



The 360|Report

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) – Engage! Community Conversation & Dinner Series Spring 2023

Facilitated by MTI

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The 360 Report | Executive Summary & Overview

**Engage! Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)
Community Conversation & Dinner
April-May 2023**

Table 1: Demographics

Demographics	Total Participants		
	(n)	(N)	%
Indigenous, Black or Other People of Color (IBPOC)	216	257	84%
Youth/Under 24	71	257	28%

The 360 | Executive Summary, Event Overview & Demographics

The final two events in a project consisting of three open conversations (and two separate focused discussion themes) hosted by Marnita’s Table and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) in the spring of 2023, the Engage! series brought together 257

community members in the Saint Paul metropolitan area. Participants of this second series of events, held on April 25th and May 4th, 2023, at Washington Technology Magnet School, included current and former SPPS students, parents, and family members, SPPS staff, board members and administrators – approximately 84 percent of whom identified as Indigenous, Black, or other people of color and over a quarter of whom were under the age of 24. In keeping with district demographics and school priorities, the event was hosted in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Karen, though participants of the conversation reported also speaking French, Amharic, Oromo, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese and Vietnamese. Discussion notes and sign-in sheets submitted in languages other than English were transcribed and translated before analysis.

While originally planned as part of a series centered on the most recent strategic plan for the district, SPPS Achieves, the discussion content for the first event associated with this project (on March 30, 2023) was redesigned with a focus on school safety and security in response to a violent incident at Harding Senior High School in Saint Paul. This pivot created space for community members to process, reflect and respond to the incident, while providing broad ranging feedback on school safety in general. The April and May conversations represent a return to the original goal of sharing information on the district’s strategic plan and conducting an open community forum for discussing that information. The results and discussion themes of the previous conversation, Safe(r) have been addressed in a separate report, reflecting the unique design and thematic focus of that conversation. However, in the interest of accommodating community participants understandably still preoccupied with questions of

safety and security, we included a section in the Engage! discussion guide which allowed participants to continue reflecting upon the role of safety and security in creating effective, supportive, and welcoming school communities in Saint Paul.

Event participants had the opportunity to engage with information about Saint Paul Public School goals, priorities, and initiatives of the SPPS Achieves strategic plan during the community conversation, which featured in-depth small group engagement during the Mindstorm guided discussion sessions. Participants of these discussion groups described what they most valued in the SPPS Achieves plan alongside their considerations about what they hoped a school environment might provide for students, staff, and families, sharing personal experiences and perspectives on the topic. Analysis of the discussion themes shows that conversations largely focused upon (1) the importance of personal connection, respect, cultural sensitivity and relational approaches to parent and family engagement when seeking to create authentically welcoming schools; (2) holistic definitions of success for students (along with the identification of barriers to success and approaches to addressing those barriers); (3) resources for thriving in school, (4) participant priorities and perceptions of the SPPS Achieves plan; and (5) community-generated ideation on the elements of an ideal or “dream” school environment for students, families, teachers, and administrators.

The series was co-hosted by staff and leadership of Saint Paul Public Schools who helped welcome community members to in-person events throughout the three-event series of community conversations, with event design and facilitation provided by the Marnita’s Table team in the model of Intentional Social Interaction (IZI). Project coordination, logistics and outreach were led by senior project director Sammie Ardito Rivera and training director Lauren Williams with support from outreach specialist and Spanish language coordination lead Marlene Rojas. Materials design, research, project evaluation and analysis were conducted under the supervision of research director Elexis Trinity with support from operations and evaluation manager Lars Goldstein, editorial assistant Johanna Keller Flores, and other members of the MTI team.

The following report consists of qualitative discussion data collected from the above activities and the thematic analysis of their results conducted by the Marnita’s Table research team.

Table 2: Measurable Indicators of Success

Indicator	Goal	Delivered
At least 51% Indigenous, Black and other people of color (IBPOC) and/or marginalized immigrants	51%	84%
Met someone new across race, class, culture or other means of self-identity	80%	95%
Would come again	50%	98%

Would invite someone to another conversation	50%	100%
Felt welcome (at the event)	80%	100%
Felt heard and listened to	80%	100%
Met someone with whom they wanted to stay in touch	50%	95%



**Engage! Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)
Community Conversation and Dinner
Mindstorm**

Questions for Discussion (45 minutes):

Choose the topic or topics your group finds most important to discuss.

1. What are the **words, actions, and behaviors of authentic connection**? Is there anything that helps (or would help) you and your identity **to feel as though you belong** in this community?
2. **What does educational success look like for you, your family, and/or your student(s)**? Are there any things that would make success easier? Are there any things that make it hard? What resources and experiences would you value as a member of the SPPS community?
3. **Are there things you need to thrive** as a student, parent or guardian, teacher, staff member or other community member in SPPS? If so, what are those things? Are you able to access them? If not, who or what might help you get the things you need to thrive?
4. **Right now, what do you think a diploma from SPPS will give a student**? Is it good enough to get them to college? Is it good enough for them to take care of their family? Is it good enough to allow them to live a certain lifestyle? Do you think there are different kinds of diplomas in SPPS?
5. **Is there anything you see in the SPPS Achieves strategic plan that you think is especially important**? Are there any outcomes, objectives or focus areas that are valuable to you, your family and/or your student(s)? Is there anything you don't see here that is a priority for you? What, if any, resources, relationships, and experiences do you appreciate the most at SPPS?
6. **Dream up what a really good school looks like**. Describe the classroom, the cafeteria, the outside, the facility, etc. What does it look like at Elementary? Middle? High School? Is there something your school doesn't have, but should have?
7. **What is standing in the way of us closing achievement gaps**? How can all of us work together to make progress?
8. **Building a Safer Community**: Is there anything that makes you feel safe (in school or as a member of the SPPS community)? Is there anything that makes you feel unsafe? If so, please discuss.

9. **Is there anything that we didn't ask that we should have?** What isn't here that you would like to see? Are there any questions you have? Please share your question(s), and any answers that your group discusses.



The 360 Report | Mindstorm Themes & Analysis

Engage! Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)
Community Conversation and Dinner
April-May 2023

Overview & Methodology:

The following is a summary and analysis of the discussion notes submitted by small-group conversation facilitators during the Mindstorm sessions hosted at Washington Technology Magnet School in Saint Paul, Minnesota on April 25, and May 4, 2023. Originally planned as part of a series of Saint Paul Public School (SPPS) community conversations centered on the most recent strategic plan for the district, SPPS Achieves, the discussion content was modified to include a section continuing the conversation on school safety and security in response to a violent incident at Harding Senior High School in Saint Paul and subsequent IZI event focused on this theme hosted on March 30, 2023.¹ This focused conversation series represented a return to the goal of engaging community feedback on the SPPS Achieves strategic plan, its goals, and associated programs. This discussion was undertaken by a total of 257 participants in individual small group discussions with dedicated scribes (notetakers) assigned to each group and language.² All events across this series were open to the public and welcomed participants from all over the Saint Paul metropolitan area.

