



# Envision SPPS

## A well-rounded education for all students

### A well-rounded education at SPPS

At SPPS, we believe all students deserve the full range of educational opportunities and student supports that a robust, well-rounded education affords. They deserve nothing less.

A well-rounded education is one that meets the **Minnesota state's educational standards** by providing students with learning opportunities that give them the skills to succeed in school, college and career.

Building on a deep understanding of the **core essentials of reading, writing and math**, students are taught by **educators with expertise in science, arts, social studies, world languages, physical education and health** while having access to an array of enrichment opportunities. And as a team, educators work together to deliver **culturally-relevant lessons personalized to each student's specific needs**.

A holistic, well-rounded education also provides a broad range of school-based services such as a full-time counselor, social worker and nurse to **address students' social, emotional, mental and physical health**. There may also be other specialized **staff dedicated to family engagement** and to address the needs of students and families from specific cultural backgrounds.

### Eliminating barriers to a well-rounded education is within our reach

SPPS is **committed to managing our resources wisely** so we can fulfill our promise to families to prepare students to think critically so they can pursue their dreams and change the world. The time has come for us to implement **long-term, sustainable solutions** to ensure all students have equitable access to the well-rounded education they deserve now and into the future.

### School budgets determined by student enrollment

State and federal funds provide schools money for each student that attends a school. Additional funds are provided if the student has specialized education needs; is an English learner; is low-income; and to help schools be racially integrated.

That means a school's budget is based on the number and type of students that attend the school. So the larger and more integrated a school is, the larger the budget. **A complete budget provides schools with more resources to provide students a holistic, well-rounded education.**

### Envision SPPS workgroups

Tasked with aligning school facilities and programs, Envision SPPS is part of the strategic plan, SPPS Achieves. Envision SPPS is driven by 11 workgroups,\* totaling approximately 130 members composed of SPPS staff, parents, community partners and other organizations.

Each workgroup is focused on a topic area that, taken together, provides a holistic approach to illuminate the complexities around the challenges to delivering a well-rounded education. Workgroups have been tasked to identify findings to inform recommendations that will be proposed to the Board of Education.

#### \*Envision SPPS Workgroups

- College and Career Paths
- Early Childhood Education
- Enrollment
- Facilities Utilization/ Alignment
- Language Immersion
- Integration
- Middle School Model
- Montessori Pathway
- Special Education
- Talent, Development and Acceleration Service Pathway (TDAS)
- Well-rounded Education

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## Declining birth rates mean fewer students

Birth rates continue to decline in Minnesota and the city of St. Paul. This is a national trend that won't be turning around any time soon. Nationally, this is the sixth year in a row that the number of births has declined and the **lowest number of births since 1979**.

Fewer children being born means fewer students are entering our schools. **SPPS cannot afford to continue to maintain schools that are significantly under enrolled.**

Historically, SPPS has financed under-enrolled schools through its general education budget to help keep their doors open. But to do so means taking resources from schools that have enough students to maintain a robust, well-rounded education program. If we continue to chip away at well-rounded programs across the school district, more and more students are denied the strong education they deserve.

## Solutions and timeline

SPPS will continue to support effective school programs with strong student enrollment. For programs with too few students to maintain a complete budget, **a range of solutions and options are being considered to pool resources such as co-locating, combining, merging, relocating, and yes, closing schools and programs.** Some sites may share space with organizational partners to enhance services to the school or surrounding community. No building will be sold.



Recommendations will likely mostly involve **elementary schools, and some middle school programs and related secondary pathways may also change.** Most boundary changes will stay the same, but some adjustments may be made to maximize access and integration.

## Timeline for implementation

Some solutions will likely begin to be **implemented in fall of 2022 while others will be phased in over two or more years depending on the site.** Additional program changes may be proposed in the future. Solutions and recommendations will be provided to the Board of Education in late fall 2021.

## School communities envisioning new well-rounded programs

As more details emerge about recommendations and solutions, SPPS will continue to inform families and staff. Once specific school sites are identified, those school communities will be involved in a process to envision how best their school can reflect its students, staff and neighborhood.

Together, school communities will be able to build a strong, welcoming well-rounded program that supports its students, families, staff and community.

