Inclusion

Instruction

Infrastructure

SPPS ★ 2033







Saint Paul Public Schools

Draft Strategic Plan

2026–2033

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Introduction

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has designed and is planning to roll out its new strategic plan, SPPS 2033. SPPS 2033 will provide guidance and direction on priorities, investments and focus areas for the next seven years. This report presents details of the plan, including the process, roles and responsibilities, and plans for monitoring and reporting.

100-Day Report, 10 Key Topics & Three Priority Areas

Preparation for SPPS 2033 began in October 2025 with the presentation of Superintendent Dr. Stacie Stanley's 100-Day Report. The report was based on her first months in the district, during which she spoke with hundreds of stakeholders about their experiences and perceptions. The findings in the report were organized into 10 key areas of opportunity:

1. Achievement Gap Reduction & Academic Acceleration
2. Literacy Consistency (PreK-12 Framework)
3. Continuous Improvement Structure
4. Discipline and Belonging
5. Family Communication & Language Access
6. Special Education Programming Enhancement
7. Staff Recruitment & Retention
8. Analysis of Resource Allocation Models
9. Facilities Portfolio Analysis
10. Marketing & Enrollment Recovery

In synthesizing qualitative community feedback into clear "areas of growth," the report ensured that subsequent strategic planning would not be an abstract administrative exercise, but a direct response to the lived experiences of the St. Paul community. The internal project team organized the 10 key topics into three priority areas: Excellence in Instruction, Deliberate Inclusion and Sustainable Infrastructure. These areas provide the guidance for the plan's focus.

Draft Strategic Plan

Priority Area 1: Excellence in Instruction

Core Vision: Every student receives high-quality, data-informed and culturally responsive instruction that accelerates their growth and eliminates predictable achievement gaps.

Key Topic	High-Level Strategy Statement	Strategy Actions
Achievement Gap Reduction & Academic Acceleration	Establish clear, consistent, high-quality, data-informed and culturally responsive classroom instruction grounded in a shared vision of effective teaching.	1.1.a. Clarify districtwide approach to Tier 1 instruction grounded in a shared understanding of effective teaching 1.1.b. Transform evaluation and accountability structures 1.1.c. Align professional learning for all educational staff in SPPS
Continuous Improvement	Sustain a culture of continuous improvement where all staff are capable and empowered to immerse students in multiple levels of support, resulting in strong academic and interpersonal success.	1.2.a. Establish a shared understanding of goals for improvement throughout the entire system 1.2.b. Build & communicate an organizing structure that identifies and connects district- and school-based teams in line with the MnMTSS model 1.2.c. District and school leaders facilitate continuous system improvement
Literacy Consistency & Coherence	Prioritize literacy instruction through a districtwide framework that aligns high-quality, data-informed, culturally responsive literacy instruction and provides shared accountability structures.	1.3.a. Establish a coherent, districtwide system by clarifying priorities, standardizing processes, and using consistent walkthrough and accountability structures 1.3.b. Design personalized, equitable professional learning pathways grounded in the PreK-12 literacy framework 1.3.c. Align all instructional and programmatic decisions across all grade levels

Priority Area 2: Deliberate Inclusion

Core Vision: All schools and departments create an environment where every student, staff and family member experiences dignity, connection and comprehensive support.

