

SIXTIMES

FALL 2024



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SIX



WELCOME TO THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR!

CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY OF IMPROVEMENT

As Superintendent of South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS), I am proud of the progress and plans shaping the future of our schools. This fall, we continue our collective effort to ensure every student in our district thrives academically and personally, equipped with the skills needed for future success.

One highlight is the release of the 2023-24 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) scores. Over the past four years, SSPPS has been trending in the right direction. We've seen steady improvements in reading, math, and science scores, inching closer to state averages. While we're proud of this progress, we recognize that there is still work to be done. Our commitment to continuous improvement remains strong, and we're confident the strategies/tools we've implemented will continue to close achievement gaps.



TOOLS SUCH AS:

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):

This approach allows us to provide personalized academic and social-emotional support to students across all grade levels.

Talent Development and Advanced Academics: Providing enrichment opportunities for students who need an extra challenge.

New Curriculum and Training: CORE learning training coupled with programs like UFLI and Wit & Wisdom are helping to build strong reading foundations. Science is also receiving renewed attention, with elementary students engaging in hands-on learning through our new Science Specialist classes.

With these tools and strategies in place, we are confident in our ability to keep moving forward and close achievement gaps. Thank you for your continued support of South St. Paul Public Schools. Together, we are building a bright future for all our students, creating a district where every learner is empowered to succeed. While we celebrate our progress, we remain committed to the work ahead, ensuring SSPPS continues to grow and thrive.



Dr. Brian Zambreno
SSPPS Superintendent

SSPPS ANNUAL REPORT

The South St. Paul Public Schools Annual Report is a snapshot of our district statistics from the previous school year, 2023-2024. You can find the most up-to-date Annual Report Fact Sheet on our website at www.sspps.org/about/about-sspps.

2023-24 ENROLLMENT

2,917

Total Students

217

Early Learning (PreK/ECSE)

549

Kaposia Education Center (K-5)

593

Lincoln Center (K-5)

589

Middle School (6-8)

868

High School (9-12)

101

Community Learning Center (10-12)

2023-24 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

641

Students involved in at LEAST ONE ATHLETIC program (grades 6-12)

142

Students involved in at LEAST ONE ACTIVITY program (grades 6-12)

468

Students involved in MORE THAN ONE athletic/activity program (grades 6-12)

60

Students involved in at least one Affinity Group (grades 6-12)

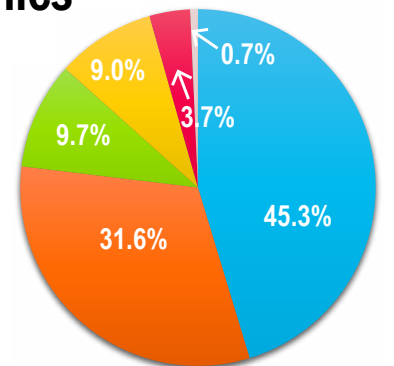
53

Students who earned an Academic Letter (grades 10-12)

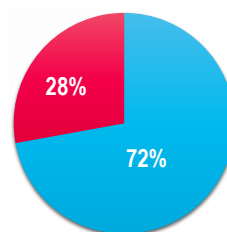
3.7+ GPA for all 3 trimesters in one school year

2023-24 DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

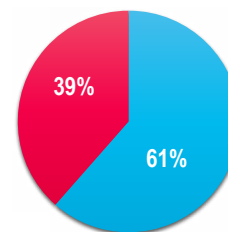
White (non-Hispanic)	45.3%
Hispanic	31.6%
Multi-Racial	9.7%
Black (non-Hispanic)	9.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.7%
American Indian	0.7%



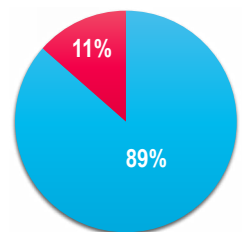
2023-24 TEACHER PROFILE



72% With Master Degrees



61% With more than 10 years experience



11% With fewer than 3 years experience

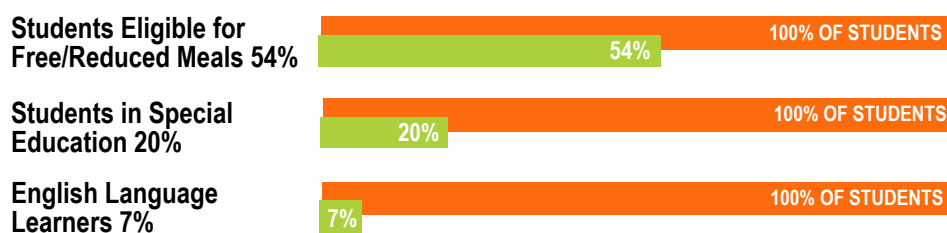
2023-24 SSP COMMUNITY EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

