

Superintendent Leadership Profile

Saint Paul Public Schools

October 22, 2024

The Saint Paul Public Schools Leadership Profile is built on data collected through:

- Individual interviews with members of the Board of Education;
- Focus groups with staff, administrators, union leadership, Parent Advisory Councils, students, and community partners;
- In-person and online open forums conducted in English, Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Spanish; and an
- Online survey open to all members of the SPPS community.

BWP consultants analyzed the data and what emerged were criteria that describe the skills, experiences, knowledge, and personal qualities that your community believes are essential for your next superintendent.

The Leadership Profile suggests that the next SPPS superintendent must be able to build upon the district's strengths and address its challenges. To do so, this leader must bring to the position personal qualities and values that will support the building of relationships across the school district and cultivate partnerships with community groups to better serve students.

SPPS Strengths to Build On

- **Diverse Programs and Services:** SPPS is recognized for its inclusive approach to diversity, offering a wide range of programs that welcome and serve students from various cultural, linguistic, and learning backgrounds.
- **Student Support:** SPPS schools are committed to providing support systems to ensure student success and promoting physical and mental well-being.
- **Community Pride:** St. Paul residents' pride in their community is a valuable asset to the district. SPPS employees include many former students and residents who choose to live in St. Paul.
- **Partnerships:** The district has a strong network of partnerships with local businesses and organizations to enhance student opportunities and resources.

These community partners are committed to offering services to bridge gaps and support students.

- **Committed Staff:** Staff members are dedicated and hardworking. They have the best interests of students in their hearts.
- **Diversity:** SPPS reflects the diversity of St. Paul. This diversity is a strength and enriches the lives of students and residents. The diversity of the community and schools is valued by families.

SPPS Challenges to Address

- **Academic Outcomes:** There is a need to improve student achievement outcomes and increase high expectations for all students to reduce or eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps.
- **School/District Collaboration:** There is a strong sense that schools are siloed, lacking connection to one another and the district as a whole. The next leader will need to work with principals and administrators to take steps to bring greater coherence to the curriculum, instructional practices, and policy and procedure implementation.
- **Facilities:** The superintendent will need to optimize district facilities in alignment with enrollment changes and address ongoing challenges in maintaining and upgrading school infrastructure to ensure equity across buildings.
- **Budget and Finances:** Facing financial constraints and the need for strategic budgeting, the superintendent must have a solid understanding of financial management and the ability to make difficult decisions that prioritize student success.
- **Enrollment:** Declining enrollment is a critical issue. The superintendent will need to implement strategies to attract new students and retain existing ones, ensuring resource allocation matches enrollment needs.
- **Staff Diversity and Cultural Integrity:** SPPS needs a superintendent who can increase the diversity of the staff and administration to better reflect the students the school district serves. All SPPS employees must be prepared to support culturally competent schools, classrooms, and instruction.

- **Trust:** The next superintendent must work with staff, students, parents, administration, and union leadership to develop collaborative systems and transparent practices that bridge gaps and build mutual understanding and trust.
- **School Safety:** Every child deserves to feel safe at school. The superintendent needs to address concerns to create schools to ensure the physical and emotional safety of students.

Essential Leadership Qualities

- **Instructional Leader:** Possesses a strong instructional background with a proven record of improving student outcomes, closing achievement gaps, expanding equitable opportunities, including career readiness, and empowering educators to create impactful, data-driven learning for all students.
- **Cultural Integrity:** The next superintendent must be deeply committed to language and cultural advocacy, equity, and leading initiatives that promote a culture of inclusivity and respect for all students, staff, and families.
- **Equity Advocate:** A leader who advances equity initiatives, ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, has access to high-quality education and equal opportunities for success. They should address inequalities, eliminate barriers, and combat racism across policies, programs, services, and curricula.
- **Trust Builder:** Collaborating and building trust at all levels of the organization—staff, unions, families, and the broader community is key. The next superintendent must foster an environment of transparency and mutual respect.
- **Relationship Builder:** The ideal candidate will have an approachable personality, connecting effortlessly with all stakeholders, from board members and community leaders to staff and students. Building authentic relationships will be central to their success.
- **Experienced in Similar Districts:** Experience working in a district with similar demographics, challenges, and strengths to SPPS is essential. The superintendent must understand the unique needs of diverse urban school districts and be prepared to bring innovative solutions.
- **Active Listener:** Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills, a visible presence, and the ability to listen to and engage effectively with diverse groups. The superintendent should be adept at engaging with students, staff, parents, and

community in difficult conversations while maintaining strong relationships and applying what is shared and learned in making decisions.

- **Political Ally:** The next superintendent must work collaboratively with the Board of Education, partnering with it to advocate for SPPS with government officials and community organizations.
- **Committed:** The community wants a superintendent who seeks to “get to know” St. Paul. Actions and decisions need to respect the history of the city and build upon its unique history, culture, and civic pride.
- **Strategic Thinker:** A leader with proven change management skills and a track record of collaboratively developing plans with the community aligned with the district's strategic plan, mission, and vision within decision-making processes across the district.