, activities & the arts, parental and community participation and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Conduct actuarial modeling to explore and better understand program and service costs versus funding for market segments
- Deploy market research to learn about school characteristic preferences, user satisfaction, web analytics, further competitor research, exit surveys and other strategies to provide data useful for program development and refinement, resource allocations and continuous improvement functions.
 - Target satisfaction surveys to schools with populations who leave for other district schools as well as non-district schools. Focus on previously successful schools who see a decline in enrollment (i.e. Ramsey, LNFI, Como).
 - Target exit surveys to trigger at time of record request *and at time of within-district new school request if changing in a non-transitional grade (i.e. if a 2nd grader moves to a new school in SPPS)*. Tie the record request to the questionnaire. For example, the parent must call in or complete an online form to authorize the record transfer. At this time the survey can be delivered (either online or over the phone.)
 - Send every Welcome Center (Student Placement) visitor, new district enrollee, and school tour participant an immediate follow up communication thanking them for their interest and consideration of SPPS and ask them for feedback about their experience (email link to online survey).
 - Do not ignore complaints or take negative feedback personally. Negative feedback is very valuable and provides the key to improved responsiveness and customer satisfaction. As much as possible treat every parent like the VIP customers they are.
- Re-vision and upgrade Placement Center as a ***Saint Paul Schools Welcome Center***. Placement is a *function* within Recruitment and Retention. The facilities, parking lot, etc. must be exciting, attractive and visually communicate to school shoppers that SPPS is a high quality choice that takes pride in the district and its offerings. Consider

using technology to tell the district’s story. Use private schools, suburban facilities and University Welcome Centers as examples. It is important the district makes a good first impression. This is a relatively low cost, effective strategy to help sell SPPS schools and give a positive first impression of the district.

- Train all school frontline staff (receptionists and administrators) on customer service and being welcoming and responsive. Help schools in their role to attract and retain students. Make everyone who experiences the district’s schools feel valued and important. Do not assume or take for granted that visitors know the system.
- Oversee redesign of district website; special attention to the current Student Placement section and improved functionality as well as look and feel.
- Continue to leverage parent advisory councils (PACs) to collaborate with the district on outreach, community input, communications, and to develop relationships with less represented and special populations within the district.

Strategy #3: Commit to Improving School Climate



Safety, responsiveness, feeling welcome, feeling valued are all part of school climate. Data suggests that a large number of families left SPPS the past two years due to concerns over school climate, especially safety and bullying.

When the incidents of bullying or harassment occur frequently, or are not resolved adequately, families usually do not stay in that school long. For purposes of this analysis, it is hypothesized that if a student experiences bullying or harassment at least once per week they are at very high risk for leaving that school if they are able to do so. Although the data shows that

overall Saint Paul is not far from the State averages and in some cases lower, there is still work to be done to eliminate the frequency of this behavior in the district’s schools. Bullying and harassment has long-term mental health consequences and can impair successful functioning later in life. We, as a community, need to treat this seriously and work together to resolve the problem including helping perpetrators who are often acting out trauma in their own lives and/or lacking social-emotional skills.

The Minnesota Student Survey is an excellent and reliable measure of many things including students’ experiences around bullying and harassment and their perceptions about feeling safe in school. It can provide the district with important and reliable data to indicate its

success in reducing negative behavior. The chart below illustrates the frequency of bullying/harassment in SPPS as reported by students in various grades. A breakdown by school (not all SPPS schools currently participate in MSS) show that there is a fairly wide variation in reported bullying/harassment by school: Please see the appendix for the **2016 SPPS Bullying/Harassment by School Report**.

Here is how Saint Paul measures up to the State of Minnesota:

2016	St. Paul district			Minnesota		
	Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons anytime in the last 30 days			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons anytime in the last 30 days		
What is your grade in school right now?	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Total 5th grade	45.6%	54.4%	100.0%	39.2%	60.8%	100.0%
Total 8th grade	45.2%	54.8%	100.0%	42.6%	57.4%	100.0%
Total 9th grade	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%	40.6%	59.4%	100.0%
Total 11th grade	27.2%	72.8%	100.0%	33.1%	66.9%	100.0%
	Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons weekly or more often in the last 30 days			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons weekly or more often in the last 30 days		
What is your grade in school right now?	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Total 5th grade	15.6%	84.4%	100.0%	13.1%	86.9%	100.0%
Total 8th grade	15.8%	84.2%	100.0%	15.5%	84.5%	100.0%
Total 9th grade	11.2%	88.8%	100.0%	14.1%	85.9%	100.0%
Total 11th grade	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%	10.8%	89.2%	100.0%
	Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons every day in the last 30 days			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons every day in the last 30 days		
What is your grade in school right now?	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Total 5th grade	6.1%	93.9%	100.0%	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
Total 8th grade	4.7%	95.3%	100.0%	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
Total 9th grade	3.3%	96.7%	100.0%	3.6%	96.4%	100.0%
Total 11th grade	3.0%	97.0%	100.0%	2.8%	97.2%	100.0%

SPPS BOE has adopted an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy and procedures for reporting. Responsive classroom techniques, which help prevent and deal effectively with negative peer interactions and create a more positive school climate, have been piloted and are being rolled out across the district. Many, but not all SPPS schools participate in the MSS.

SPPS is moving in the right direction but a publicly visible, concentrated and sustained effort must be made to gain parent’s trust that its schools are safe.

Tactics:

- Reinitiate the School Climate Task Force to oversee these efforts.
- Ensure Minnesota Department of Education recommended best practices are enacted to ensure a reduction in the frequency of negative behavior in the district’s schools.

- Measure the district’s success and be willing to be accountable.
- Create a more centralized function to oversee the full area of school climate. Currently the district has two divisions that oversee this issue; school climate and counseling. Perhaps this creates a lack of clarity on who has authority and accountability, or makes operationalization challenging. For example, although two staff members (counselors) were trained in reporting and intervention practices by the MDE recently, this information has not been rolled out or operationalized in the schools (where the building administrators are ultimately responsible).
- School Climate should use the MDE recommended and verified measurement tools to gauge school climate across the district.
- SPPS would benefit by requiring all SPPS schools participate in the Minnesota Student Survey to measure students’ direct experiences in the district’s schools. Proxy measures like suspension rates are inadequate.
- SPPS would benefit from addressing concerns over school safety head on by making an explicit commitment to parents that SPPS is serious about providing a safe and orderly learning environment and that families’ and teachers’ concerns will be taken seriously.
- Allow for incident reporting in many formats (online, paper, in person) and capture and track all reports of unsafe behavior, bullying and harassment so that SPPS can follow up in a timely way to ensure issues are being handled appropriately and effectively and document the district’s progress.
- Ensure the district’s prevention strategies are consistent and effective in all buildings. In-school suspension could be used for intensive instruction, social skills training, and trauma-sensitive counseling for students with behavioral challenges. The community seems to be understanding that in most cases children exhibiting inappropriate behavior are in need of help as well. This, however, does not mean that parents will tolerate disruptive classroom behavior or unsafe school environments.
- Target anti-bullying/harassment interventions on schools with high incidents reported by MSS.

Strategy #4: Maximize Enrollment in All School Buildings

To operate efficiently SPPS should better monitor and maximize the use and enrollment in existing facilities. According to district analysis, to achieve economies of scale and efficiently serve all students and offer desired features, the minimum enrollment in a given school would ideally be no less than 375 students.

Tactics:

- Address issues with class size caps; negotiate blanket exceptions where needed, explore alternatives, help union understand the dynamics at play and how this issue impairs enrollment growth. Enrollment declines lead to decreases in union membership as fewer teachers are needed.
- Stop artificially controlling for flow between schools.
- Concentrate effort on low building capacity to enrollment schools including consolidation, marketing strategies, co-locating programs, expanding Pre-K offerings, closure, programming and branding changes.
- Create strategy for schools where consolidation/merger into other programs is warranted:
 - Allow for a “turn around” year if parents and administration can present a plan and provide some assistance to implement it.
 - If turn around attempts are not successful, provide displaced families with priority access to any other program they qualify for with busing (only existing students, not non-attending siblings)
 - Implement an exciting welcoming campaign to help ease the transition from one school to the next prior to the transition. For example, invite parents to the PTO in the prior year. Have an event and a special program with students welcoming newcomers with songs, treats, games, etc.
 - Consider using schools with excess capacity to launch new school within a school programs and/or popular program expansions (Jei Ming/Hamline Midway; Pre-K)
- Identify popular, in-demand concepts and factors contributing to their popularity. Explore duplication of concept (OWL, Expo, Washington Technology, etc.) or determining and offering the characteristics which are driving the appeal of those programs in other ways (i.e. GT/high ability programming, STEM offerings, expeditionary learning, etc.). Note that duplication to new areas hasn’t always been successful. Complete transplants of popular programs, however, have been.
- Examine rebuilding previously popular programs such as LNFI... what happened?
- Consider a simplified regional concept to aid in families better understanding how the choice system works and ensure equitable access to opportunities and programs for all SPPS families. Does SPPS need 7 regions? How about 4 regions? Each region should have a portfolio of strong offerings informed by market segment research which indicates demand. Any student in the district should have access to specialized offerings if it isn’t offered in their region.
- Provide more access to the whole district as students age, their interests and talents emerge and they start looking outward to the world versus only their neighborhood. Consider open enrollment versus neighborhood-based concepts for high schools with either public transit and/or a hub and spoke hybrid (school bus and MTC) transportation services that all high school students could access. This would

increase district's ability to differentiate and create strong specialized programs according to parent and students' desires which all students in the city could access.