Key Topic	High-Level Strategy Statement	Strategy Actions
Discipline & Belonging	Foster school and district culture and climate through high expectations and authentic relationships that deeply honor the dignity of every student, family and staff member.	2.1.a. Standardize effective systems that eliminate disproportionate exclusionary practices for students 2.1.b. Develop upper elementary and secondary students as leaders using student perspectives and fostering civic agency 2.1.c. Establish authentic experiences that develop individual and group parent/ guardian leadership with a shared commitment to SPPS
Family Communication & Language Access Standards	Strengthen families' connection to and trust in SPPS through districtwide, culturally responsive communication approaches that ensure information is clear, consistent and accessible.	2.2.a. Establish a culture of clear written and oral communication grounded in families and schools working together for student success 2.2.b. Ensure equitable access to information and services for families regardless of language proficiency or disability 2.2.c. Implement consistent family communication standards and practices across all schools and departments
Special Education Programming Enhancement	Provide an educational community of holistic support where the least restrictive environment is an affirming space where every student feels they truly belong.	2.3.a. Incorporate Universal Design for Learning in Tier 1 instruction 2.3.b Align schedules with students' specialized service needs that support inclusion 2.3.c. Create a consistent districtwide, holistic review process to strengthen special education identification, referral, evaluation, placement, IEP development, service delivery and discipline practices
Staff Retention & Recruitment	Build and retain a diverse, thriving workforce that mirrors our student population, and cultivate an equitable and culturally proficient district culture that reflects the district's commitment to belonging and dignity.	2.4.a. Create a shared understanding and expectation of belonging, dignity and equity that includes the Tools of Cultural Proficiency 2.4.b. Provide onboarding for all staff that ensures the tenets of Policy 419 are active and present at every level of the organization 2.4.c. Streamline hiring practices by integrating core equity standards into every stage of the talent lifecycle 2.4.d. Develop and expand career pathways and growth opportunities for students, staff and community members that directly address high-need areas and the goal of increasing culturally competent staff from diverse backgrounds

Priority Area 3: Sustainable Infrastructure

Core Vision: Commitment to purposeful allocation of resources to ensure programs and facilities are positioned to meet the needs of current and future students, families and staff.

Key Topic	High-Level Strategy Statement	Strategy Actions
Marketing & Enrollment Recovery	Elevate the district's brand and reputation to establish Saint Paul Public Schools as the trusted and premier educational destination for every St. Paul family.	3.1.a. Establish a strong district brand identity that clearly articulates why SPPS is the district of choice for St. Paul families 3.1.b. Develop a districtwide marketing plan that outlines what distinguishes SPPS, incorporates the voices of students, families, staff and community members, defines who we serve and what we will deliver
Facilities Portfolio Analysis	Create a sustainable district footprint that invests our resources directly into students' futures and maximizes the use of district facilities.	This will be the final approved plan from the facilities portfolio analysis
Analysis of Current Resource Allocation Models	Build a culture of continuous fiscal improvement where the allocation of resources is examined and adjusted to meet the needs of our students.	3.3.a. Conduct an internal audit to improve current financial policies, procedures, and responsibilities 3.3.b. Provide financial training (norms & fluency) for staff who manage budgets and/or allocate district resources

Roles & Responsibilities

SPPS 2033 was created through the work of several interdependent teams.

The Project Team

In November 2025, an internal project team was established. The team was composed of SPPS district leaders representing Communications, Operations, Innovation, Research and Strategy. The responsibility of this team was to design and manage the planning process, including managing the timeline and ensuring that every moving part of the plan remained aligned with the Superintendent's vision and resulted in a coherent, manageable final product. This team completed its responsibility with the guidance of the Superintendent. The internal project team immediately began the work of synthesizing previous reports and literature, developing a high-level structure for the process. Also done very early was establishing core guiding principles including the umbrella lens of equity and dignity. The 10 key topic areas from the 100-Day Report were organized into three priority areas: Excellence in Instruction, Deliberate Inclusion and Sustainable Infrastructure.

Advisory Taskforce

In alignment with the Superintendent's 100-day report and her November 2025 strategic plan development design overview, a group of 32 members, including SPPS students, parents and staff and business/community partners served on the Strategic Plan Advisory Taskforce in an advisory role. The taskforce informed the strategic planning process and provided input to

district leadership. Members reviewed and analyzed community input, examined data on student outcomes and district needs, discussed strategic priorities and tradeoffs, and advised on goals, objectives and success metrics. The taskforce ensured diverse perspectives from students, families, staff and community partners informed the development of the district's strategic direction for 2026-2033.

To emphasize equity, the district utilized a blind selection process for the taskforce. Applicants' identities were hidden during the review of their written responses, ensuring that the final members—selected only later for demographic representation—were chosen based on the merit of their ideas and their commitment to the SPPS mission. The selection process was designed to ensure that the taskforce was not merely "diverse" in name but inclusive in power, specifically lifting up voices most impacted by district policies. This approach follows the philosophy of D. Richler: "Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies. It is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone."