Participating small groups submitted an aggregate total of 24 pages of notes and transcriptions from their conversations. In keeping with district demographics and school priorities, participation was facilitated in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Karen, though some participants also spoke French, Amharic, Oromo, Arabic, Portuguese, Chinese and Vietnamese, reflecting the rich diversity of the Saint Paul community. Discussion notes submitted in languages other than English were transcribed and translated before analysis. The responses and discussion themes emerging from individual small-group sessions have subsequently been aggregated and deidentified where necessary for the purposes of this analysis. The full text of the submitted notes is available on page 22 of this report, while a facsimile of the Mindstorm packet distributed during these conversations, including instructions and questions, has also been included (*see: page 5 for more details*).

¹ Discussion themes, outcomes, and community-based recommendations for SPPS are summarized in a separate 360 report shared with the district following the event and made available to the community on a public google drive.

² All participants received the same instructions and discussion questions and were guided to focus on the themes and topics they considered most important to discuss. Transcriptions of the orally reported highlights and key observations from these discussions as summarized by participants during the event can be found on page 20 of this report.

Because of the free-flowing nature of the hour-long small group discussions which were guided in an intentionally non-rigid manner in order to allow for flexibility, participant choice, and community-based responsiveness in accordance with the model of Intentional Social Interaction, many of the themes emerging during these conversations occur across individual discussion questions and overlap with topics raised by participants. Accordingly, the thematic content of this Mindstorm has been analyzed holistically with care and attention to both the substance and the context of participant discussions, and every attempt made to render topical linkages apparent and to highlight the many instances where themes overlap and participant stories and comments reference previous discussion themes or insights. Methodologically, techniques of both content and textual analysis were applied to these ends. The key themes emerging across both events have been summarized and outlined below in Table 3.

Table 3. Overview of Key Themes, Community Perspectives & Priorities from Engage! SPPS

“Together we build a stronger community.”
– discussion participant.

Key Theme: Centrality of **personal connection, respect, cultural sensitivity and relational approaches to parent and family engagement** for creating and sustaining authentically welcoming schools.

Highlights:

- **Rooted in reciprocal relationship – recognition and respect**, “knowing by name,” making an effort to introduce oneself, to talk to those around oneself and show kindness, being genuine.
 - **Sense of “good rapport” with children’s teachers.**
 - **Efforts of teachers to get to know students as individuals** deeply meaningful to students. (“My teachers know me by name,” and “Teachers adapt to students’ needs.”)
- **Open, embodied communication** (with eye contact, direct acknowledgement, smiles), engaged listening.
- **Community events, outreach, and engagement efforts**, creating space for parents to build relationships with other parents and members of the SPPS community; gathering to connect around food an important signifier of welcome and connection across many cultures.
- **Cultural respect, knowing and learning about cultural histories, holidays, celebrations, and traditions;** significant interest in both sharing one’s culture with school community, other parents, teachers/staff and in learning about the cultural traditions of other members of the SPPS community.
 - **Importance of respect and mutually valuing multicultural, multifaith community** (spanning Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and other faith traditions).
 - **Importance of learning and teaching cultural history reflective of Saint Paul’s diversity – even the difficult parts of history** (“Show humble history,” and “Everybody’s history should be taught – not just one-sided. Open-minded conversation without judgement. Can’t just be one way. Discussion with others – like this.”)
 - **Community members value cultural liaison roles** and opportunities for spotlighting or engaging with local community leaders.
 - **Cultural affinity helps Native students feel more comfortable** connecting with adults within their communities.
 - **Hmong community members concerned about losing traditional cultural approaches** to openly greeting, communicating with and welcoming one another, concern that some of this is being lost as the local Hmong community becomes “westernized.”
- **Programs, groups, and organized opportunities** for an engaged school experience:
 - Students highly value **“Where Everybody Belongs” (WEB) Leadership program** for creating authentic connections (“like having an older sibling”) and would like to see it expanded beyond middle school as a high school offering (“[The] first time I walk[ed] into school it felt challenging.”).
 - Participants appreciate **“being part of the LCD PAC” because it “allowed them to feel like a part of [the] community and has empowered them,”** but some feel that outreach about such opportunities should be improved and others suggesting that more Latine community members should get involved.

- **Students and families value the 510 program at Washington Tech and would like to see it reinstated**, suggesting that it provided “academic support, social [interaction], provided opportunity to try new things. Really promoted more interaction between students. Students feel this was so beneficial to the student life communities!” and “also provided opportunities for students to try sports.”

Key Theme: Holistic definitions of school, student, and teacher success – *academically, professionally, socially, and emotionally.*

Highlights:

- **Academic achievement, enrichment resources, and support:**
 - Good grades, honor roll – **high expectations of all students.**
 - Opportunities and resources for **challenging, advanced coursework**, academic support for students in AP/IB classes, and more options for second language learning.
 - **Cultivation of curiosity, excitement about learning, and independent learning** orientation more important than tests.
 - **Student voice represented in the learning environment**, implementing opportunities for student-led or student interest-driven learning; “more fun classes after school,” cultural immersion opportunities and English language-learning supports.
- **Social and emotional learning, preparation for college and careers**, “being set up for the future,” more breaks throughout the day (including free periods, time for exercise, visiting the library, resting and sleep) and opportunities for time outside/outdoor recreation.
 - **Happiness and the ability to support oneself** and provide for basic needs.
 - For immigrant parents especially, **financial stability and English fluency.**
- **Addressing a diversity of experiences and providing resources for support for students, teachers, and administrators** (“more staff that look like students,” understanding and addressing systemic barriers, teacher/staff burnout prevention – especially for staff of color, supporting healthy professional boundaries).
 - **More support for “average” or “middle tier” students**, especially non-athletes.
- **Accessibility supports for learning – including transportation** (“taking the city bus is hard”), tutors and designated tutoring spaces in schools, tablets/technology support, college advisors, social workers, and counselors).
- **Family support integral to student success, as is meaningful, personal relationships with teachers and various forms of mentoring**; some parents in the Karen-speaking community get information from STS rather than the schools and impress upon students high academic expectations within the family system.
 - **Ability to communicate with teachers, relationships** between family and staff.

Key Theme: Addressing barriers to inclusion and school/student success – *issues of equity, accessibility, safety, inclusion, and engagement, among others.*

Highlights:

Barriers to authentic inclusion/concerns about inclusivity:

- Difficulty of **having to “take on and represent” an entire culture** due to being “one of the only... or the only” member of one’s cultural group in a space or community.
- **More support desired by parents of neurodiverse students seeking resources** and sufficiently challenging learning environment for students.
- **Bullying a significant issue especially for Latine students**, viewed by parents as “a form of discrimination” if it is “allowed to continue,” also see: “All parents [at the] table have had experiences with their kids being bullied and being dismissed, not enough consequences for the bully,” concerns about balancing need for consequences in confirmed cases of bullying against the tendency for discriminatory punitive treatment toward some students and not others.

Barriers to educational success:

- **Significant concern about teacher burnout** – emphasis on the need to ensure teachers are paid well, feel valued, and are supported in maintaining high quality educational standards and well-staffed cohort of teachers for each school in the district; appreciation expressed for the quality of existing teachers.
- **Combined middle/high school context challenging** (“Having middle school and high school together is hard.”).
- **Transitioning to school difficult for some students who are new to the country and/or for those learning English** as a second language; pacing of learning and frequency of exams, speed of instructor speech (especially for English language learners) can be challenging.