- Revise facilities plans to maximize ROI, innovate alternative usages, respond to reliable data about customer demand for programming, and prioritize competitive-oriented improvements.
- Determine if a new Area A middle school can be established by freeing up space by consolidating under enrolled schools.
- Expand Pre-K as funding and space becomes available. Prioritize programs which have an historic ability to retain students for Kindergarten in SPPS schools. (See Pre-K waitlist data and retention data by site in the appendix.)

Strategy #5: Serve all students by their strengths. Attract and retain high potential students who reflect the full diversity of our City

Families are happiest when their child is appropriately challenged, their child's areas of struggle are supported, and when their child's unique abilities are acknowledged and developed into talents. When students achieve, they raise the academic profile and perceived quality of the schools they attend. Students' examples of success increase the positive image of the district as a whole. Attracting and fostering high achieving students has been a popular and well-established enrollment strategy in many public schools in Minnesota and nationally. The district can promote achievement and success in college preparatory, career-oriented and extracurricular areas.

In addition to ensuring individual student growth via personalized, strengths-based instruction, greater emphasis on providing a well-rounded curriculum in core and non-core subjects would help the district attract and retain students. SPPS should document the MN K-12 Standards in every school regardless if a specialized instructional model or a traditional model as a way to demonstrate to families that their children will be provided a comprehensive education in all SPPS schools.

Tactics:

- The Board of Education should articulate a policy and procedures with a vision and plan for meeting the needs of all students according to their ability, aptitudes and readiness to learn across the spectrum based on research best-practices. Several Minnesota districts offer excellent examples (Eagan-AV-Rsmt, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Bloomington)
- Adopt a comprehensive districtwide **Talent Development Plan** to address the needs of all students across the ability spectrum in SPPS schools. There are many excellent models to choose from (Eagan-Apple Valley-Rosemount, Eden Prairie,

Bloomington...) that have already been developed based on research and best practices. Such a plan should include:

- Use CogAT and other measures (i.e. classroom assessment) to help advise instructional differentiation (personalized learning) in Elementary schools. The schools that currently offer these strategies are the district's most popular and in demand. SPPS's competition is heavily weighted towards schools that offer programs for advanced learners and subject level grouping by skill attainment, ability, and/or achievement.
- Instructional differentiation (and training for regular classroom teachers to implement) such as flexible grouping by ability/achievement and subject, cluster groupings, acceleration, etc. does not require pull out programs or gifted specialists in every school. It would require teacher training in areas such as recognizing ability, differentiating instruction and rethinking how schools/classrooms are organized.
- *Young Scholars* type programs in all elementary schools to provide support and early intervention for high potential students from groups underrepresented in gifted programs.
- Targeted high achievement programs for immigrant populations and MLL, so they can continue to achieve highly as they acquire English proficiency.
- Continue to develop successful mentorship programs and support groups for secondary students of color (such as Avid) to help offset the effects (i.e. stereotype threat, institutionalized racism, etc.) that contribute to their underrepresentation and success in accelerated course work and college access.
- A new East Metro magnet for highly gifted students (locally normed, tiered, needs-based entrance for students with exceptional ability) should be considered. These students (2-4%) benefit from radical acceleration with other age-mates and from a program specifically geared to meet their unique learning needs. Highly gifted learners can have a very difficult time finding a peer group or getting their academic needs met in a neighborhood school. Such a school would not need to replace Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet, which could continue to operate as is, but it would ensure those with the greatest needs for academic modifications and acceleration from all populations within the district would be accommodated where they perhaps could not gain entry to the lottery-based (versus needs-based) Capitol Hill

Saint Paul could attract large numbers of students not only locally, but also from Minneapolis, from parents who work in the Cities, and east metro students, who are particularly underserved. There are a few noteworthy magnets and comprehensive talent development programs of this type in the

Twin Cities at this time, but they are concentrated in the western and southern suburbs such as Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Rosemount/AV/Eagan, and Bloomington. Incidentally, these districts all developed comprehensive programs to address the needs of students of all abilities as a way to grow enrollment and accrue positive economic and academic achievement benefits for the district. Washington DC recently adopted similar strategies to attract and retain talent within their district (and to better meet the academic needs of all students in their district).

- District curriculum and instruction should be selected for those who have the potential for high academic achievement, as well as for students for whom academic achievement requires more time and/or supports (and everyone in between).
- Re-orient curriculum and learning (currently heavily weighted on the tested subjects... math and reading) to ensure delivery of the Minnesota K-12 Standards that emphasize a well-rounded, multidisciplinary curriculum. Avoid over-emphasis on reading and math. This is consistent with new federal (Every Child Succeeds Act) and emerging state guidelines. This also allows students to have greater access to subjects which might interest them, engage them in school and provide more opportunities for them to excel.
- Provide additional supports to students needing extra help. Pilot more flexible grouping of students so teachers are not required to teach to such a broad range and can offer more concentrated and intensive instruction to students at similar skill levels. This would free up time to offer more multi-disciplinary instruction as well.² (See Marcia Gentry's work in urban districts for reference.)
- Individual differences in the instructional pacing students' need in order to be appropriately challenged require that the district includes provisions for those above minimum proficiency and/or who learn more quickly. Students should rarely have to wait to learn while classmates catch up. Every child deserves to be appropriately challenged and learn the connection between hard work and outcomes (see Carol Dweck's work about "Mindset").
- SPPS can further improve upon differentiation by utilizing recent developments in technology enabled personalized learning.
- Offer strong music and arts programs in all schools. Music not only boosts achievement for all kids, it also attracts high performing students.
- Ensure sufficient funding for varied and high quality co-curricular and extracurricular activities beyond athletics including academic competitions, debate, mock trial, speech, model UN, robotics, Destination Imagination, musical theater, math team, creator labs, drama, clubs, etc..

² http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/05/20/fp_olszewski.html

Strategy #6: Create a World-class Arts Legacy that Reflects the City's Diversity and Creative Talent

Multiple studies have found that music makes kids smarter. It helps cognitive development and achievement in subjects such as math and reading. It improves participation in school and school satisfaction. The arts also attract talented students. These benefits will strengthen the district and pay dividends in higher achievement for all, as well as attracting and retaining more students in the district's schools.

Saint Paul is home to some of the region's best, most world-renown, and diverse art and music artists and organizations. Our citizens love, appreciate and participate in the arts and value it for their children. And, our local arts community loves to partner with our public schools.

The arts allow families and the community to experience, collaborate and appreciate one another and come together to celebrate our unique experiences and cultures like nothing else. Performances and exhibitions celebrating SPPS students' creative expressions bring communities together, engage families and create welcoming and inclusive school communities in a powerful and profound way. Much more can be done to drive excellence, access, and to create a district known for its unique and outstanding arts and music opportunities. This can truly help SPPS distinguish itself in an exciting and positive way and assist the district in attracting and retaining families.

Tactics:

- Create district task force of community arts education experts, arts organization leaders, and arts advocate parents to develop a comprehensive plan to develop high quality arts programming in all schools that represents the diverse cultures of Saint Paul families and which all students can access.
- Recruit and hire a Music Education Director for the District who would oversee the overall program and quality, act as an advocate, foster community partnerships and seek grants to support high quality music education in SPPS schools.
- Comply with State law requiring all elementary and middle schools provide 3 of 4 arts offerings and students must take 2, and all high schools provide 3 of 5 courses and students must take 1.
- Instrumental music is especially sensitive to lack of continuity of instruction because it is group/ensemble dependent and it's important that students enter and progress as a cohort. From an equity perspective, it is critical students have

at a minimum a grounding in general music education in elementary so they are prepared to participate in ensembles in Middle School. Other arts are less sensitive to lack of continuity and/or are more individual expression oriented. Offer high quality general music taught by a licensed music educator in all elementary schools during the school day as part of the district's obligation under MN law and the K-12 Ed Standards.

- Provide support to building administrators in identifying highly qualified arts education teacher candidates and assistance in interviewing
- Offer culturally diverse artistic expression representing our populations
- Home-grown arts opportunities that leverages community talent, expertise, local artists and organizations, and history of Saint Paul (i.e. Jazz at Rondo curriculum, Walker West Music Academy, The Ordway, Artists in residence programs, etc.)
- Establish strong and ambitious goals and monitor success and participation
- Adequately and equitably fund after-school and co-curricular arts-based activities. Musicals need a budget. Bands and choirs should be able to travel to represent the district in other areas of the metro and region, etc. in the same way athletic teams who reach State level competition are provided for.
- Create quality, competitive performance venues over time throughout the district. Consider starting by making an investment in the Como area where SPPS is losing many students to Roseville and Central High School, both of which have well known quality performing arts traditions and facilities. Build a new, exceptional Performing Arts Center or upgrade and add to existing facilities to make it competitive with surrounding suburbs. Attract visionary instructors when needed who are excited about creating a strong performing arts legacy program. Such an amenity would give students a suitable venue to showcase band, orchestra and choir concerts, musical theater, spoken word/poetry slams, dance and dramatic productions. It would be a centerpiece of the school and a wonderful, positive way to engage school families and community that surrounds it.
- Establish non-profit and community support to provide instruments and instrument repairs so all SPPS students who wish to participate are able to.
- Make school concerts, performances and arts exhibitions a key strategy in family engagement, community building and outreach.

Strategy #7: Leverage Unique Urban & Wild, Natural Environment

Saint Paul is uniquely positioned as a central, Capitol city to create many opportunities for students and partnerships for volunteering, mentorships, etc. Saint Paul is also unique with the Mississippi River transecting the City and all the park, recreational and wilderness areas

that surrounds us. This can create many opportunities for our district and students. Also, SPPS can promote and make even better use of the incredible resource, Belwin Environmental Learning Center.