5,882 Total Participation in all Community Education Youth Programs

8,022 Total Participation in all Community Education Adult Programs

248 SSP Senior Center Members- Run by Community Education

261 Adult Education Participants- Includes 15 Adult Education Graduates (GED)



STAY CONNECTED!



NEW HORIZONS: CONTINUING TO BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Our dedication to academic excellence and raising our student test scores remains a top priority. Recognizing the need to enhance our students' academic journey and empower them to shape their educational paths, we are committed to driving meaningful change. In 2023 we introduced our **Packer Pathways**- A replacement of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years and Middle Years programs. The sunseting pf the PYP and MYP programs enabled SSPPS District Leaders to explore and implement curriculum

that better fits the needs of our students. With the changes implemented this school year, we are better equipped to: help students in need of additional academic support, keep students engaged in the classroom, and further challenge the students who required extra academic stimulation. Read more about **Packer Pathways** in the Academics Section of the sspps.org website.

TEST SCORES TRENDING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The Minnesota Department of Education recently released 2023-24 state test scores. Over the past four years, South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS) have seen encouraging upward trends in student test scores. While we recognize we are not where we need or want to be, we're proud of the strides we're making and the solid foundation we're putting in place to drive continued improvement.

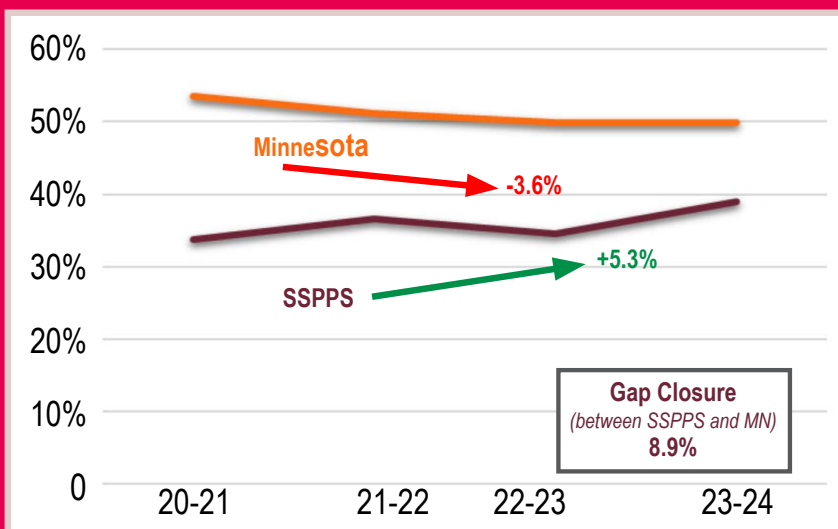
Each year, we move closer to closing the achievement gaps between our district and the state averages in reading, math, and science. This progress reflects our district's commitment to fostering student growth, enhancing instruction, and providing targeted support where it's needed most.

Though we acknowledge there is still work to be done, we are confident that we are trending in the right direction. The strategies and initiatives we've implemented are designed to build on this momentum, ensuring that every student can achieve academic success.

The graphs below demonstrate the steady gains in MCA test scores over the past four years, showing our district's growth in comparison to the State of Minnesota. With a focus on continuous improvement, we are well-positioned to close these gaps and help our students reach new levels of achievement.