The Strategic Plan Advisory Taskforce held seven primary meetings between February and May 2026 to guide the district's seven-year strategic direction. During that time, they did the following:

- Completed stakeholder analysis
- Defined a strategic challenge as a "complex, system-level issue" that reflects inequities or misalignments across the organization and cannot be solved by isolated actions
- Identified "minimum specifications": non-negotiable priorities that must be met for the plan to be considered successful
- Articulated visions of seven-year success
- Served as consultants to the Strategy Formation Action Teams. The primary goals were to help participants identify key system-level challenges and use diverse perspectives to reflect on the strategies being developed
- Reviewed final proposals

Strategy Formation Action Teams

Sixty-one SPPS staff members organized into nine teams, one for each key topic area, except the Facilities Portfolio Analysis, which has its own project team and taskforce. Each team was composed of staff members across the district with expertise in their topic area. The teams were co-led by individuals selected by the project team and approved by the Superintendent. The teams worked together on an expedited timeline between March and May 2026. During that time, each team:

- Participated in three hours of orientation
- Participated in a full day of cultural proficiency training with Dr. Frannie Becquer
- Reviewed the 100-Day Report, S.O.A.R. analysis and engagement summary
- Conducted research in the field of their topic
- Drafted a proposal to address the key topic, including a challenge statement, research summary, objective, strategies, SMART goals, implementation plan, feasibility and resources
- Presented to student groups and the Advisory Taskforce

Senior Executive Leadership Team (SELT)

The eight-member SPPS Senior Executive Leadership Team (SELT) provided feedback, collaborated throughout the process and crafted the structure of the final plan. This group will also play a critical role in operationalizing the final plan into actions.

Community Engagement

Advisory Taskforce

A 32--member group was convened, consisting of students, parents, community partners, district staff and Board of Education members. This group met seven times for 3.5-hour sessions to ground the plan in community experience and review draft proposals.

Accordion Model

The strategic planning process utilized a multifaceted engagement approach designed to ensure that the final plan was shaped by a wide range of perspectives, including students, families, staff and community partners. The accordion model has two phases:

1. **Expansion Phase:** Broad outreach to gather diverse perspectives through virtual meetings, districtwide surveys and large-scale leadership sessions.
2. **Compression Phase:** Collected data was synthesized by the project team and the Advisory Taskforce and/or Strategy Formation Action Teams to create, shape and revise their work.

Expansion #1

Engagement was tailored to different groups to ensure authentic participation and meaningful feedback loops.

Virtual Community Meetings (February 2026)

Six sessions were held to present priority areas and gather initial input on community concerns.

Leadership Engagement (February-March 2026)

180 SPPS leaders (principals, directors, assistant superintendents, etc.) were consulted. They, in turn, facilitated their own community-based focus groups, reaching over 1,400 individuals.

In-Person Community Meetings (February-March 2026)

115 participants reviewed draft strategy proposals to assess their feasibility and value.

Expansion #2

Community Survey (March 2026)

Nearly 900 students, families and staff provided feedback on key topics, emphasizing that education is most effective when children feel seen, heard and valued.

Expansion #3

Student Convening (May 2026)

51 high school students from across the district were brought together to provide feedback on strategy proposals using a modified consultancy protocol.

In-Person Community Meetings (May 2026)

Over 100 participants reviewed draft strategy proposals to assess their feasibility and value.

Engagement Summary

Expansion	Method	Participants	Attendees	Summary of Findings
1	Community Meeting	Families Staff Community members	1,973	SPPS has worked on all the key topics, but the results aren't widely visible or understood. Additionally, stakeholders have substantially different views on what the strategic challenges are.
	Leadership-facilitated	Families Staff Students Community members		
2	Survey	9-12th grade students Families Staff	879	All groups agree on a core principle: education is most effective when children feel seen, heard and valued. Across the board, stakeholders emphasized the need for an environment that respects student dignity, intelligence and individual needs.
3	Community Meeting	Families Staff Community members	115	We've identified the right strategic challenges, and most of our proposed strategies were well-received. However, participants raised serious questions about how practical they are, how quickly we can implement them, and who will be held accountable.
	Student Convening	9-12th grade students	51	While students generally liked the strategies, particularly discipline and belonging, they had substantial concerns about consistency. They noticed that the ideas aren't applied the same way from school to school—or even by different staff within the same building.

Appendix

- 100-Day Report
- Advisory Taskforce Report
- Community Engagement Report