- Strongly advocate for enhanced Public Transit that could serve all Saint Paul High School Students. Expansion of service and student access to it could open up huge opportunities for our youth, our district and our City as a whole.
- District should enter discussions with the City to create unique spaces, facilities, programming and opportunities that SPPS students access in the City's plans for the *Great River Passage* and redevelopment in other areas of the city (i.e. the Ford Plant, Bruce Vento trail area, etc.). Could SPPS create special programs and opportunities for learning in these unique urban/wild spaces? The possibilities to explore include:
 - A new experiential/environmentally focused magnet program (see Upper Mississippi Academy charter school) might be an opportunity for SPPS to explore.
 - SPPS could add a SPPS crew (rowing) team to our district athletics offerings.
 - An outdoor performance space for school groups.
 - Teach hands on science and history units on the river.
 - Physical education canoeing and kayaking classes.
 - Build school gardens to teach students about food, cooking and healthy eating.
 - SPPS Farmer's Market stand
 - SPPS Teen Foodies cooking programs to teach diverse, traditional foods from around the world in a community garden and kitchen concept

Strategy #8: Expand College Access and Partnership Opportunities with Post-Secondary

Students in Saint Paul have a rich opportunity to access many institutions for higher education through PSEO and dual enrollment partnerships. This is a big advantage for our district. SPPS could make this easier and more accessible to more students by providing more options to pursue PSEO easily PT and perhaps combined with a district online high school as well.

Also, one competitive advantage private schools and some charter schools have is a robust and full service college guidance counseling services. SPPS can beef up our college, vocational and GAP Year counseling and services to SPPS high schooler.

Tactics:

- Expand upon the successful Gateway to College high school concept with Saint Paul Community College; explore other program ideas where students could concurrently earn high school and post-secondary credit (PSEO).
- In addition to what is currently offered in our schools, create a centrally located, district-wide college resource center (or have two or more around the district as demand warrants) that is open after-school, on weekends, and in the evening. Here SPPS students could:
 - enroll in courses and research sessions helping them prepare to apply to college,
 - learn about careers and occupations,
 - research schools and scholarships,
 - obtain walk-in guidance counseling,
 - work directly with a college application essay editor,
 - help students narrow down their college selections,
 - learn about affordability, grants, scholarships,
 - hear speakers from touring college admissions officers, etc.
- A visit to the college resource center as a field trip for all Freshmen or Sophomores and parent open houses every year would be a great way to build awareness and get people used to using the center. Staff with professional college guidance counselors.

Strategy #9: Revise Facilities Master Plan to Maximize Enrollment and Improve Competitiveness of District Schools

- Prioritize improvements that will close the student out-flow, attract/retain students, and to maximize facility occupancy.
- According to research on what Saint Paul families want, the needs of arts programming is underrepresented in the Facilities Master Plan. Ensure all schools have adequate, comparable with SPPS competitor’s facilities for high quality theatrical productions, backstage dressing rooms and storage, concerts, studio arts, instrumental and vocal music instruction and storage. Fund with a referendum if necessary. Saint Paul taxpayer would support this!
- Invest in a state-of-the-art revamp to the Student Placement Center (find grants to help pay for it) and transform to a visitor-oriented ***Saint Paul Schools Welcome Center.***
- Consider fitness centers as well as, or in lieu of team athletics facilities improvements in some schools. Which would attract and retain more students? Which would provide the highest ROI for the district?

MARKETING AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE SUGGESTED CHANGES:

Strategy #10: Develop a Distinctive Brand

What is SPPS's image and identity in the educational marketplace? Is SPPS the "unsafe", "under-resourced", "inner city", victimized district who cannot meet the academic needs of its students because their needs are so great? Is SPPS seen as chaotic and unsafe? Is SPPS seen as primarily caring about trying to meet minimum proficiency and closing the achievement gap? Does SPPS value and provide strong programs for high achieving students as well as struggling students? Is SPPS focused on deficiency instead of strength? If these are the associations with the district, then SPPS needs to retell its story.

Tactic:

SPPS needs to create and embrace a vision that highlights the district's unique and distinctive qualities and sets it apart from the competition in ways valued by active school choice exercisers. SPPS especially needs to attract ACEs who are higher achieving and who will enhance the overall district academic profile as well as bring additional resources to our district.

It is recommended that in creating this vision and new brand identity SPPS consider not only who it is as a district, but also who we are as a City. How does SPPS differentiate itself? What is its "value proposition"? Some ideas include:

- Ability to offer lots of options and variety: Excellent traditional and specialized, in demand programs with high achievement expectations. SPPS can be scalable and flexible to meet demand/desires.
- SPPS can retain more Saint Paul families by offering more RIGOROUS traditional schools that emphasize strong, well-rounded academics: reading, arts and STEM.
- SPPS can retain more Saint Paul families and ATTRACT OUT OF DISTRICT FAMILIES by guaranteeing a pathway to strong schools K-12, expanding currently successful, and creating well-planned new specialized concepts which SPPS has determined will be popular.
- Urban: access to public transportation system (potentially) and other synergies that arise from our location as a central city.
- Diversity: prepare students to be multi-culturally competent. This is highly desired and sought after among universities and employers. Shared experiences make a stronger City and broader view of the world.
- Technology-enabled instruction; personalized learning.

- Arts-focused and arts rich! As a community Saint Paul strongly values the arts and have incredible leaders in and around the district who want to help Saint Paul schools improve its arts and music offerings.
- Amazing partnership opportunities: arts, cultural, non-profit, business, government, community that is highly supportive of public education.
- Wilderness and environmental opportunities: Belwin is a relatively unknown asset. SPPS also has untapped potential to partner in development of the Mississippi River Great River Passage, Ford Plant redevelopment area, etc.. This could become a fabulous asset for SPPS youth and the district.
- Create a *Welcome to Saint Paul Public Schools Promotional Video* focusing on core brand messaging, highlight high achievement and accomplishments, feature our best and most impressive bells and whistles (Belwin, Como Observatory, STEM labs, Robotics Teams, Poetry Slams, Theater and Music...)

***Strategy #11: Eat, Sleep and Breathe Achievement and Excellence!
Become success and strengths-oriented. Improve and prioritize
communications about district success and the success of SPPS students.***

Emphasize exceptionalism and extraordinary achievement. Help create a culture of success and strength... tell the story of student and district accomplishments at highest levels. Although closing the achievement gap is critical, and should remain critical to the district's mission, in order to attract more families and secure the resources needed to close the gap the district should de-emphasize stories about the achievement gap in public communications. The problem with keeping this as the district's external headline is that even when incremental success is made, it focuses attention on the district's deficiencies. Instead SPPS should focus on the stories of strength, extraordinary success and achievement among students of color and all students.

Generally speaking, parents choosing schools care less about test scores than policymakers and administrators and understand that, as a community and society, we have major opportunity gaps that impact test scores. Nevertheless, especially in the absence of other information highlighting positives attributes, test scores take on disproportionate weight and are an important factor in school selection for many families. SPPS can provide interpretive information to include in test score presentations and on its placement website. Does SPPS have any data to support over the year growth in achievement which is a much better marker of teacher effectiveness and school performance/quality? Providing a more complete picture of the opportunities available to SPPS students and the successes SPPS students enjoy helps to offset hard-to-interpret test score data. Additionally, overall parent satisfaction ratings on places such as

GreatSchools.org, as well as word of mouth, are very effective and influential data points parents use to inform enrollment decisions.

Tactics:

- Promote unique opportunities for SPPS students; mentorships and internships, Belwin, etc.,
- Provide district and school safety statistics; positive school climate and user satisfaction data
- More nuanced understanding of test data scores and alternative measurements showing individual student growth
- Counter negatives by directly addressing situations and also by educating public on the facts about our district compared to others... without making excuses but in a solutions-oriented mode.
- Create a student and staff online “Successes” repository: Create an online data form that is easy to use for building administrators, teachers, coaches, students, parents and community members to report information on accomplishments, honors, and achievements of our students and teachers (i.e. a Google form for anyone to use and report success stories). Some schools are good communicating this information internally, in their school newsletters, Facebook pages, etc. but this needs to be broadcast to our community much more. This information can be used by the school and district to promote noteworthy accomplishments on an ongoing basis. Even if a particular school doesn’t need the publicity, it increases the public perception of our schools and district “brand” as a whole and ensures public buy in, positive impressions and commitment. Highlight specific and ongoing promotion of high achievement happening in all schools such as:
 - Highly selective college acceptances
 - Merit-based scholarship winners
 - Corporate mentorship recipients
 - Noteworthy arts performers: i.e. combo from Walker West... all SPPS high schoolers (Como, Highland, Central) who won 1st place in prestigious Eau Claire Jazz Fest, all the kids picked for the Honors Recital from each school, students cast in professional productions, All State for Band, Choir, Orchestra, Jazz Band should be photographed and a story about their background in music should be told, Hennepin Theatre Trust Spotlight award recipients, etc.
 - Regional, State or National Competition winners for things such as Lego League, DI, poetry slam, speech, word master, philosophy slam, knowledge

bowl, math team, robotics, One Acts, Spanish Debate, Mock Trial, Model UN, YEG, etc.)