- **Transportation (city buses, school buses – though a valuable resource, can be difficult to navigate).**
- **Online credit recovery harder** for some **than in-person** learning.
- **Delayed IEP support** (“not provided until spring”) challenging for students and families when needed earlier (“success looks like early engagement in IEPs).

Key Theme: Closing the Achievement Gap

Highlights:

Barriers to closing achievement gap:

- Different households, levels of parental support and involvement, **different values and family backgrounds, different levels of internal motivation among students.**
- **Lack of data-driven decision-making.**
- **Limited resources**, some factors out of individual/family/school control.
- **Racism, structural and systemic barriers;** social and cultural barriers (race, class, etc.).
- **Lack of supportive relationships.**
- **Unrealistic expectations.**
- **Language barriers**, viewing students in ESL as a disadvantage rather than a gift.
- **Assessments skewed toward middle-class white students**, biased toward students of color, often inaccessible to students with learning disabilities, only available in English language.
- **Lack of support for working parents/single-parent households.**
- **Limitations of standardized testing** (compared to student portfolios, for example), move toward SAT/ACT optional admissions at many colleges and universities “puts more emphasis on student to see if college requires” the exams.
- **Safety concerns (which can impact attendance)**, difficulty balancing commitments for students who also need to work/have a job, and **student attendance issues more generally.**
- **Inconsistent availability or accessibility of services** from school to school/across the district.
- **Social and emotional learning challenges, generational trauma.**
- **Educator fatigue.**

Resources for closing achievement gap:

- **Hands-on learning** opportunities, interactive activities.
- **Culturally relevant instruction**, affirming identity; teaching “multiple perspectives in history” and “history before colonization.”
- **Open dialogue** between students, parents, and the school; more frequent communication between parents and teachers (“Two parent conference days a year isn’t enough”).
- **More school buses for high school students**, at least one adult on each bus who isn’t a driver or police officer.
- Having more **staff trained in de-escalation** on campuses.
- **Responsive teachers and staff** (“Parent said that her son needs support at school, he has been overwhelmed, but the teachers don’t respond when she calls, and he doesn’t ask for help [himself].”).

Key Theme: Resources for thriving – maximizing the learning experience.

Highlights:

- **Effective, regular multilateral communication** (between parents and teachers, teachers and students, staff, and in languages other than English).
- **A culture of safety and violence prevention.**
- **Collaboration among departments** within schools/district.
- **High expectations and positive encouragement for students.**
- **Role models who reflect student diversity and goals.**
- **Staff and students both “need to feel valued.”**
- **Leadership that listens.**
- **Multiple modes of learning engagement** – hands on, visual, 3D models, explicit instructions/“better explanations” from teachers.
- **More interpreters** (especially Karen).
- **Academic support staff (ESL, counselors, liaisons, etc.) and high-quality, well-supported** (and not “burnt out”) teachers (“amazed by the quality of teachers”).

- **Concerned, engaged parents and family; closer relationships.**

Key Theme: **Specific responses to SPPS Achieves** – participant priorities and perceptions of the district’s strategic plan.

Highlights:

Diploma from SPPS – what can/should it provide:

- **College credits/advanced standing.**
- **Career preparation, opportunities for jobs/higher education;** introduces different career pathways.
- **Educational foundation/foundational academic skills.**
- **Should ensure students are equally prepared for college.**

SPPS Achieves – priorities:

- **Family/community engagement** (“need to find better ways to reach out to families”); positive school and district culture; Community Partnership Program.
- **Career and college readiness a priority for many participants,** would like more career prep and course options, financial literacy.
- **Appreciation for the consideration of LGBTQIA+ community** within SPPS Achieves strategic plan.
- **Equity** (“[A] very high [priority is placed] on equity. It is very important each student gets what they need.”)
- **Culturally responsive instruction.**
- **Social-emotional learning.**

Key Theme: **Community-generated ideation on the ideal learning environment** – participant visions of a “dream” school for students, families, teachers, and administrators.

Highlights:

A great school would be...

- **Diverse, welcoming, and inclusive** (students, teachers, and administrators).
- **Everyone succeeds (multiple visions of success), universal high expectations.**
- **Freedom to choose one’s own classes, independent learning opportunities,** more choices for students generally.
- **Strong relationships – parents, students, staff** (including principals, counselors, support, etc.); good PTO/PTA.
- **Enthusiastic, high-quality staff and teachers** who are passionate, caring, and diverse with “up to date” salaries and strong support, well-funded schools generally.
- **High quality academic curriculum featuring rich STEAM offerings,** art-technology links, more creative offerings for the arts, music, electives; advanced science and technology; quality health and sex education.
- **School connections and more after school activities (including transportation support), free clubs and activities (including family-friendly activities that allow parents and siblings to get involved);** fun ways to get students involved in classrooms and build in-class sense of community.
- **Encouraging students to be themselves, respectfully; engaging students who appear disconnected without shaming or embarrassing them; acknowledging positive student behaviors.**
- **Cultural training for teachers with students and families; proactive responses to racist behaviors in schools.**
- **Understanding youth mental health.**
- **Music and cultural learning/experiences** incorporated in the classroom, including in elementary school learning.
- **In-class engagement with contemporary events.**
- **More movement in students’ daily lives, more recess; some classes/instruction offered outside;** outdoor eating area.
- **High quality, healthy food options (beyond pizza and burgers), larger portions and culturally specific menu items (especially Karen foods), offering both breakfast and lunch.**
- **Facilities improvements and additions:** Health clinic, theater auditorium, better bathrooms, air conditioning in the building, school store, playgrounds and outdoor learning areas/eating spaces; big gym and field for sports; wide, open and unobstructed hallways; freshly painted, colorful building spaces; roof lighting/tall windows with lots of natural light; culturally relevant spaces (like a smudging space).
- **“Place to go where teachers with lots of knowledge can help you when you need it;” adequate support for students with IEPs and/or in special education programs.**

Themes & Analysis: Summary

Question 1: Authentic Connection

We asked: *What are the **words, actions, and behaviors of authentic connection?** Is there anything that helps (or would help) you and your identity **to feel as though you belong** in this community?*

Fourteen (14) discrete discussion groups across both the April and May events submitted notes from their conversations in response to this question, making it the second highest traction section of the series. Grounding the conversation in the significance of connection, participants emphasized that belonging is rooted in reciprocal relationship building, in comments which focused on the need for recognition and respect, making an effort to introduce oneself and get to know others, showing kindness and being genuine. Participants provided examples of what belonging feels like, citing “knowing my name” and instances of open, embodied communication involving eye contact, direct acknowledgement, smiles and engaged listening.

Student participants of the discussion shared that their teachers’ efforts to get to know students as individuals was deeply meaningful to them, while parents expressed appreciation for a sense of “good rapport” with their children’s teachers, suggesting that such relationships are central to experiences of belonging at Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS). One subtheme appearing here first, but also elsewhere in this Mindstorm, is the role of community events, outreach and engagement efforts in making parents feel welcome and connected to their students’ schools and learning experience. Participants suggested such engagement opportunities were also useful for building relationships with other parents and members of the SPPS community, with some noting the multicultural valences of gathering around food, an important signifier of welcome and connection across many cultures.

