



## Community Values Engagement Events

In October and November 2023, SPPS hosted four community meetings to help inform the FY25 budgeting process. The first event was an All Parent Advisory Council (All PAC) meeting, and the other four events were open to all Saint Paul Public Schools staff, families and community members. Engagement events brought 360 members of the SPPS community together in total.

The event focus groups asked questions around the purpose of school, how SPPS graduates would be described in the future and the ideal school environment.

Focus groups were offered in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Karen. Other languages were available for interpretation if requested during event registration.

The focus groups yielded rich discussions on values across all languages. Similar themes appeared across all rooms and sessions, while some themes were specific to a language group.

When asked to complete the phrase “I believe the purpose of school is...”, responses included themes of learning, career-readiness, culturally responsive instruction, college-readiness, safety and overall preparedness for after graduating from high school.

An overall feeling of safety was the most commonly discussed theme when participants were asked, “What would you like to hear your child/children say to you about their schooling experience?”. This ranged from safety in terms of feeling like they belong in a space to physical safety, such as a protected building from outside threats.

Additionally, family members across all groups discussed the importance of a positive school and district environment citing that they wanted their children to be happy, love/enjoy school, engaged in classes and passionate about their learning.

During the discussion around the question, “how do you want to describe an SPPS graduate?”. We heard about being prepared for after graduation, being career-ready and being college-ready. Additionally, this question yielded responses involving a desire for students to be proud of their SPPS education.

Karen families focused on the importance of their children learning more about Karen culture, including eating Karen meals and learning more of their history. Culturally responsive instruction involving Karen community and culture were highlighted in how they want their children to experience SPPS. Karen participants added in the idea of teaching respect and being a responsible citizen throughout the engagement events. In Somali spaces, the importance of going to college/university after high school and being intelligent were highlighted.

During the Spanish focus group at Como Park Senior High School there was also a focus on athletics and, by extension, the idea of allowing students to participate in activities they are interested in.



In English speaking spaces, email was highlighted as the best way to communicate about the FY25 budget. In spaces where English was not the primary language (Spanish, Somali, Karen, Hmong), translated phone calls were highlighted for communication about the FY25 budget. The most commonly requested piece of information about the budgeting process was a list of what is being funded currently and then the final list of what is being sustained. Additionally, a running record of meetings and event summaries were requested so those who attended meetings could see progress based on conversations.



## Appendix A: Protocol

I believe the purpose of school is:

How do you want to describe an SPPS graduate?

Choose 3 statements you would like to hear your child/children say to you about their schooling experience.

How would you like to receive communication and updates regarding the FY25 budget?

What information would you like provided about the SPPS budgeting process?