- AP Scholars (all designations), IB Diploma and Certificate recipients
 - National Honor Society inductees should be publicized in community papers
 - National Merit honorees
 - Athletics accomplishments
 - Noteworthy community contributors and leadership examples (i.e. HPSH Senior All Night Party partnering with Union Latina to create a mural during the party and donate to a local women shelter; Gay-Straight Alliance efforts to create safe spaces such as “Day of Silence”)
 - History Day- Regional, State and National Awards
 - Science Fair- Regional, State and National Awards
 - SPPS kids doing extraordinary things (such as Geeta at HPSH who is doing original cancer research; Nick McKenna, junior, HPSH, just ran a panel at International DefCom on DNS spoofing)
 - AVID recognitions
 - Teacher honors and recognitions recipients
 - Classroom and teacher innovations
 - Program innovations and pilot projects
- Focus SPPS.org on highlighting exciting and successful accomplishments of Saint Paul students, teachers and the district. Avoid using the front page to convey things like reminders to existing families. That kind of practical information can and should be communicated in other ways such as on secondary pages, News and Happenings pages/newsletters and other district push-out communications.
 - Actively engage and participate positively and in a listening, non-defensive way in social media outlets where SPPS is being discussed (or criticized). When people complain, thank them for their feedback and offer to discuss the issue with them to find a solution (see how hoteliers are doing this now on TripAdvisor). Never get defensive, downplay, or debate angry or dissatisfied customers online. (Other parents can... but district must not engage in this.) Certainly correct misinformation that is being spread but do so in a positive, affirming and bridge building way. A dissatisfied customer, if appropriately addressed can be your most loyal and supportive future fan if their concerns are addressed with sincerity, openness and a desire to remedy the situation. In rare instances, where a disgruntled person is never happy despite earnest attempts by the district, the public tends to sympathize with the district.
 - Google maps...ensure accuracy and correct if erroneous. Hazel Park and Washington Technology Magnet are inaccurate (or were last time I tried to find them on Google!)
 - Double down on Great Schools.org... Start a campaign to get SPPS parents to honestly rate their experiences with our schools. Use this information as another

opportunity for continuous improvement. The goal should be 4.5 stars for every school.

- Generally, do not prioritize investment in paid POS or other mass paid advertising. It is not targeted nor efficient. It's not so much the district, but primarily individual schools the district needs to market. Of course, if the district is provided free advertising, take it! Find savvy ways to get free PR and free positive publicity. There may be some instances when targeted paid advertising is justified.

Strategy #12: Create a "Supply-side" Tracking System (What SPPS offers, where)

SPPS needs a data system to record and access information about what is available where in each school at any given time. SPPS can then use this data for many purposes including: matching what the district is offering where to what families want, studying participation, studying interest.

Tactics:

- Leverage our existing data systems (e.g. Infinite Campus) that is currently used to store information about all the courses offered in each secondary school.
- Start using Campus to list and register for activities and extracurricular offerings at every secondary site.
- There is work underway now by district staff to track instruction by subject in all elementary schools. Campus could be used for Elementary programs as well such as EDL, Discovery Club, Lego League, etc.
- Use this data as part of the Student Placement website backend that allows for added functionality such as filterable searches. (See Strategy #4)

Strategy #13: Explore Potential High-Demand Concepts to Appeal to Targeted Market Segments

- Create strategic planning including ROI for following:
 - expanded PreK; invest in developing strong PreK offerings which yield a high Kindergarten continuation rate.
 - Saint Paul Online K-12. Currently there are nearly 600 students in Saint Paul who attend online schools. The state reimburses districts at the rate of \$8000 per student and overhead is low. The district already has the capacity to do this. This could be a nice complement to the district's existing offerings and provide flexibility for families looking for this on a FT or PT basis.

- New partnerships with Post-Secondary. Look at expanding partnerships like the successful Gateway to College program and marketing it to out of district students looking for an alternative, supportive, college credit earning high school program.
- Evaluate former versus current Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program costs vs attracting and retaining large numbers of DHH students.
- New or expanded specialized program concepts:
 - Environmental, Experiential Focused Magnet (aka Upper Mississippi Academy)
 - College-Prep Oriented STEAM tracks (more theoretical but with Makers/Creator Labs... expanded industry/college partnerships)
 - New, vocationally-oriented STEAM tracks (highly popular now and could be expanded to attract students from outside SPPS)
 - East Metro Magnet for the Highly Gifted (See Strategy #5)
 - Current popular concepts such as Open World Learning (OWL), EXPO, Montessori, etc.
- New Middle School to serve East Side families
- Como, Humboldt, Harding and Johnson High School enhancements
- Re-energize our tradition of educational innovation. Use in-house experts, our teachers, to lead innovation, strengthen and build new programs.
- Technology-enabled personalized instruction

CUSTOMER INTERACTION SUGGESTED CHANGES:

Strategy #14: Improve School Choice, Placement Process and Recruitment

Is SPPS effectively and efficiently helping school shoppers learn about our offerings? What does the district need to improve so that school shoppers more often chose SPPS and have a positive experience?

Tactics for Improved School Choice:

- Enhanced web presence
 - Centralize the enrollment process; provide step by step instructions on line and in catalogue

- Promote all school tours on central district website as well as on each school's page
- Redesign Placement website to be recruitment focused. This will require a larger project but some of these things can be implemented in the near term prior to a major website redesign.
- Create marketing/recruitment orientation on placement front end (similar to what you see on college websites).

Ideas for messaging:

- “Welcome to Saint Paul Public Schools! Find your child’s school home here.”
- “We are committed to academic excellence, and recognizing the abilities and strengths of every child. We are committed to assisting each of our students develop their talents and reach their potential.”
- “In SPPS schools, not only will your child find extraordinary opportunities to achieve at the highest levels in academics, arts, and extracurricular activities, they will have the advantage of learning from some Minnesota’s best and most recognized teachers within a safe, supportive, and healthy environment. Only in Saint Paul Public Schools will students have the opportunity to experience wonderful programs that take advantage of our location in the heart of the region’s cultural, arts, higher education, and business Capitol city.”
- “Your child will emerge from SPPS ready to excel in college or career with the added advantage of gaining highly valued, multi-cultural competencies few youths have the opportunity to develop.”
- Include many search criteria and filters for families on school search portion of website... more and better self-help using a “shopping” interface that people are familiar with that allows them to select options based on their preferences (instructional models, course offerings and electives, activities, programs, athletics, transportation to your address, hours, Discovery Club, etc.). (use Campus data as background data engine to support this)
- Add option for no address searching (address field should be optional)
- Results return on search should include all highlights of the school rather than just a link. Include parent testimonials and at least one teacher profile for each school as part of the information provided. Include at least one non-academic cool thing about that school... (i.e. the relationship with Hamline University, the weeklong 5th grade Eagle Bluff trip, the award-winning jazz band, the Lego League tradition, after-school chess program, African Drumming Ensemble, etc.)

- Add a section on Student Placement website that offers centralized access, registration and information for all school admissions activities, events and deadlines. Standardize this process and require all schools to participate in this system. In return the district will help them coordinate and promote their events. This should include admissions showcase nights, school tours and shadowing, school fairs, a master district calendar of all admissions related events, etc. ***Ask people to pre-register online or in person upon arrival. The link to register for events should be included in all school communications to families. This contact information is GOLDEN. Even if families don't show up, this data becomes a very rich customer/marketing database of ACE families considering SPPS schools.***
- Add a one-on-one appointment with a placement specialist advisor option to website and collect contact information at that time.
- Transform the Student Placement Center into an impressive, exciting, attractive, high tech **Saint Paul Schools Welcome Center**.

Tactics for Improved Placement Process:

- Track what happens to enrollees who do not get their first or second choice.
- Over subscribe schools to reach building capacity. This will require a change in forecasting and more flexibility in staffing and classroom sizes.
- When people apply to school ask them to identify (rank) the characteristics most important to them in their school choice. This information can then be used to find a match for families if their choices are full. This will also provide on-going data showing the district what is most important and attractive to families. This data will be invaluable to shaping future programs and enhancing current offerings.
- Revise rejection letter to incentivize placement in an alternative preferred choice. Acknowledge the disappointment and frustration they must be feeling. Reassure families that the district wants to help them find a great fit for their child and can offer them information about other options in SPPS, out of district enrollment and charter options... etc.

Tactics for Better Recruitment and Retention:

- Hire a team of recruiters... a “field sales” staff who are partially compensated based on incentive pay tied to enrollment growth and/or retention in targeted areas. Focus on attracting and retaining out-of-district, PreK-K, Middle School retention/attraction, Hmong, Charters... Other?
- Promote and advertise admissions showcase events and school tours heavily to feeder schools but also in local papers, community calendars, ***in social media as Facebook events, link on twitter, publicize in Instagram*** and share on community pages and groups, etc. Most of this advertising is free.

- Target market to potential out-of-district enrollees...
 - Identify where OOD families are coming from now and how can SPPS reach more of them; submit admissions events to community calendars in neighboring districts
 - Target Saint Paul/Minneapolis and surrounding district charter school families aging out of schools for visits.... (Grades 5 and 8... Lake Country Montessori, others?) Create information sessions specifically for them in their school.
 - Ask are private schools (pre-schools, etc.) and charter schools if they are willing to have a presentation, if they are willing to send out an invitation to an event (find charter alumni families who are now happy SPPS families to help spread the word and provide trusted information and give the real scoop), or if SPPS can bring literature at a minimum.
 - Build relationships and provide some opportunities and resources to charter families in elementary and middle school; invite them to participate in a learning or community volunteer projects. Invite their community in for a **Doing Good Together** event for example. Look to other ways to develop relationships and build bridges.
- Start building relationships with middle schools EARLY! Bring middle school groups to the elementary schools and bring elementary families to the middle schools... do joint concerts, special projects, assign a mentor to elementary kids and/or families, bring student leaders in for leadership or citizen days or special trainings... have parents do a community project together, invite parents to PTO meetings, etc. Middle school tutors? Assistant coaches?
- Create **School Ambassadors** for every school.... These are loyal parents of current students, alumni, Grandparents and retired community members and parents who can help recruit for their school. Ask Ambassadors to:
 - Host house parties and/or info socials at community gathering spots (churches, coffee shops, etc.) for interested neighbors to come learn about the schools in their neighborhood and hear from parents with direct experience.
 - Share blurbs, general news, announcements, recognitions, events etc. about great things happening in their schools on social media and in neighborhood groups. Facebook is a free and very effective for marketing.
 - Place blurbs, stories, etc. in e-democracy and in community papers.
 - Participate in information sessions at other schools, etc.
- Target Saint Paul neighborhoods with larger out of district migration to other districts (West Side, East Side, North End, Como) for advertising and grassroots recruitment campaigns. Enlist existing families for support...
- Work with communications to always be in the know with “bragging” facts about each school. (See Strategy #11.)