Cultural respect and an ardent desire to both learn about the cultural traditions of others and share knowledge of one’s own culture also appeared prominently in this section, with participants pointing to the importance of cultivating respect for difference and mutually valuing the multicultural, multifaith community of Saint Paul (including Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam among other faiths and cultural traditions). Participants shared that they found it welcoming when others demonstrated knowledge about or expressed interest in learning about their histories, cultural holidays, celebrations, and traditions, and cited the importance of learning and teaching history in a manner reflective of Saint Paul’s diversity – even when those histories involve difficult subjects. Comments on this theme, for example, recommended that the district “show humble history,” or opined that “Everybody’s history should be taught – not just one-sided.” One group argued that “cultural affinity helps Native students feel more comfortable” connecting with adults in their communities especially, while another discussed concerns about the perceived westernization of the Hmong cultural traditions around greeting, welcoming and communicating with others.

Several groups described particular programs, initiatives, and other organized opportunities which they felt contributed to an engaged school experience. In this section, student

participants discussed the “Where Everybody Belongs” (WEB) leadership program, which they viewed as a great way to create authentic connections, sharing experiences of feeling like participating in the program was “like having an older sibling,” and suggesting that the program helped facilitate smoother transitions (“[The] first time I walk[ed] into school it felt challenging,” shared one student who felt that the program helped ease those anxieties.”). Accordingly, participants expressed interest in seeing the program expanded beyond middle school as a high school offering.

This resonates with similar discussions emerging in other sections of the Mindstorm in which participants described their appreciation for programs like the discontinued 510 program at Washington Technology Magnet School, which respondents hoped to see reinstated, suggesting that it provided “academic support, social [interaction], [and the] opportunity to try new things. Really promoted more interaction between students. Students feel this was so beneficial to the student life communities!” and “also provided opportunities for students to try sports.” Another program participants linked to experiences of belonging and authentic welcome in later sections of this Mindstorm was the LCD PAC, with comments emphasizing appreciation for the opportunity to “[be] part of [it],” because “it allowed them to feel like a part of [the] community and has empowered them,” though some commenters felt that outreach about such opportunities should be improved, while others suggested that more Latine community members should get involved.

Question 2: Educational Success

We asked: What does educational success look like for you, your family, and/or your student(s)? *Are there any things that would make success easier? Are there any things that make it hard? What resources and experiences would you value as a member of the SPPS community?*

In this section, nineteen (19) discussion groups submitted notes describing their perspectives on educational success, making it the highest traction section of this Mindstorm, possibly due to the inclusiveness and general nature of the question, or its immediate relevance to many participants’ direct experiences and perspectives. Taken together, notes from the discussions across both events articulate a vision of holistic success and wellbeing centered on academic achievement, access to enrichment resources and support. However, comments in this section also meaningfully emphasized the need for social and emotional learning experiences, preparation for college and a range of trades and careers, the availability of learning contexts which speak to a diversity of experiences and needs, support for the whole school community (students, teachers, and administrators), free-flowing communication among students, parents, and teachers, resources for equity and accessibility, and strong ties among students, families and their communities.

With respect to academic elements of educational success, comments in this section suggested the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students and providing ample support for achieving academic success made visible in the form of “good grades, honor roll” achievements, participation in advanced coursework or the IB program, and similar traditional or formal markers of educational success. Another key thread emerging here is the cultivation of curiosity in young learners and stimulation of students’ excitement about learning.

Commenters spoke to engaged learners' ability to pursue and make decisions about their own learning priorities and educations independently. In particular, comments linked educational success with the incorporation of student voices in decision-making and the provision of meaningful choices for students: more options for second language study, student-led or interest-driven learning, "fun classes after school," and individually tailored resources for cultural immersion and English-language learning supports.

Participants expressed a desire to see students adequately prepared for adult life and their options after high school ("being set up for the future"), tying together social and emotional learning with more holistic aspects of preparation and wellbeing, incorporating into their definitions of educational success free periods at school and rest at home, time for exercise and visiting the library, sleep hygiene, outdoor recreation, financial literacy or competence and English fluency (especially for immigrants and English language learners). Some commenters emphasized the need to provide more support for "average" or "middle tier" students, especially non-athletes with fewer formal links to the school and structured resources.

This section also contained a number of comments which defined educational success in terms of diversity and representation ("more staff that look like students"), as well as more structural issues such as understanding and addressing systemic barriers, and – a theme that was prevalent across many sections of this Mindstorm session – preventing teacher and staff burnout, especially for staff of color, including institutional support for healthy professional boundaries. Beyond this, family support, meaningful relationships with teachers and mentors, and healthy connections more broadly also appeared in participant definitions of educational success. Some commenters pointed out the role family and parental expectations can play in encouraging or stimulating student success, with regular and effective communication among families, students and staff cited as a means of supporting these relationship building efforts and student success.

This section also garnered a set of comments focusing on challenges and barriers to educational success. Teacher burnout was emphasized here, in comments proposing efforts to ensure teachers are paid well, feel valued, and are supported in maintaining high quality educational standards. Some asserted that understaffing was a key problem here, and recommended working toward fully staffed teaching cohorts. Participants had largely positive things to say about the quality of existing teachers, with several describing good personal experiences or general appreciation for their efforts.

Transportation appears in this section, as in several others in this Mindstorm session, as a serious concern for many, with commenters acknowledging that city buses, "though a valuable resource, can be tough to navigate." While one group in this section found combined middle and high school contexts challenging, other commenters elsewhere in the notes viewed K-12 learning environments specifically as a quite positive arrangement. One group suggested that online credit recovery is harder for some than in-person learning (perhaps unsurprisingly), while another described challenges with delayed IEP support ("not provided until spring"), arguing that "success looks like early engagement in IEPs."

Question 3: Resources for thriving in Saint Paul Public Schools

We asked: *Are there things you need to thrive as a student, parent or guardian, teacher, staff member or other community member in SPPS? If so, what are those things? Are you able to access them? If not, who or what might help you get the things you need to thrive?*

A total of thirteen (13) small groups submitted notes in response to this question, many of which took the form of short, direct lists of resources, actions, experiences, or other supports which participants considered necessary for thriving in Saint Paul Public Schools. Comments in this section revisited a number of themes already mentioned earlier in the Mindstorm, such as the need for effective, regular multilateral communication (between parents and teachers, teachers and students, staff, and in languages other than English), interest in multiple modes of learning engagement (hands-on, visual, 3-D models, explicit instructions and “better explanations” from teachers), role models who reflect student diversity and goals, high expectations and positive encouragement for all students, healthy relationships, and concerned, engaged parents.

Comments in this section asserted the need for staff and students “to feel valued,” and for “leadership that listens,” while also citing a need for more interpreters (especially among Karen-speaking commenters) and quality academic support staff (ESL, counselors, liaisons, etc.). The importance of teachers was again raised here, in comments which articulated further concerns about teacher “burnout” and admiration for their work (“[I am] amazed by the quality of [our] teachers.”) Other needs mentioned in this section include a culture of safety and violence prevention and collaboration among departments within schools and across the district.

