



SPPS FY25 Budget Engagement Summary

Introduction

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) highly values input from the community as we work to create a budget that reflects the priorities of the students, families and staff we serve. SPPS has been engaging with students, families and staff about what they value in education through community engagement sessions and surveys throughout 2023. Feedback gathered from the surveys and engagement sessions will be used to help inform budget decisions for the 2024-25 school year, also known as fiscal year 25 (FY25).

What We Heard From You





Across survey responses and engagement events, we learned that the SPPS community highly values:

- Students' overall feeling of safety (both physical safety and emotional wellbeing)
- Students' ability to choose and access learning opportunities they are excited about
- Student voice and perspectives being embedded in school culture and decision-making
- Students are ready for post-secondary education and/or careers
- Inclusive and culturally responsive instruction
- Hiring staff that reflect the student population

Finally, **the importance that our community places on fostering a positive school and district culture cannot be overstated.** Students' engagement in their learning and feeling like they are part of a respectful school community go hand in hand.

How We Engaged With You

Timeline

 Marnita's Table Community Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two community engagement events hosted by Marnita's Table at Washington Technology Magnet School and Humboldt High School 	Spring 2023
 Student Convenings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight student convenings with SPPS high school students at the Black Youth Healing Arts Center 	Spring 2023
 Community Values Engagement Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five language-specific sessions with SPPS Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) • Four community engagement sessions at East African Elementary Magnet School, American Indian Magnet School, Como Park Senior High School and Humboldt High School 	Fall 2023
 Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three surveys administered to students (grades 6-12), families and staff 	Fall 2023



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS = 10,739

Engagement Activity Summaries

Marnita’s Table Community Conversations

In spring 2023, SPPS worked with a community partner, Marnita’s Table, to host two community conversations focused on discussing the SPPS Achieves strategic plan and the district’s work using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Marnita’s Table Community Conversations	257 Total Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none">Washington Technology Magnet School April 25, 2023Humboldt High School May 4, 2023
	Discussions centered around authentic connection/belonging, educational success, an SPPS graduate’s future, the strategic plan, safety and “dream schools”.
	While some groups discussed belonging, inclusion and feeling welcomed differently, it was clear that these values are important to those who attended.
	Students, families and community members identified opportunities for engagement and adding their voice as well as access to more class choices as things they highly value.
	Learning about other people and their cultures as well as an overall sense of inclusion are strong values.
	The top two values from those who completed the exit survey are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The idea of belonging within the community and SPPSThe importance of student voice and perspective

Read the full [Marnita’s Table Community Conversations Report](#).

Student Convenings

In spring 2023, students from eight SPPS high schools participated in Student Convenings with their peers for conversations facilitated by the SPPS Office of Equity. Each group of students spent a full day at the Black Youth Healing Arts Center discussing their experiences in high school. Superintendent Gothard attended all eight sessions with the students. 431 students participated across the eight days.

Student Convenings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Highland Senior High School April 27, 2023 105 Participants● Central High School May 3, 2023 88 Participants● Washington Technology Magnet High School May 9, 2023 40 Participants● Harding High School May 10, 2023 26 Participants● Open World Learning May 11, 2023 64 Participants● Como Park High School May 17, 2023 36 Participants● Johnson High School May 18, 2023 47 Participants● Humboldt High School May 25, 2023 23 Participants
	<p>Many high school students experience their high schools as spaces where the school climate and culture is often a barrier to learning. Students feel this is due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● differential treatment based on race, ethnicity, culture and identity● escalating stress and anxiety● inability of the school to articulate, communicate about and ensure physical safety● lack of racial ethnic and cultural representation in classrooms● restricting access to essential school resources such as bathrooms● teachers' disinterest, lack of respect for students, and inability to facilitate learning in relevant and engaging ways
	<p>High school students value a school climate and culture that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● access to school resources● a network of friends, acquaintances and peers● outreach from support staff● teachers that build connection to the curriculum and reflect care for the student as a successful learner● trustworthy adults

Read the full [Student Convenings Report](#).

Community Values Engagement Sessions

In October 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. Approximately 360 people attended the five events.

Community Values Engagement Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All PACs Budget Engagement Session October 13, 2023 55 Participants• East African Elementary Magnet School October 17, 2023 30 Participants• American Indian Magnet School October 23, 2023 66 Participants• Como Park High School October 25, 2023 139 Participants• Humboldt High School November 16, 2023 70 Participants
	<p>When asked to complete the phrase “I believe the purpose of school is...”, common responses included themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning• College and career readiness• Culturally responsive instruction• Safety• Preparedness for after graduating from high school
	<p>Safety was most commonly discussed when asked, “What would you like to hear your child/children say to you about their schooling experience?” Safety was discussed in both physical and emotional terms.</p>
	<p>Family members across all language groups desire a positive school and district culture and want children to be happy, engaged in classes and passionate about learning.</p>

Read the full [Community Values Engagement Sessions Report](#).

Community Values Surveys

A community values survey was sent to all SPPS families, all staff and 6-12th grade students in October 2023. Below is a high-level summary of the results.

Community Values Survey Response Numbers and Rates

Group	Number of Responses	Response Rate
Students (grades 6-12)	3,347	20.28%
Staff	1,998	25.64%
Families	4,346	12.01%

The surveys asked questions about the purpose of school, how respondents would like to describe an SPPS graduate, and the ideal school environment. Family and student surveys were available in English, Hmong, Spanish, Somali and Karen. Full text of the surveys can be found in the [Community Values Surveys Report](#).

Community Values Survey Highlights

Highest Rankings			
	Students	Families	Staff
Students have friends	●		
Students have access to activities that interest them	●	●	
Students feel safe	●	●	●
Students feel successful and happy	●		
Students are critical thinkers who are ready for next steps		●	●
School should help students gain self-knowledge, find personal sense of purpose and better understand their values	●	●	●

Read the full [Community Values Surveys Report](#).

For more information about these community values, the FY25 budget timeline and to share your feedback, please visit spps.org/FY25budget.