VII. Next Steps

- I. Execute quarterly-phased, one-year implementation plan w clear executable action, objectives, and processes.
 - a. Assign tasks
 - b. Obtaining funding as needed
- II. Determine additional changes needed and incorporate into implementation plan
- III. Clarify further longer-range research projects. Source research assistance and resource requirements.
- IV. Discuss findings and enrollment growth initiative in series of public presentations. Seek input, ideas, and feedback.
- V. Provide resources and expertise as requested as part of SPPS Strategic Plan revisions and development

VIII. Appendix

- Summary of Research for Winning Students Report to SPPS
- SPPS MSS Bullying and Harassment by Frequency and School 2016
- Responses to Survey of SPPS Music Educators 2015
- Summary of Key, Near-Term Recommendations by Division

Winning Students for SPPS, Enrollment Growth Project

Summary of Discovery: research, data, studies, to date. June, 2017

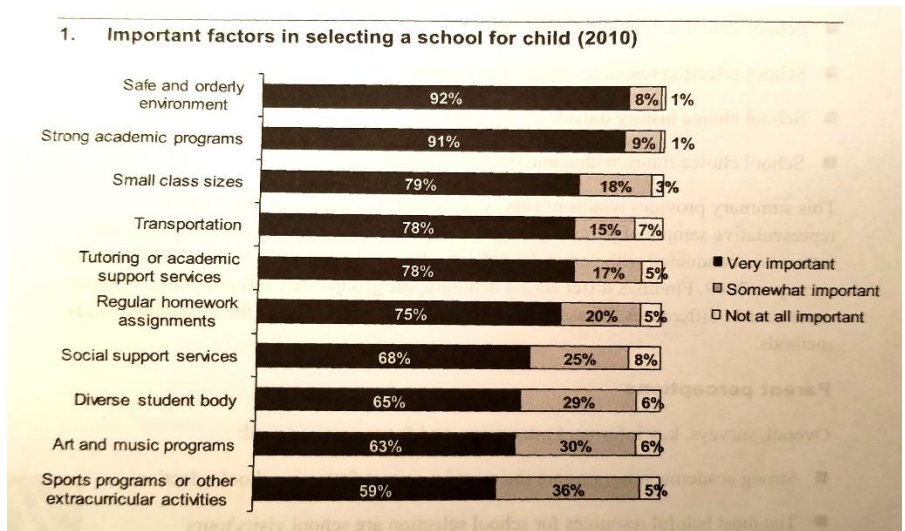
Study name/Type	Conducted by	Description														
<i>Minnesota Student Survey</i> , questionnaire, voluntary participation, 2016	Minnesota Dept. of Health and Minnesota Dept. of Education	Comprehensive student health survey of 5 th , 8 th , 9 th and 11 th graders. Questions of interest include related to school safety, bullying, participation, school activity availability.														
<p>Summary of related findings: Bullying for any reason in SPPS:</p> <p>Students report being bullied or harassed for any given reason weekly or more often in last 30 days: 5th Grade: Average: 15.6% (Range: 32.7% - 5.6%) 8th Grade: Average: 15.8% (Range: 19.4% - 10.4%) 9th Grade: Average: 11.2% (Range: 25% - 7.8%) 11th Grade: Average: 7.9% (Range: 9.8% - 6.4%)</p> <p>Additional research has been requested and is forthcoming.</p>																
<i>District enrollment projections and trends</i>	SPPS REA; MDE	Student movement within, in and out of district, between public, charters and out of district. Continuation rate analysis														
<p>Summary of related findings:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>School year</th> <th># public</th> <th># nonpublic</th> <th># charter</th> <th>School year</th> <th>% public</th> <th>% non-publ</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>37605</td> <td>7455</td> <td>9814</td> <td>15-16</td> <td>68.5%</td> <td>13.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Share of students attending SPPS has been declining since high in 1995-96 (79%). The rate of loss has accelerated since 2010. What has happened since that time? District divested in strong and popular programming (i.e. gifted education and consistent music and arts programming.) SSSC. School choice was more limited. Transportation became more limited. Behavioral and safety issues. Budget cuts that affected school-level staffing, services and programs. Other changes?</p> <p>Continuation Rate Analysis: Poorer performing schools have low continuation rates.</p>			School year	# public	# nonpublic	# charter	School year	% public	% non-publ	2015-16	37605	7455	9814	15-16	68.5%	13.6%
School year	# public	# nonpublic	# charter	School year	% public	% non-publ										
2015-16	37605	7455	9814	15-16	68.5%	13.6%										
<i>Minnesota Charter and District School Demographics, March 2017</i>	Center for School Change (MDE Data Center)	Enrollment over time by demographic groups.														
<p>Summary of related findings: (see stand-alone report)</p>																

<i>SPPS Course offerings by school</i>	Office of Teaching and Learning	Master list of approved courses for each school. Thought this data would be useful in determining the “supply” side of district market... What we are offering where.
<p>Summary of related findings: This is not what is currently OFFERED at each school...only what they are authorized to provide. We will need to determine the details that are important and collect data on what is offered... i.e. product features (courses, curriculum, academic/pedagogical features, co-curriculars, extra-curriculars, activities, services, etc.) for each school...</p>		
<i>“Premier Education” report</i>	Michelle Wall, Parent advocates	Case for quality, standards driven music education in all SPPS schools; Well-rounded/whole child education state and national mandates
<p>Summary of related findings: (see report)</p>		
<i>SPPS Family Feedback Survey 2015-16 (exit survey), questionnaire/telephone</i>	SPPS Office of Student Placement	Determine factors which contributed to families deciding to leave SPPS. Study was suspended due to lack of funding/staffing.
<p>Summary of related findings: Insufficient sample and response so results are preliminary and inconclusive. Results indicated that there were three main themes mentioned as contributing factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Climate/Safe and Welcoming (selected by 40%) • Individualized attention to meet specific needs of my child (selected by 42%) • Convenience Factors (selected by 12%) <p>Unsafe schools (selected by 31%) and my child was being bullied or harassed (selected by 25%) were the largest factors.</p>		
<i>Parent Conversations, qualitative study, one on one interviews, focus groups</i>	Saint Paul Schools Foundations, Ted Davis consultant	Better understand the dissatisfaction of SPPS parents whose children are statistically on the top of the achievement gap and determine if there are strategies that can preserve and strengthen the relationship btwn those parents and SPPS
<p>Summary of related findings: (see one page findings) Expressed Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top down administrative decisions • Lack of staff/parent voice in decision making • Over-emphasis on struggling students to detriment of high ability/high achieving students • School safety • School communications • Insufficient individualized attention 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts to music and the arts and other electives • Schools not responsive to parent concerns • Families looking at middle school • Low expectations for African American students • Lack of discipline in classroom • Too few African American teachers 		
<p>SPPS Superintendent Search: 33 Characteristics Report; Feb 2017; Community online questionnaire.</p>	<p>Superintendent Search Consultant</p>	<p>Board members, employees and other constituents were asked to select ten most desirable characteristics from 33 listed in the survey instrument. Characteristics chosen most in common by the various groups were recommended to the Board to be worthy of consideration.</p>
<p>Summary of related findings: Parents priorities in the new Superintendent: (Parent’s expressed #1 concern was not included in the recommended qualities for the Superintendent). Improving student achievement nor increasing academic quality were isolated questions in this survey. Top 3 parent responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes a positive school climate to ensure a safe learning environment • Demonstrates a deep understanding of racial equity and how it impacts teaching practices and student learning • Is a strong communicator; speaking, listening and writing. 		
<p>Report of feedback from Superintendent Search Community Meetings; group meetings and discussions, Jan 2017</p>	<p>SPPS Office of Communications; Superintendent Search Task Force</p>	<p>Four public community meetings and also district parent advisory councils were held throughout the district to gather input on desired characteristics of the new Superintendent.</p>
<p>Summary of related findings: Question: What are your greatest concerns? Here are the findings most closely related to enrollment. The responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School safety • Resource allocation to schools • More resources needed for services and programs (mental health and social emotional learning) • Inequities • Lack of diverse staff • Low academic achievement (lack of college and career readiness) • Lack of community engagement • Lack of funding 		

<p>School Choice in SPPS: Based on parent/guardian surveys, key informant interviews, and focus groups, 2009 and 2010</p>	<p>Wilder Research</p>	<p>SPPS commits to providing a premier education for all in the community. Study to understand factors in moving forward with school choice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School selection factors • School selection resources within the district • School choice history outside of the district • School choice future within and outside of the district
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Summary of related findings:



<p>COB Presentation Somali PAC</p>		
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Summary of related findings:

Bullying is not being addressed; free transport to charter; SPPS not reflecting beliefs, i.e. sexual preference inclusivity;

<p>COB Presentation Hmong PAC</p>		
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Summary of related findings: Why not a district-wide magnet w transportation; bullying