Questions 4-5: SPPS diploma, SPPS Achieves

We asked: (4) Right now, what do you think a diploma from SPPS will give a student? *Is it good enough to get them to college? Is it good enough for them to take care of their family? Is it good enough to allow them to live a certain lifestyle? Do you think there are different kinds of diplomas in SPPS?*

And **(5) Is there anything you see in the SPPS Achieves strategic plan that you think is especially important?** *Are there any outcomes, objectives or focus areas that are valuable to you, your family and/or your student(s)? Is there anything you don't see here that is a priority for you? What, if any, resources, relationships, and experiences do you appreciate the most at SPPS?*

Thirteen (13) small groups chose to address question four (4) in the notes they submitted for this series, while eight (8) groups submitted notes in response to question five (5), concerning their prioritization of elements of the SPPS Achieves plan. Comments on the value of a (high school) diploma from Saint Paul Public Schools focused on the attainment of foundational educational skills; trade, career, and college preparation, exposure to various career pathways and opportunities for advancement (jobs/higher education). One group also discussed the

importance of ensuring that all students are adequately prepared for college, so that they are able to access that opportunity if they would like to do so.

Comments noting specific priorities and responses to the SPPS Achieves plan suggest participants particularly appreciated commitments to family and community engagement (though some argue that the schools “need to find better ways to reach out to families” and others note a positive school and district culture as a related priority). The Community Partnership Program is also mentioned in this context.

Many participants continued discussing their prioritization of career and college readiness in this section, with some opining that they’d like to see more career prep and course options, including financial literacy and practical skills. Other priorities featured among the comments shared by the eight groups responding to this question included consideration of the LGBTQIA+ community (and appreciation for the inclusion of such considerations in the plan), culturally responsive instruction, investments in social and emotional learning, and equity (notes one group: “[A] very high priority [is placed] on equity. It is very important each student gets what they need.”)

Question 6: Dream of a Great School

We asked: *Dream up what a really good school looks like.* Describe the classroom, the cafeteria, the outside, the facility, etc. What does it look like at Elementary? Middle? High School? Is there something your school doesn’t have, but should have?

In this section, twelve (12) small groups submitted notes detailing their ideal arrangements for a strong and effective learning environment. When prompted to “dream up” a great school, participants shared that their vision of such an institution would be diverse, welcoming, and inclusive, the sort of school with universal high expectations for all its students, where “everyone succeeds” in achieving their “multiple visions of success.” Many comments echoed other sections of this Mindstorm, in some instances deepening and adding more context to revisited themes – citing expectations such as providing students with independent learning opportunities, the freedom to choose their own classes, and more choices in their education, or returning to the importance of high-quality, well-supported and compensated teachers (who commenters said should be passionate, caring, and diverse), with commenters extending this discussion to note that a dream school would, of course, be a well-funded one more generally. Similarly, commenters again raised the need for strong relationships among parents, staff, and students, adding that such an institution would also have a “good PTO/PTA.”

The dream school described in this section would offer a high-quality academic curriculum featuring rich offerings across science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM), in a discussion which emphasized art-technology links, creative offerings in music, the arts, and electives as well as advanced science and technology curricular options and quality health and sex education. Some also note that music and cultural learning or experiences might be incorporated in the classroom, including in elementary school, while others describe classrooms in which students are empowered to discuss current events relevant to their lives and communities. Such as school would also feature a range of afterschool activities (with transportation support), free clubs and family-friendly activities allowing parents and siblings to

get involved as well. One group notes that finding fun ways to get students involved in classrooms works to build a sense of community among students, who would, in the dream school described in these notes, be encouraged to be themselves and treated with respect.

Classroom culture would involve engaging students who appear disconnected without shaming or embarrassing them and acknowledging positive student behaviors and providing adequate support for students with IEPs and/or enrolled in special education programs. Training in the dream school described by participants would help support an understanding of youth mental health and incorporate cultural training for teachers with students and families, as part of a school culture of inclusion and proactive approaches to addressing racism in schools. Other elements of school culture suggested by commenters in this section include incorporating more movement into students' daily lives, more frequent recesses, or even, seasonally and periodically offering some classes outside, or allowing students to eat outdoors.

Food and facilities were the subject of many comments and ideas with many groups describing how their dream of a great school would offer high-quality, healthy food options ("beyond pizza and burgers") with larger portions provided and culturally specific menu items (like Karen foods) in cafeterias offering students both breakfast and lunch. Facilities amenities mentioned in this section included: a health clinic; theater auditorium; better bathrooms; air conditioning in the building; school store (for fun student incentives); playgrounds and outdoor learning areas or eating spaces; a big gym and field for sports; wide, open and unobstructed hallways; freshly painted, colorful building spaces; roof lighting or tall windows with lots of natural light; and culturally relevant spaces (like a smudging space).

In the words of one commenter, a great school would feature a "place to go where teachers with lots of knowledge can help you when you need it."

Question 7: Closing the Achievement Gap

We asked: *What is standing in the way of us closing achievement gaps? How can all of us work together to make progress?*

Nine (9) groups submitted notes addressing the challenges – and possible resources for addressing – achievement gaps in Saint Paul Public Schools. Given the framing of this question, most participants spoke explicitly to the barriers facing those who would like to help close the achievement gap among students. Comments in this section tended to speak to (1) individual and family characteristics, (2) systemic and structural barriers, and (3) resource or institutional limitations.

In the first category, comments pointed to differences of household contexts, levels of parental involvement, family backgrounds and values, and different levels of internal motivation among students. Other groups cited a lack of supportive relationships in students' lives, unrealistic expectations, social and emotional learning challenges, generational trauma, and a lack of support for working parents and/or single-parent households. In the second category, comments focus on the use of assessments skewed toward middle-class white students, biased against students of color, inaccessible to students with learning disabilities, and only available in the English language, in a thematic thread which also included discussions about the limitations

of standardized testing (compared to student portfolios, for example), and the challenges associated with the move toward SAT/ACT optional admissions at many colleges and universities, which some felt “puts more emphasis on the student to see if [a particular] college requires” the exams. Comments in this category also pointed structural and systemic barriers associated with race, class, and cultural differences. Loosely tied to this category, safety concerns and associated anxiety also emerged as a barrier identified in this section, with comments noting that such safety concerns can directly impact attendance and thereby student performance and success. Others note difficulty balancing commitments for students who need to work/have a job or cite student attendance issues more generally. In the third and final category, comments noted inconsistent availability and accessibility of services from school to school across the district and educator fatigue as barriers to the goal of closing student achievement gaps.

Although much of the conversation in this section was, as noted above, focused on barriers, several groups also described potential resources toward this admirable goal, recommending the use of hands-on learning opportunities and interactive activities; culturally relevant instruction affirming students’ identities, the teaching of “multiple perspectives in history” and “history before colonization.” Additional resources cited in the notes for this section included open dialogue and more frequent communication between parents and teachers (“Two parent conference days a year isn’t enough”), having more staff trained in de-escalation on campuses, and responsive teachers and staff (with one group noting that one “parent [in their group] said that her son needs support at school, he has been overwhelmed, but the teachers don’t respond when she calls, and he doesn’t ask for help [himself].”). One group also recommended providing more school buses for high school students staffed with at least “one adult on each bus who isn’t a driver or police officer.”