READING



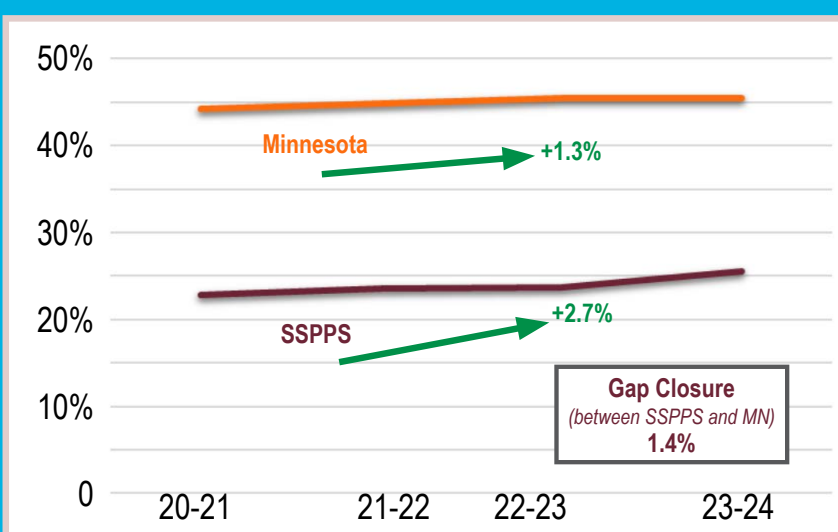
STRENGTHENING LITERACY FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS

At SSPPS, we believe building strong reading skills at an early age is key to academic success. Over the past two years, our elementary teachers have been dedicated to enhancing reading instruction, and their hard work is paying off. Through the implementation of cutting-edge reading programs like UFLI and Wit & Wisdom, we've seen a notable 5.3% increase in student reading scores.

These programs, which align with Minnesota's new READ Act, were already part of our district's approach before the legislation passed. This proactive focus has positioned us ahead of the curve in ensuring our students develop the foundational skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

In addition to these innovative programs, our educators dedicated their summer to completing CORE Learning training, as required by the READ Act. This intensive training equips teachers with the latest research-backed strategies to help all students reach their full potential.

MATH

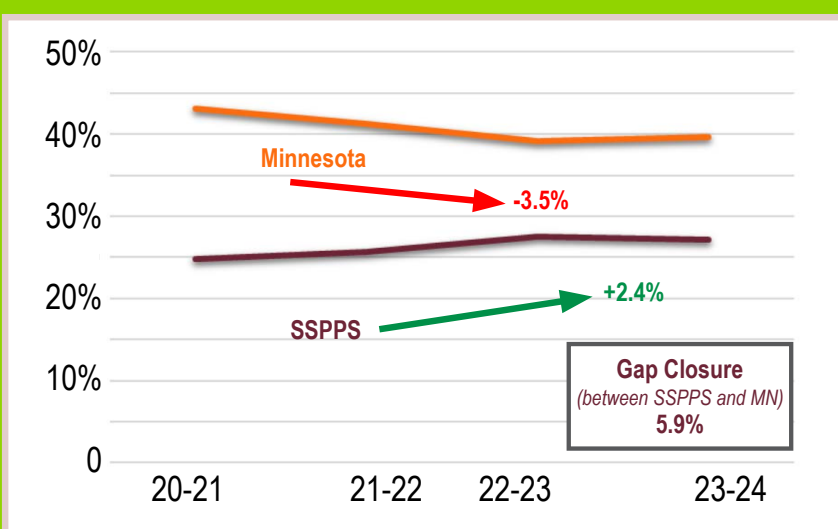


BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION IN MATH

SSPPS is committed to helping every student develop a deep understanding of math fundamentals. Our teaching staff has worked hard to update the math curriculum to align with Minnesota State Standards. At the elementary level, we've adopted the Math Expressions program, which combines traditional instruction with hands-on learning. This approach encourages students to explore math concepts through real-world problem solving and collaborative learning, helping them grasp not just the "how," but the "why" behind math processes.

As students progress through our system, we provide targeted support to ensure they stay on track and feel confident in their math skills. In elementary school, students who need extra help participate in small group interventions and in the Middle School students are in a class that gives them a preview of grade-level lessons preparing them for their regular classroom lesson.

SCIENCE



A NEW SCIENCE EXPERIENCE

This school year, our elementary students are experiencing the excitement of hands-on learning through our new Science Specialist class. Using the **Mystery Science** curriculum, students explore a wide range of topics, from animals and nature to the solar system and weather. Each lesson is designed to be interactive, engaging students in experiments and activities that encourage curiosity and discovery. What makes this even more meaningful is that the lessons align with Minnesota's new Science Standards, rolled out this school year. This approach not only makes science enjoyable, but it also fosters creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking—skills essential for future academic success.