Survey of SPPS Music Educators 2016	Katie Sterns	Survey of all SPPS Music teachers in spring of 2016 to gauge effects of changes to music programming in SPPS schools.
<p>Summary of related findings: Quality of, and access to Music Education has been adversely affected by the elimination of the 7th period in Middle School as well as the elimination of music education in most SPPS elementary schools. The EDL after school music program has been, in many cases, not only severely insufficient and of poor quality, but damaging to future participation.</p>		
Facilities Conditions and Educational Adequacy Assessment Summary & District Capacity vs Enrollment by Site	SPPS Facilities	See table in report regarding capacity vs enrollment
<i>How do parents research and choose schools? Parent attitudes and behaviors when choosing schools, 2013</i>	GreatSchools.org	<p>Research to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does informing parents about their school options influence their decisions? • Why do families research schools? • What types of information are parents seeking? • How do parents use and interpret school ratings? • What is the role of “word of mouth” in parents’ school choice process?
<p>Summary of related findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When parents were provided information about their school options, they chose higher-performing schools for their children. • Parents go online to research schools when actively choosing a school, but also to more generally gather information about a school or track its progress. • Parents seek information and guidance from multiple sources to inform their school choice process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Top criteria for evaluating schools are academic achievement ○ After achievement parents look for info on practical matters specific to their needs, e.g. after-school care, diversity, extracurriculars. ○ Secondary sources of information are used for more insight and subjective factors like learning environment, teacher quality. Final decision often rests on firsthand experience. • Top criteria cited by Great Schools users for evaluating schools are good teachers, curriculum/academics, and school safety 		

Community Survey for Columbia Heights Public Schools , telephone survey, N170, Dec 2016	Springsted Incorporated,	Survey of families with students entering or leaving the District through open enrollment. (What draws people to the district and what draws them away?)
<p>Summary of related findings: Lots to look at here... curious how this data will impact planning efforts For incoming AND outgoing students... top 3 factors: Quality of teaching, safety, academic programs Other factors were also very important depending on the grade level and the particular interests, needs, etc. of the student and his/her family.</p>		
Parental Expectations for Their Children's Academic Attainment , Oct 2015	Child Trends	Child Trends' original analysis of the National Household Education Surveys.
<p>Summary of related findings: Parental income, educational attainment, and immigrant status strongly influence the educational attainment expectations for their children. It follows that parents with college-level expectations for their children will be seeking educational settings (schools) that will best prepare them both academically to do well in college, as well as prepare them to be competitive in the college admissions process.</p>		
What Parents Want: Education Preferences and Trade-offs August 26, 2013	Fordham Institute, Harris Interactive	<i>A National Survey of K-12 Parents on school choice</i>
<p>Summary of related findings: Study measures parent's preferred school characteristics and trade-offs when making school choice decisions. Findings show similar baseline qualities but then preferences differ and cluster around market segments. https://edexcellence.net/publications/what-parents-want.html</p>		
Public School Parents on the Promise of Public School Education July, 2013	Hart Research Associates for the American Federation of Teachers	Nationwide survey among parents of children in public K12 schools.
<p>Summary of related findings: Parents top goals for schools are to increase their child's knowledge in standards-based, comprehensive (well-rounded) subjects (parents reject a narrowed, test-driven curriculum), and provide a safe and secure environment for children. Parents top criteria for rating teacher quality is how well the teacher understands the individual needs of the students they teach. https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/american+federation+of+teachers/15c401c170b48509?projector=1</p>		

SPPS MSS Bullying and Harassment by Frequency and School 2016

What is your grade in school right now?			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons anytime in the last 30 days			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons weekly or more often in the last 30 days			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons every day in the last 30 days		
			Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
grade 5	School building	Benjamin E Mays Magnet	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%	32.7%	67.3%	100.0%	15.4%	84.6%	100.0%
		Paul & Sheila Wellstone Elementary	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%	31.4%	68.6%	100.0%	11.4%	88.6%	100.0%
		Eastern Heights Elementary	59.6%	40.4%	100.0%	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%	9.6%	90.4%	100.0%
		Cherokee Heights Magnet Elementary	52.0%	48.0%	100.0%	24.0%	76.0%	100.0%	12.0%	88.0%	100.0%
		The Heights Community School	59.7%	40.3%	100.0%	23.6%	76.4%	100.0%	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
		Daytons Bluff Elementary	59.1%	40.9%	100.0%	22.7%	77.3%	100.0%	6.8%	93.2%	100.0%
		Obama Service Learning Elementary	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%	22.6%	77.4%	100.0%	16.1%	83.9%	100.0%
		Hamline Elementary	53.7%	46.3%	100.0%	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%	7.3%	92.7%	100.0%
		Maxfield Elementary	46.9%	53.1%	100.0%	21.9%	78.1%	100.0%	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%
		Riverview West School of Excellence	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%	21.7%	78.3%	100.0%	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
		Battle Creek Elementary	45.8%	54.2%	100.0%	20.8%	79.2%	100.0%	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%
		Hazel Park Prep Academy	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%	20.8%	79.2%	100.0%	15.1%	84.9%	100.0%
		Linwood Monroe Arts Plus Upper School	53.7%	46.3%	100.0%	19.5%	80.5%	100.0%	7.3%	92.7%	100.0%
		Nokomis Montessori North	77.4%	22.6%	100.0%	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
		Four Seasons Elementary	51.0%	49.0%	100.0%	18.4%	81.6%	100.0%	4.1%	95.9%	100.0%
		Farnsworth Aerospace Upper School	43.8%	56.2%	100.0%	18.1%	81.9%	100.0%	9.5%	90.5%	100.0%
		JJ Hill Montessori	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	18.0%	82.0%	100.0%	6.0%	94.0%	100.0%
		Saint Paul Music Academy	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%	17.6%	82.4%	100.0%	5.5%	94.5%	100.0%
		Crossroads Montessori	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%	16.0%	84.0%	100.0%	4.0%	96.0%	100.0%
		Adams Magnet Elementary	51.9%	48.1%	100.0%	15.6%	84.4%	100.0%	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
		Frost Lake Elementary	47.0%	53.0%	100.0%	15.2%	84.8%	100.0%	9.1%	90.9%	100.0%
		Crossroads Science Program	53.7%	46.3%	100.0%	14.6%	85.4%	100.0%	2.4%	97.6%	100.0%
		John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary	44.7%	55.3%	100.0%	13.2%	86.8%	100.0%	2.6%	97.4%	100.0%
		Bruce F Vento Elementary	34.3%	65.7%	100.0%	11.9%	88.1%	100.0%	6.0%	94.0%	100.0%
		Highland Park Elementary	51.4%	48.6%	100.0%	11.4%	88.6%	100.0%	5.7%	94.3%	100.0%
		Como Park Elementary	35.6%	64.4%	100.0%	10.2%	89.8%	100.0%	8.5%	91.5%	100.0%
		Chelsea Heights Elementary	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%	4.0%	96.0%	100.0%
		Expo for Excellence Elementary	40.2%	59.8%	100.0%	9.8%	90.2%	100.0%	3.3%	96.7%	100.0%
		Groveland Park Elementary	44.2%	55.8%	100.0%	9.6%	90.4%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		L Etoile Du Nord French Immersion	37.1%	62.9%	100.0%	9.0%	91.0%	100.0%	2.2%	97.8%	100.0%
		Randolph Heights Elementary	22.9%	77.1%	100.0%	8.6%	91.4%	100.0%	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
		Horace Mann Elementary	21.8%	78.2%	100.0%	7.3%	92.7%	100.0%	1.8%	98.2%	100.0%
St. Anthony Park Elementary	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%	6.5%	93.5%	100.0%	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%		
Highwood Hills Elementary	43.8%	56.3%	100.0%	6.3%	93.8%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%	5.6%	94.4%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Total 5th grade			45.6%	54.4%	100.0%	15.6%	84.4%	100.0%	6.1%	93.9%	100.0%

What is your grade in school right now?			Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons anytime in the last 30 days		Total	Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons weekly or more often in the last 30 days		Total	Bullied or harassed for any of the given reasons every day in the last 30 days		Total
			Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
grade 8	School building	Farnsworth Aerospace Upper School	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%	4.2%	95.8%	100.0%
		Parkway Montessori Community School	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%	17.9%	82.1%	100.0%	5.3%	94.7%	100.0%
		Murray Middle School	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%	17.3%	82.7%	100.0%	5.1%	94.9%	100.0%
		American Indian Magnet School	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%	2.8%	97.2%	100.0%
		Ramsey Middle School	44.3%	55.7%	100.0%	16.5%	83.5%	100.0%	7.2%	92.8%	100.0%
		Linwood Monroe Arts Plus	40.9%	59.1%	100.0%	16.2%	83.8%	100.0%	4.5%	95.5%	100.0%
		Hazel Park Prep Academy	42.6%	57.4%	100.0%	14.8%	85.2%	100.0%	4.9%	95.1%	100.0%
		Battle Creek Middle	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%	14.6%	85.4%	100.0%	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
		Highland Park Middle School	48.1%	51.9%	100.0%	11.5%	88.5%	100.0%	3.8%	96.2%	100.0%
		Open World Learning Secondary	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%	10.4%	89.6%	100.0%	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
Total 8th grade			45.2%	54.8%	100.0%	15.8%	84.2%	100.0%	4.7%	95.3%	100.0%
grade 9	School building	Central Senior High	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%
		Harding Senior High	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%	12.3%	87.7%	100.0%	4.4%	95.6%	100.0%
		Creative Arts Secondary School	39.5%	60.5%	100.0%	12.1%	87.9%	100.0%	2.3%	97.7%	100.0%
		Como Park Senior High	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%	11.5%	88.5%	100.0%	3.8%	96.2%	100.0%
		Johnson Senior High	33.7%	66.3%	100.0%	10.2%	89.8%	100.0%	1.7%	98.3%	100.0%
		Open World Learning Secondary	26.4%	73.6%	100.0%	7.8%	92.2%	100.0%	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
Total 9th grade			34.6%	65.4%	100.0%	11.2%	88.8%	100.0%	3.3%	96.7%	100.0%
grade 11	School building	Johnson Senior High	26.8%	73.2%	100.0%	9.8%	90.2%	100.0%	2.4%	97.6%	100.0%
		Central Senior High	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%	9.3%	90.7%	100.0%	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
		Como Park Senior High	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%	9.2%	90.8%	100.0%	3.9%	96.1%	100.0%
		Harding Senior High	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Open World Learning Secondary	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%	3.0%	97.0%	100.0%
		Creative Arts Secondary School	28.7%	71.3%	100.0%	6.4%	93.6%	100.0%	2.0%	98.0%	100.0%
Total 11th grade			27.2%	72.8%	100.0%	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%	3.0%	97.0%	100.0%