Question 8: What Should SPPS Know Now?

We asked: What should the district know right now?

Four (4) groups submitted notes responding to this fairly open-ended section, which provided discussion groups the opportunity to directly share with the district any issues, concerns, or priorities they consider urgent or especially significant. The following list is a summation of the key points these four groups wanted SPPS to know right now:

- [There are] 114 languages [spoken in the district] but we only translate 4.” In the words of one commenter from this group: “I’m supposed to drop my kid at school – a school [where] I don’t even know the language spoken.”
- “[The strategy of] ‘Last hired first fired’ inhibit[s] diversity in hiring.” (This group also notes that policies around citizenship status and criminal records can be barriers in some cases as well.)
- “Engage quiet students.”
- Be aware that some who have experienced trauma don’t believe in therapy or experience cultural stigmas/stereotypes around seeking therapeutic support, which can be a barrier to getting help.
- COVID’s after-effects are still ongoing.

- “Attendance is very impacted by the city buses, ask Metro Transit if there can be SPPS student-only routes.” (This group also notes their concern that some “students may bring a weapon for protection [on regular buses], resulting in weapons in the school.”)
- Not all schools at all grade levels have access to outdoor space.
- Housing security is an issue for some students (This group also asks: “Can any of the schools that are empty be repurposed into housing for students?”)

Question 9: Building a Safe(r) School Community

We asked: *Is there anything that makes you feel safe (in school or as a member of the SPPS community)? Is there anything that makes you feel unsafe? If so, please discuss.*

Added to the Mindstorm discussion guide after the Safe(r) event in order to leave space for those still reflecting upon the role of safety and security in sustaining strong and effective school communities, this section was undertaken by six (6) small groups which elected to submit notes on the theme. Most of the comments in this section reiterate themes surfaced in greater detail in the Safe(r) conversation held on March 30th such as ensuring that hallways in the schools are monitored by teachers or other staff members, providing conflict resolution and de-escalation training for staff, and addressing physical security with systems such as a uniform locking protocol or automatic lock for school doors. Similarly, ideas such as the assertion that “everyone needs to own that they have a role in keeping the [school] safe” and the sentiment that familiarity and relationship building is a critical resource for safety – or that a sense of community belonging is protective – are also reminiscent of that earlier conversation. Beyond this, comments in this section demonstrate a sense that safety is a broad ranging responsibility with roles and duties extending beyond the school, such as in the enforcement of gun laws and outreach to community about firearm training.

Question 10: Anything Else?

We asked: *Is there anything that we didn’t ask that we should have? What isn’t here that you would like to see? Are there any questions you have? Please share your question(s), and any answers that your group discusses.*

This section of the Mindstorm provides an opportunity in its framing for participants to propose their own directions for discussion not already provided for in previous questions. Six (6) groups submitted notes in this section, one of which simply expressed gratitude for the experience they shared with their small group, two of which summarized their priorities from the previous notes and overall conversations in which they had engaged (including prioritizing teacher salaries and workforce retention, ensuring urban schools have access to the same opportunities as suburban schools, providing mentors for language academy students, more tutoring support, more buildings with air conditioning and more tutoring support). Two more comments appear to note recommended resources of potential use to participants or the schools (such as the National Parents Union website), and another which seems to be a reflection upon personal experiences as an intern during studies at the University of Minnesota. The full text of the notes and transcripts from the discussions can be found on page 22 of this report



**Engage! Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)
Community Conversation & Dinner
25 April 2023**

Mindstorm: Oral Report Notes³

About These Notes

The below notes were taken by members of our research team during the oral report-out from the Mindstorm small-group focused conversations during the Engage! SPPS Achieves event hosted at Washington Tech Magnet School on April 25, 2023. During this activity, participating discussion groups nominate a representative from their table to share with the larger group a few key themes emerging from their conversations. Groups have been numbered according to the order in which they presented.

Group 1: Educational success looks like a teacher noticing when a student is nervous to contribute to a group or where they have to talk about the project in a classroom. Usually [if] kids have anxiety, social anxiety, it's very helpful when a teacher helps a student speak in the classroom.

Group 2: A recurring theme was the [importance of a] sense of community and belonging in a school in general. It starts with that community, where you feel that connectedness and authenticity, that connection with others that break[s] down walls and increase[s] that sense of safety. Helping people thrive in the first place and feel comfortable in the space they are [matters].

Group 3: Educational success is important to know what you're going to do with what you're learning in school – how does it advance your life? How does it make you a better person? How are you connected with what you're learning, how can you use your degree/diploma to achieve financial stability and make your parents proud. Know the community you're in and the resources you have.

Group 4: [We discussed] the words, actions, and behaviors of authentic connection. Learning about backgrounds, incorporating backgrounds into lessons, say for example using religion, using a Muslim and Jewish councilor at the school with Muslim students during Ramadan.

Group 5: The language barrier between student, school and parents and teachers [was the focus of our conversation]. How [the] school can translate it, there isn't enough interpreters to fully help, [and] students and parents don't know enough about how to help their children [sic].

³ Due to audio malfunction, oral report notes not captured for May 4th event.

Group 6: The relationship between parents and teachers needs to be stronger – it’s creating a lack of knowledge of available courses and it’s feeding inequities.

Group 7: We talked about question number two: What does educational success look like for your family? You need support for your family so they can better support students in school.

Group 8: We talked about SPPS tutoring, taking tests, they [meaning students] don’t know what they’re doing. They’re writing down random answers. We need more tutors to help us out a little more. Have the knowledge in our heads, trying to get good grades.

Group 9: The St. Paul community needs to know what families need, staff need to feel proud to work in St. Paul, kids need to get into the classes they are choosing. [We also discussed] what actions, words, behaviors of authentic connection [looks like to us]: Listening, recognition of you, having teachers knowing your name and respecting your culture. Having more community events and connection with parents and teachers.

Group 10: [We discussed topic] number eight: Building a safer community. SPPS should start enforcing gun laws, more security in school environment, have better outreach for firearm safety. One or two staff should have training to use a firearm, keep it in a locked place. Stop romanticizing guns, they are weapons of mass destruction.

Mindstorm Notes | Raw Aggregate Engage! SPPS Achieves

Please note: While the small group discussion notes in this document have been organized by discussion question, ordered by date of the virtual events (bolded in the texts) and separated by discussion group (indicated by the following symbol: ***), not all groups submitted notes in response to every question. Additionally, some groups submitted notes that were not organized by question, but by theme. Where possible, such notes including clear responses to particular questions in the discussion notes have been reorganized under the relevant question and date. Where the conversation notes submitted appear to be too general or too broad to be broken out according to the Mindstorm questions, they have been included under the final section of this Mindstorm which allows participants to propose their own questions and/or organizational structure for their conversations. Personal stories appear often in the text of the notes and have generally been included here in the section under which they were submitted in order to avoid separating such comments from the context of the conversation in which they occurred, including in cases where themes overlap and/or the discussion in fact addresses several questions posed in the Mindstorm discussion guides.