As we continue to prioritize science, our district is conducting a thorough review of the science curriculum for grades 6-12 during the 2024-25 school year. This review will ensure our science programs remain up-to-date with the latest standards and best practices, keeping pace with the rapidly evolving world of science. By strengthening our curriculum, we aim to equip students with the problem-solving and critical thinking skills they need to succeed in higher education and beyond.

Packer Pathways is a comprehensive academic strategic plan aimed at enhancing personalized learning and support for students from birth through graduation and beyond.

SUPPORT FOR EVERY STUDENT'S SUCCESS

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

South St. Paul Public Schools utilizes the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Model to provide high-quality instruction and social-emotional support across all grade levels and schools. Using the MTSS model, our educators can quickly identify and respond to each student's unique needs in both academics and behavior, which in turn will help them thrive. MTSS has three levels of support called "tiers" to help students get what they need for academic success.

- **Tier 1:** High quality instruction for all students in the classroom through classroom subject lessons
- **Tier 2:** Students who need extra help get small group support or targeted lessons to help them catch up or better understand the material
- **Tier 3:** Students who need even more specialized support and instruction- which may include special education

The school works with counselors and parents/guardians when a student is advised to enter Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention services.

NEW TALENT DEVELOPMENT/ADVANCED ACADEMICS PROGRAM CHALLENGES AND INSPIRES YOUNG LEARNERS

This year, Kaposia and Lincoln elementary schools launched Talent Development and Advanced Academics programs, designed to enrich students' academic experiences and build on their strengths. These programs, aligned with the Pathway to Packer Promise, ensure that all students have opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

OPENING DOORS FOR YOUNG TALENT

Recognizing diverse learning styles, these programs focus on early identification of students needing additional academic challenges. By broadening the criteria beyond test scores, they create pathways for all students to succeed.

PRIMARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (PEP) FOR GRADES K-2

PEP identifies young learners with advanced potential through indicators like creativity, problem-solving, and engagement, rather than relying solely on standardized tests.

ADVANCED ACADEMICS IN LITERACY FOR GRADES 3-5

Students in upper elementary participate in Reading Circles led by Talent Development Specialist Jake Knaus. These groups engage in deep discussions around novels, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and a love for literature.

A COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS

"These new programs tap into students' potential," said Knaus. "We're ensuring every student has the opportunity to be challenged, explore new ideas, and build essential skills for the future."

These initiatives reflect SSPPS's dedication to creating a dynamic learning environment that supports the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators.



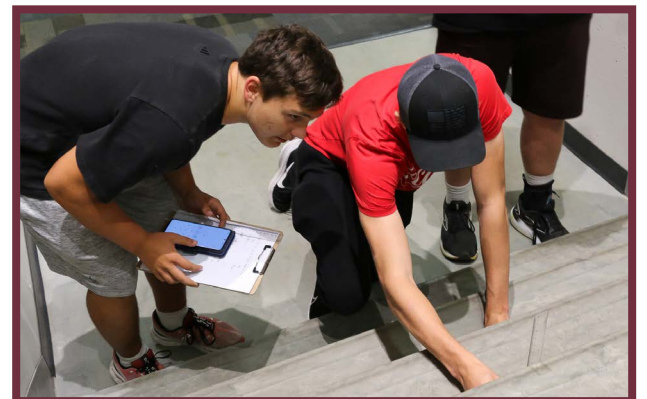
More information on our curriculum, the Talent and Development/Advanced Academics program, and our College and Career Advising Program can be found at www.sspps.org/academics.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING

We know each student learns at their own pace, and we are committed to ensuring all learners have the support they need to succeed. Our intervention programs provide targeted reading and math support for students who need a little extra help. Through small group sessions, intervention teachers offer individualized attention, focusing on specific reading skills and math concepts that allows students to build confidence alongside peers with similar needs.

For students excelling in reading and math, we offer enriched opportunities through our Talent Development and Advanced Academic programs, which are designed to challenge advanced learners. You can read more about these exciting programs in the article below.

This personalized approach ensures that students receive the help they need while staying connected to their grade-level curriculum, creating a seamless learning experience that fosters both growth and inclusion.



COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISING RETURNS TO SSP HIGH SCHOOL, OFFERING STUDENTS PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

South St. Paul High School is pleased to reintroduce its College and Career Advising program, part of the district's Pathway to Packer Promise. This initiative helps students explore post-secondary options, ensuring they graduate with a clear plan for college, technical education, or career paths.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

College and Career Advisor Lael Booth connects students with resources like representative visits, college fairs, and personalized advising. Booth brings in representatives from colleges, technical schools, and career programs, helping students explore various post-high school options, including trades and gap years.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

SSP students also attend off-site events, such as Career Connect Day at the St. Paul RiverCentre, where they meet professionals and explore diverse industries. These events give students a chance to explore industries they might not have considered and hear from professionals about what it takes to succeed in today's workforce.

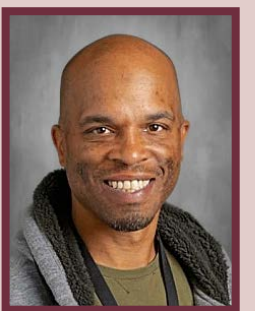
PERSONALIZED GUIDANCE

Booth supports students with college applications, financial aid, scholarships, and career readiness. Whether planning for college or entering the workforce, students receive individualized guidance.

A COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Working alongside programs like TriDistrict CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) and PSEO (Postsecondary Enrollment Options), College and Career Advising helps students gain real-world experience and build a foundation for success. "We want every student to leave feeling prepared for what's next," says Booth. "That's what the Pathway to Packer Promise is all about."

By reinstating this program, SSP High School strengthens its commitment to ensuring all students have the tools and resources needed to succeed in high school and beyond.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ### Breaking Down the Numbers

The Minnesota Department of Education recently released the numbers from the 2023-24 MCA/MTA Test. While we are not where we want to be as a district, we have seen an upward trend in our test scores. Inside this issue we break down the numbers to show how we are closing the gap between SSPPS and the State of MN.

- ### Supporting Continuous Improvement

A look at current curriculum in place to help our students improve their academic outcomes. How we are supporting our students not only in the classroom, but also with any barriers to learning that exist outside of the classroom.

- ### Talent Development and Advanced Learners

New this year, at both elementary schools, students who show advanced academic comprehension in literacy are receiving extra support. To continue advancing their knowledge, these students will participate in reading circles with students around their same academic level.

- ### Preparing Students for Life After Graduation

South St. Paul High School is helping students with college applications, scholarships, job readiness, and post-secondary decisions. Inside read more about the role of the new College and Career Advisor.



South St. Paul Public Schools

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South St. Paul Public Schools Community Newsletter

SIXTIMES

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WORK FOR SSPPS!

SSPPS is looking for great people to join our team. We're always hiring part-time, full-time, and seasonal employees with flexible day and evening hours. Scan the QR code to view current openings.



LEA LOS SIXTIMES EN ESPAÑOL

Escanear aquí para leer una versión digital del Boletín Sixtimes de SSPPS en español.

CREATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

A STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR 2025 AND BEYOND

South St. Paul Public Schools (SSPPS) is excited to refresh our strategic direction, continuing to enhance the experience for students, staff, families, and the greater SSP community. This update ensures we remain responsive to the evolving needs of our district, while maintaining a commitment to academic excellence and whole-child development.

Building on the success of the last two years—through initiatives like the Desired Daily Experience and Packer Pathways—this strategic plan will help us map a clear course for the next five years. Focus groups with students, families, staff, and community members have provided valuable feedback on strengths, areas for improvement, and future priorities.

Next, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee—comprising staff, families, and community members—will review these insights, identifying key themes and shaping our district's mission, vision, and core pillars for the next five years. This collaborative process empowers all stakeholders to shape SSPPS's future, ensuring that our district equips all learners for success in a rapidly changing world.

2024 FACILITY TASK FORCE SUMMARY

The 2024 Facilities Task Force, made up of 25-30 staff, families, and community members, recently completed a four-month initiative to develop short- and long-term plans for maintaining our district's facilities.



Their input has been crucial in addressing aging infrastructure, meeting legislative requirements, and ensuring a safe learning environment for all. The group's recommendations will shape our district's facility strategies moving forward.

District leaders are now working to incorporate this feedback into a comprehensive facilities plan. Stay tuned to sspps.org for updates in the coming months.



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SHARED VALUES

SSPPS and the City of SSP have joined together to establish a foundational set of core values reflecting the best of our Community!