SPPS Music Teacher Survey, Spring 2016

In which level of school do you teach?	Have you seen an increase in participation in your classes since the district has moved to a 7 period day?	If you have seen an increase in participation, how many more students are participating (in total) than had been when there were only 6 periods?
Elementary	NA	
Elementary	NA	
Elementary	NA	
Elementary	NA	
Elementary, Middle School	NA	We always had 7 periods, but enrollment has increased significantly in the last 3 years. Up around 100 students total.
Elementary, Middle School	No	
Elementary, Middle School	Yes	I have been teaching with the 7 period day for over 16 years and have seen the middle school orchestra grow from eight to 82. This is due to the presence of the elementary program and multiple levels, including beginning level, being offered in middle school. Access to any electives subject is dramatically reduced with fewer class periods. I transferred away from another SPPS Jr. high because they implemented a schedule that reduced class periods and I saw an immediate drop in participation. I caused problems for lanquages as well.
Retired; taught these levels	Not Sure	After-school programs not affected.
High School	Yes	Probably 15 percent
High School	Yes	30%
High School	Not Sure	
High School	Yes	About 50 students. Our numbers were big prior to the switch from 6-7 periods. We have grown a little despite the cuts of the past few years, and, we added a band for about 25 beginnners.
High School	Not Sure	
Middle School	na	
Middle School	Not Sure	

Are the students that are participating now more diverse than before?	Are parents supportive of their child's participation in music as evidenced by attending concerts, coming to conferences, etc.?	Are you currently being provided with adequate resources to meet the minimum needs of a quality program in your school?	Do you feel EDL is providing the same level or access to quality music ed as the previous, school day model for elementary students?
Yes=10	Yes=12	Yes=6	Yes=0
No=1	No=2	No=8	No=14
Not Sure=4	Not Sure=1	Not Sure=1	Not Sure=1
Total = 15	Total = 15	Total= 15	Total =15

School Level Taught	Please explain how you think music education has been impacted via district changes over the past 6 years. Include your observations on quality of instruction, participation, preparation for advanced studies, access and equity and any other observations, concerns or positives you wish to note.	If you are not currently being provided with adequate resources (funding for instruments, repairs, music, competition entry fees, instruction or administration assistance, etc.), what do you need to meet the minimum requirements of a quality program?
Elementary	As a current elementary music teacher, and one who has taught band in St. Paul both during the day and after school, as well as in other districts, the after school band program is not teaching anything to the students except the acceptance of mediocrity at best. I've seen the program in action at several schools and never seen the students get anything that I would even classify as a music education at all. It is, at best exposure to the instruments.	
Elementary	Our EDL program is worse than having no program at all because it is turning the kids off to band. We have had 3 teachers in 3 years with not much progress and incorrect teaching. Sadly our outgoing 5th graders have no interest in pursuing band in middle school.	more support for special ed students so class isn't interrupted as much
Elementary	Moving the band program after school means that far fewer students are able to attend band lessons and ensembles. Having band after school makes it less a part of a school day and more of an extracurricular activity.	
Elementary	Fewer music specialists, EDL is difficult to reach all students, I would like to see a blended program. There have been many studies that show the positive impact of music education, but these statistics do not seem to be important. Quality of after school instruction can be varied, depends on the training of the instructor. It has been difficult to find instructors for these programs, and they must have All students together, or the students are in other activities during that time... Forget instruments... It is difficult to schedule break out times for help with individual instruments. Beginners need encouragement and individual help. Can't be done easily with 25 -30 students in the space.	The problem... Position reduced, not materials
Middle	I was directly involved with the elementary program for many years and have seen the decline in quality of instruction with the EDL model. It has somewhat been minimized by including 6th grade in the middle school, but often that setting is not an ideal setup for beginning instruction (large groups with mixed instrumentation).	funding for instruments (very old inventory and not enough of the more expensive instruments like tubas, bassoons, oboes, etc.) and inadequate facilities, more expensive repairs not approved and not enough new instruments to replace them.
Middle	Although the EDL band program is being claimed as a success, the reality is that the students coming into MS are not nearly as prepared as when the instrumental program was a part of the regular school day. Student skill levels are woefully lacking.	Families are doing significant fund raising to support the needs of the program (kss)
Middle	The EDL Instrumental Music Program is a total disaster. When students come to middle school from the EDL program they have only completed pages 4 or 5 of the class method book. I have had to tell the counselors to put them into beginning band classes when they get to middle school. Because not all students can or choose to stay after school, there is a decrease in the number of students participating in instrumental music. This effects the numbers in middle school and consequently high school. It also effects instrumentation and the level of music we are able to perform. It is very difficult to find curriculum for the students to perform at that basic level. The structure of the EDL program does not allow enough time for quality instruction. It takes younger students longer to develop. A 30 to 40 minute lesson in a heterogeneous setting one a week is ineffective. One needs a homogenous lesson twice a week.	Funding for repairs is the greatest need.
Middle/Elementary	Following the program reductions that actually began over SEVEN years ago (February 2009, when 360C announced reduction of the elementary instrumental programs for a savings of a reported \$1.4M -- a questionable figure), the professional and learner/performer chaos-fallout has been manifested at all levels; teacher, student, community. http://www.twincities.com/2009/03/17/st-paul-schools-proposed-music-cuts-spur-protest/ My wife is also an elementary classroom music instructor in SPPS, and has twice (in 2010 and also 2014) been impacted by the resultant staff-placement (involuntary transfer by licensure seniority, per contract) issues which have resulted from this reduction process. In 2010, she was bumped from a position she had held for eleven years in one of the creative arts elementaries; in '14, her four-year position along with the daytime Band position in that building (which I then took over for the following '14 - '15 year with its moving to ALC/EDL after-school), was eliminated in a high-function Groveland/Highland/Mac elementary. http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/st-paul-s-expo-elementary-axes-music-curriculum/ Community response to this spring 2014 action was generally stonewalled at both the building and at the district levels. Without sufficient elementary performer preparation available in daytime access, performer skill-levels (not ABILITIES, by the way) have probably fallen off anywhere from fifteen to twenty percent. Some of my past colleagues (I retired in '12 at age fifty-nine after thirty-three years in SPPS, this action fully precipitated by this district arts-redirected and generally reduced performing-arts programs priority) would place this figure a good deal higher.	Funding for ALC is different-sourced. However, ALC/EDL is not a viable rationale or substitute for student daytime program access. In winter, do we really say justifiably to registrants and their parents "If you want to be in Band/Orchestra, you will need to carry your instrument home from the activity bus in the dark and in -20", in possibly high-risk neighborhoods..." ?? [This, in my view, is enormous disincentive, very thinly-veiled.] To return to the question, resources MUST begin with appropriate program access for students. Additionally, rehearsal and storage space in the ALC format have really become an afterthought, though, thankfully, co-workers will assist in this insofar as they may be able. 1.) Daytime Access Opportunity (not just those who are able to stay after school two afternoons per week). NOTE: This includes greater cooperation and student-participant encouragement by guidance departments at secondary levels as well, by the way..... 2.) Rehearsal space on-site 3.) Prioritization in the schedule (this will be tough for the daytimers if middle and high schools drop to six periods -- attempted at CH in 2001, by the way....) 4.) Sufficient storage for program inventory
Middle/Elementary	The retirement rate of our more senior music educators since the inception of this district strategy has risen markedly.	I had no music instruments for general music, not even shakers, bells, rhythm sticks, drums, my 4th grade classes played on buckets like homeless people and I bought the sticks
Middle/Elementary	I have been to three schools because of cuts since 2010, (one) will no longer have music, (another) will no longer have world drumming, and choir and music exploration was cut last year When the 6th grade was moved to the middle school, participation in my program increased an average of roughly 4 times. Classes can now also be offered at multiple experience/skill levels, which had not been possible earlier. The success at my specific location has been largely due to being full time in one location specifically for Orchestra, which gives me the opportunity to build the program from the elementary up. I can think of no other SPPS school with 2 full time instrumental music teachers OR which has a strings teacher dedicated to orchestra and specifically a band teacher for the band. Though Saint Paul does currently have a couple truly outstanding teachers who can do both well, they do not have time for multiple levels. Most thriving districts do have different levels and area specific teachers.	We do meet basic needs and our PTO has been very supportive, giving as many resources as possible. To truly meet growing student need and growing participation, there is always more that could be done.
High School	for the worse --the edl program is not managed 100% people without instrumental experience are teaching in it.	transportation fees
High School	The average player isn't as good as it once was. My biggest concern is a lack of general music at the elementary level	
High School	The overall music literacy continues to fall. The difference in skill level from elementary school to elementary school is obvious at the high school level and with NO vocal music at Murray middle, my beginning singers really have a steep road to climb to catch up with their suburban peers. Only the students with the means to take private lessons are able to truly compete. If they are able to stay in an ensemble for all four years of high school (which was extremely difficult with a six period day), they come are able to continue music study at the collegiate level with hard work.	
High School	Vocal music should be provided at all grade levels and in every school in order to provide a continuum of knowledge and skill development.	Funding for electronic equipment and more choral music.
High School	They have much less experience with notation, rhythms, sight reading, and, are behind in their development of tone, range, and articulation. They are not as prepared to play intermediate to advanced level band and orchestra literature.	All of the items you've listed. More access to, and more time with, consistent and routine individualized/small group instruction at the early years of development on their instruments.