Question 1: What are the words, actions, and behaviors of authentic connection? Is there anything that helps (or would help) you and your identity to feel as though you belong in this community?

April 25, 2023

- Listening
- Recognition, knowing by name
- Having culture respected
 - Learning more about holidays, celebration
- Communication with teachers
- Community events – carnivals, EDY events
- Bringing parents in, ability to meet each other

-
- Feels like one of the only Latina or the only. Have to take on and represent. Some support group or more Latine staff members. Something about being able to express myself.
 - Student similar. Had to learn when students don't show respect for teachers. Lack of respect.

-
- Open conversations
 - Communication
 - Eye contact
 - Acknowledgement/greeting
 - Warm welcome
 - Smile

-
- Cultural connection – Native student – easier to connect with adults of similar background

- I do feel that I belong – ex: daughter’s teachers – good rapport and conversation. I think she might have ADD – I’m frustrated trying to get support/diagnosis. Daughter – more engaged – needs very challenging program, she’s very bright. I’d like to see that addressed.
- I want everyone to convey open mind. Means – don’t be afraid to greet each other/ ask questions. Hmong community is losing some of this because we’re becoming westernized. Hmong people always greeted the community, looking for connections – same clan, different clans. Sister v. aunties. 90’s – began to change. Wanting to revive.
- Many cultures/no judgement. Spirit week – to unite students.
- People want to know about our culture – we like to share
- Everybody’s history should be taught – not just one sided. Open minded conversation without judgement. Can’t just be one way. Discussion with others – like this.
- Open minded – anywhere you’re at. Has been something I appreciate, so many to learn from (Spanish). Would love more opportunities for learning about others’ cultures.
- More truth out there. Show humble history. I was shocked – so many things connect them.
- Negative history – accepting. Grandson is native – sharing in cultural experience.
- Open minds change behaviors.
- Doable pieces – why do we shut people down. How can we *include*. If I’m not familiar, and you don’t allow me to show up as me. Then I can’t participate authentically. Put in a situation without background. People associate talent with race – its wrong
- Happy to see me, and know how to navigate

■ **Group: Karen Students**

- Talking to people around me and making connections with everyone around me
- Showing kindness both ways
- Feeling welcome
- Sharing materials/stuff with others
- Talking to people that is alone
- Helping others
- Being genuine, adjust to others, starting conversations
- First time I walk in to school it felt challenging
- My teachers know me by name
- Teachers adapt to students needs
- WEB leaders (Where Everybody Belongs) – like having an older sibling relationship. Will this continue? Students would like to see the WEB program expanded so its not just middle school.

-
- Communication
 - outreach, engagement, welcoming
 - Inclusion and involvement
 - participating, cultural sharing.
 - Offering liaison representative.
 - Religion, traditional spiritual practice
 - New Year, spiritual calling/welcoming
 - Invite a community leader for empowerment speech

-
- Parent looking for school

- Community member charter by Menard's
- Southeast Asian, *familia* ties – way of life – greeting people across food, food=welcome, thank you. The connection that brings people together – eat together is a sign of trust. 25-27 cultures in one school – needs connection, I'm Muslim but I took people to church
- Very strong in religion = very positive understanding of religion background = change terms, use background to teach kids
- Use background as balance of respect, knowing many people close together, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, etc.

May 4, 2023

- Listening
- Communities and events together to meet new parents and connect
- Spring carnival brings people together and volunteers learn about other schools

-
- At Highland, always see the same 5 parents at events
 - No one else laments not seeing more people
 - Maybe like once a month or once a quarter that bullying were addressed with kids at school
 - Feels like bullying that has happened to son is a form of discrimination because its been allowed to continue
 - Being part of the LCD PAC has allowed them to feel like a part of a community and has empowered them
 - We as Latinos need to be more involved
 - Suggestion: every grade should have a person to make sure that all parents/families are well informed of all events/groups, etc.
 - Only knew about LCD PAC by coincidence
 - Email parents more with smaller issues instead of not saying anything
 - Would like an anonymous complaint form

-
- Listening
 - Respect
 - Affirmation by seeing yourself represented physically
 - Feeling comfortable in a conversation
 - Warm welcome
 - Kindness
 - Representation in various views

-
- Compliment
 - Respectful and care about your boundaries
 - When other knows the kinds of food you like
 - Language
 - Knowledge your lived experience
 - Stories that reflect who you and lived experience
 - Music, art

- See other people with similar background

-
- Able to relate welcome to different cultures
 - Commonality, receptive
 - Different walks of earth, open to learning
 - Genuine, bring authentic self
 - Teacher
 - Generous-understanding-above and beyond, helpful
 - Being respectful, respectful of privacy, respecting differences, not rude

-
- I didn't have barriers, community connector, facilitator to introduce the new families to the society and culture and language
 - More adults trained and specialized to participate and in schools, more teachers, more people who help families feel welcome
 - Specially trained people who are paid
 - We talk about identifying the source of problems so we can give and allocate the right solutions and efforts
 - Behavior specialists

-
- I have established a relationship with school community I aspects such as conversations, activities, and collaborations.

Question 2: What does educational success look like for you, your family, and/or your student(s)? Are there any things that would make success easier? Are there any things that make it hard? What resources and experiences would you value as a member of the SPPS community?

April 25, 2023

- Good grades – not asked but an unspoken expectation
- Ability to communicate with teachers
 - Useful to have tech to bring home
- Opportunities, resources for advanced coursework
- Success vs. failure
- AB honor roll
- Not getting in trouble
- Barriers
 - Motivation
 - Other students

-
- Preparation, high expectation, academic support for students in AP/IB classes

- Middle tier students need to be supported (non-athletes), “average students”
- Lack of motivation post-covid – enough to slide through
- Relationships between family & staff would make it easier
- Relationships must be developed
- Student voice – ask the students
- Social emotional learning
- Resources and experiences:
 - More staff that look like students
 - Systemic barriers (criminal record, citizenship status etc.)
 - Current staff burn out (staff of color)
 - Professional boundaries

-
- Student – should look like being able to make career pathways, wants his own students to have that opportunity
 - Student – what do students want to learn, It can be easier when you are group, work with mix group members
 - Teacher – success when student leave high school, they can make a choice in what to do and feel capable and confident.

-
- What does it look like
 - College
 - Passing my classes and getting through
 - Graduating
 - Graduating with a degree helps you be more successful
 - Being set up for the future
 - Knowing what you want to do
 - Being able to help others
 - Anything that would make success easier
 - Better transportation – taking the city bus is hard
 - Getting help from staff and teachers
 - Money
 - Ipads
 - Help from family
 - Teachers, social workers, counselors
 - Tutors – designated space in a building for help
 - College advisors
 - Having middle school and high school together is hard
 - What makes it hard
 - Hard for some students who are new to the country
 - Transportation; miss yellow buses but it is nice to have access; after school buses get very crowded, sometimes kids are late
 - Resources to add
 - Want more fun classes after school
 - Bring back 5-10 at Washington, or make it optional
 - Discussions like this
 - Getting outside, more active, get outside
 - Free period – exercise, library, rest, sleep

- Opportunities for breaks
- Study hour to catch up on homework, study hall
- Bus for after school activities
- School feels like a prison – go in and do work
- Online credit recovery is harder than in person
- Extracurricular activities are great but hard to access due to transportation

-
- Washington is opening more course offerings
 - Washington took away the 510, students want it back. It was academic support, social, provided opportunity to try new things. Really promoted more interaction between students. Students feel this was so beneficial to the student life communities!
 - Need to have teachers who actually make a connection with students and establish relationships.
 - 510 also provided opportunities for students to try sports – i.e. badminton
 - Believe the loss of 510 is part of the drop in student enrolment
 - Jie Ming – New Year performance was a central part of the community. Cultural immersion via dance & music – has not really returned yet
 - Comes to conferences and is talking to foundation teacher but not someone who actually works with your student. This does not make sense.