Summary of Key, Near-Term Recommendations by Division:

Some recommendations below are self-evident and others require more research and/or vetting. In the event a recommendation requires more investigation and further planning it is assumed this would start within this period.

Leadership:

- Re-orient budget, funding, organizational structure and policy to support a focus on enrollment growth in order to enhance the district's financial stability. *Growth needs to be the priority* until district reaches greater fiscal stability and turned the corner on enrollment declines.
- Revise district policy to create a clear framework that articulates vision, goals and objectives and ensures "product" quality and consistency across district. Require measurable user satisfaction data collection imbedded in operations at key points.
- Reorganize the district to prioritize enrollment and retention (parent-satisfaction) focus. This would, by extension, positively reinforce achievement and equity goals as well as this is what parents also want.
- Create a commission to develop a bold vision and plan for a strong, equitable arts and music legacy for the district.
- Direct staff to pursue and seek grants to find innovative solutions such as public transport/district provided transportation hybrid partnerships, arts partners, new magnets, teacher led initiatives, personalized learning, revised market intel driven FMP, community engagement, etc.

Communications:

- EAT, SLEEP AND BREATH ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS!: Create easy to use, online "Success" repository and publicize on main website and on every school's website. Direct principals to include successes in all their communications with families and district as well.
- Create Facebook pages for all SPPS schools that don't have one and use it to promote school events, success stories and information to parents and the community. School *Ambassadors* (volunteers) can assist in keeping info up-to-date and sharing.
- Redesign district front page (SPPS.org) to focus on student (family) recruitment by highlighting SPPS student high achievement and success stories. Make practical and functional information easy to find on secondary pages.
- Create a campaign to request SPPS parents give accurate and honest feedback and rate their schools on Greatschools.org. Use the feedback to gather market intelligence and then use the information to improve operations, instruction, communications, to become more responsive to customers and to better meet

community desires. Incentivize principals to encourage participation (but not high ratings). Set goal of 4.5 stars in every SPPS school.

- Ask Principals, PTOs and PACs to help with recruitment and promotion in the community. Create a volunteer school **Ambassador** program in every school. Hold a district training and create a Facebook group for these volunteers where they can exchange ideas for promoting their schools on social media, at community events, etc..
- In addition to general enrollment campaigns, create additional targeted marketing and communications campaigns to attract strong, higher achieving students to help bring stability and strength to schools and support higher need, more capital intensive students.

Marketing and Market Research:

- Conduct study of Hmong community and enrollment trends and determine causal factors to Hmong enrollment loss. Identify opportunities to re-engage participation in the district.
- Start collecting market data including user experience and customer (parent/student) satisfaction data. Work with Enrollment Research Advisory Committee to identify key times to collect user data, leverage technology, build data collection into operations and start collecting data: at preK screening, during school search, at enrollment, at placement, at exit (time of record request), when transferring between schools within the district outside of normal transition times, 5th grade middle school desires/concerns survey, Pre-K, general satisfaction census at end of school year
- Develop customer marketing databases: create opportunities to connect with ACEs and gather contact information so SPPS can target communications and marketing to school shoppers and offer more efficient consultative and individualized placement services.
- Conduct Saint Paul Educational Market Segment study to inform creation of a balanced school “product portfolio” which reflects a strong and balanced mix of traditional (K12 Standards; instructor led) and specialized program offerings according to demand in Saint Paul. Specialized offerings include programs focused on students with unique learning characteristics/requirements (DHH, GT, etc.) and niche curricular models (Montessori, Language Immersion, STEM, experiential/environmental, etc.)
- Use existing resources and tools to create a robust “supply side” tracking system (what SPPS offers where...).
- Create plan to build relationships early between elementary schools and middle schools.
- Write a marketing plan for the district and eventually for each school.

Student Placement:

- Retool Student Placement as part of larger reorganization to create a Marketing, Recruitment & Retention division. Invest in recruitment staffing (enrollment increase incentive based pay), user-experience informed website and Welcome Center redesign.
- Capture data at time of school choice deadline and track what happens to students who do not get their first choice, their second choice schools.
- Revise school application to include a survey with a forced-rank school characteristics preferences survey.
- Promote admissions events and tours in a centralized location as well as push out to community and school sites.

Operations:

- Minimize system inflexibility which create barriers to enrollment growth.
- Create more access across regions (consider expansion and/or redefining “Reflecting St. Paul” to include reserving space for students from all regions in district magnets and popular programs as well as (or versus) reserving by lower income “blocks” (see Dallas school district initiative)
- move from a projections based on previous enrollment model to one that favors and supports enrollment growth with placement targets/growth goals for next year.
- Set and publicize minimum enrollment targets (i.e. 350-375 per school). Allow for a turn-around year and if targets not achieved relocate families to new schools (displaced families should get first choice for any school they qualify for within the district with transportation provided). Re-program the then vacant facilities with high-demand, district-wide magnet concepts. Consider provision for attendance proportionally by region in district-wide magnets (as an expansion of Reflecting Saint Paul).
- Create and invest in clear, desirable pathways/articulations for all SPPS students over the next two years. Focus on East Side, West Side and Como. Plan to build new traditionally programmed, regional schools where needed (i.e. East Side middle school) or create space for expansion by consolidating programs that are not sufficiently full where possible. Enhance facilities and program offerings in Como, Harding, Johnson and Humboldt High Schools.
- Investigate and start developing plans for expanded PSEO and postsecondary partnerships, Online K-12, and expanded PreK. Determine feasibility and ROI.

Union Negotiations:

- Explore flexible alternatives to hard class-size caps including teacher:student ratios, blanket exemptions in schools needing to reach capacity or under special circumstances (to allow for sibling attendance), etc.

School Climate:

- Communicate commitment and plan to continuous improvement school climate.
- Require all schools participate in MSS.
- Prioritize school climate and anti-bullying interventions at schools with most need.
- Look at district reorganizing to support this and make it a priority. Create specific goals and plans to achieve them. Evaluate and report on outcomes.

Finance:

- Do financial analysis and create a stability/actuarial model to understand costs to educate so that SPPS can create a more sustainable district with a diverse mix which achieves equilibrium between high-to-low capital intensive students.
- Determine baseline cost to provide consistent services and meet comprehensive academic quality offerings in all buildings (i.e. core and non-core instruction to meet the full K-12 Ed standards, administration, operations, etc.)

Instruction:

- Provide for the individual needs of each student- Refocus instruction on individual growth versus minimum proficiency and standardized testing.
- Create draft plan to articulate tiered service model that serves *all* students by ability, pacing requirements and readiness. Vet plan with area experts (e.g. University of St. Thomas, Special Education and Gifted Education, Dr. Thomas Shaff, etc.) and present to public for input. Consider creating *Young Scholars* programs in elementary schools and the addition of new magnet for highly gifted students (with tiered, needs based entry... see area districts such as Bloomington as example) as part of the plan.
- Offer “block math” (math at the same time across the whole school... students are then grouped flexibly by ability/achievement versus just by grade level) in all elementary schools as is currently available in some (SAP, Capitol Hill, Horace Mann?, others?)
- Provide training for elementary teachers in ability identification, using CogAT to individualize instruction, differentiation methods, etc.
- Share best practices to utilize technology enabled personalized instruction (iPads)

Endnotes

ⁱ SPPS does not have a comprehensive policy to address ability. Students with learning challenges and disabilities are protected by law and services are stipulated by law. The needs of students on the other end of the spectrum, i.e. gifted, high ability, etc., are not protected under law. In a norm based system, and certainly one that concentrates on minimum proficiency versus individual growth, the needs of these students often are neglected.

Several years ago the district adopted the CogAT test to help it look not only for a qualifying score for Capitol Hill, but also to help SPPS understand every child's unique spectrum of ability and areas of strength and where additional support would be helpful. CogAT should be used much more than it currently is. In fact, teachers should be given access to student's CogAT scores which are designed specifically to be used by teachers to guide instruction and by parents to provide enrichment. SPPS has also adopted local norming to help identify a more diverse and equitable representation within the GT identified student body.

SPPS, however, is not distinguishing need variation within that identified group. And the needs and accommodations between moderately gifted and profoundly gifted students is large. Moderately gifted students are likely well served in a neighborhood school with instructional differentiation. Highly and profoundly gifted students however (only 2-3% of the population), require much more radical acceleration and enrichment to ensure continued growth and sufficient academic challenge. It is unlikely students with this profile will be best served in a mainstream school and benefit from co-location in a more concentrated setting. These accommodations however, do not cost more than any standard classroom. It is for this reason that many enrollment and marketing savvy districts in surrounding suburbs have created specialized schools-within-a-schools and stand-alone programs to serve these students. This concept, as part of a comprehensive, consistent and research supported approach to serving all students of all abilities in SPPS could create a positive and healthier enrollment growth opportunity for the district.

In order for the district to deliver on helping each student reach their potential it is essential it acknowledges that every child comes to school as a unique being with unique strengths and challenges. The district would benefit by help every child grow, no matter where they start, and no matter where the other children their age may be.