-
- Hard when teachers talk about a topic really fast and can't immerse info well. When tests happening so much – hard to understand in such a short amount of time. Success: HS Diploma and college!
 - Education – important – try my best
 - Immigrant parents – want financial stability. We know English, they don't. Make good use.
 - Educational success: what will I use with what I'm learning. Ex: history. Many cultures – oral storytelling via family vs. academic settings. I wish more of a cultural education to feel pride in who I am. Diplomas/degrees are important but you need someone to help you make your plan for what you'll use your degree for.
 - Feeling like I can get my daughter the help she needs to focus – so she can pass her classes. She is way intelligent. You'd think she was older. When she's in the classroom she needs to be able to sit and focus next year. Sit next to her. But I don't want her medicated.
 - Grandson – getting movement breaks
 - For me school was not successful. Dyslexic. Didn't do college – not my route. Hands on for me. Success was not school based. Learning based. Rookie school. EMT Courses. Intro to XX. 2-5 week crash course, then EMT, hazmat, fire ops, etc. in 1 week. Trade was better for me. Success = happiness in what they're doing. Job where you can take care of yourself. 4 year-6-8 why does this define success?
 - ELS learning supports
 - Hmong community – 50 years but we still have Hmong students learning English.

Group: Karen Students

- My parents expect me to be A student
- Our parents push us to be better
- Parents ask questions about school
- Parents get information through sts, not the school
- Interpreters are limited
- Parents communicate and ask questions
- Some parents are very strict with sts
- Parents need support how to use platforms and technology

-
- Success – having everyone graduate on time
 - Mentorship
 - Supporter – at home/community
 - Setting goals
 - Resources/materials
 - Connection
 - Supporters
 - Mentorship

-
- Not like test, seeing a child come in shy, learning, independent, expressing, learning
 - Understanding when we don't connect, students shut down
 - Charters are doing so much – how can they do all that, they drive, custodian, we are trapped
 - They are taking extra steps, charters
 - We have culture – we know what to do

May 4, 2023

- A good experience, but hearing teachers leaving and programs shutting down
- SPPS community as a whole is struggling
- Funding for teachers = pulling in teachers → do not lower our standards
- We have excellent teachers but they are burning out
- Support teachers we have, and some new teachers don't teach because of salary
- If anyone knows a teacher who has experience teaching advanced math
- Incentives for teachers, like paying off student loans → stay for 5 years
- SPPS is a good school overall in comparison. People say bad things, but they don't know bad.

-
- Happy with the schools, reading achievement has been high
 - Wish that more Latinos sent more of their kids to dual immersion programs
 - I wish they had more empathy and attention when it comes to bullying. It is trivialized and dismissed. Staff say “all kids fight”
 - Some sort of therapy/groups/counseling to counter this
 - So much is dismissed because kids don't say anything to staff right away
 - Communication needs to be prioritized in order to gain trust for students to be honest with staff

- All parents in table have had experiences with their kids being bullied and being dismissed, not enough consequences for the bully
- One shared that after their child was severely bullied, principal told them nothing else could be done because certain races were disproportionately suspended
 - Feel unfair to their kids
 - District needs to have stricter consequences
- Simple problems are handled poorly and make problems worse

-
- Academic engagement
 - Place where all students feel comfortable
 - Student voice
 - Teacher diversity
 - Multicultural learning
 - Expository learning
 - Success easier – inclusivity, multilingual
 - Feeling of belonging
 - TRUST
 - Lots of information
 - Be aware of students mental health aware of situation at home
 - Hard: missing school
 - Students/families as partners
 - Cultural competency/awareness/literate
 - More community school settings
 - Connecting with organizations
 - Increase authentic family engagement
 - Use feedback in strategic plan
 - Active effort from school to fight against racist behaviors
 - Translate information for ALL languages
 - Need languages to be interpreted

-
- At Humboldt, want more languages and challenges
 - More AP, IB, CIS, more challenges
 - No HW in elementary
 - IEP services weren't provide until spring
 - Success looks like early engagement in IEPs
 - Big Bro/Big Sis in schools

■ Community member: there are many things that would make it easier. If we look at St. Paul as a whole, there are many programs, but Saint Paul as a city is huge. Traveling to certain programs are difficult. Some of these programs include gyms for exercise and tutoring for tougher subjects.

-
- Focus, finish with homework

- Celebration or recognition, rewards
- Graduating
- Hard and not focus with friend
 - Distraction
- Representation at all levels
- Redefine what “success” means
- Individual success vs. collective/community success
- Knowing how to set goal and achieving goals
- When families are engaging

-
- Always resource avail
 - Outlet, different resource with outreach
 - Someone with same mindset
 - Child being able to get learning from different culture/background
 - Getting into college. Good enough to have skills for next – being prepared

-
- Cooperation amongst school mates
 - Feeling welcome
 - More information about scholarships and educational/cultural programs
 - Conferences to talk about everything going on, with advanced notice
 - Better communication between students, teachers, and parents

-
- More tutors and time with students
 - Personalized help
 - Extra help for each student
 - Its frustrating when there is no staff that speaks Spanish
 - Increase the number of translators
 - Better weekly communication with parents

-
- Must strive to pass all subjects
 - Must get outstanding achievements in every school
 - Someone’s learning subjects and grade level must be the same as his or her level (reading, writing, and math grade level)

Question 3: Are there things you need to thrive as a student, parent or guardian, teacher, staff member or other community member in SPPS? If so, what are those things? Are you able to access them? If not, who or what might help you get the things you need to thrive?

April 25, 2023

- Good communication
 - Parents ↔ Teachers
 - Teachers ↔ Students

- Between staff
- Communication in languages other than English
- Culture within secondary schools – stabbing at Harding
- Is 25% proficiency on MCA something to be proud of?
- Impact on image – reality behind the image
- Collaboration between departments
 - Relationship with supervisor
- Does leadership listen? Are they willing to acknowledge the issue than rather than covering up?
- Want to be informed
- Honesty
- Advantages of being in a large district – resources, opportunities available
- Staff, students – need to feel valued

-
- Student – multiple ways of teaching (hands on, visual)
 - Student –teacher being more specific (better explanations)
 - 3D models

-
- Positive encouragement
 - Push me to do my best
 - High expectations; expectations
 - Role models – know how to relate to you
 - Behavior specialists are around more and easier to talk to than counselors
 - Shared culture, representation

Group: Karen Students

- More interpreters
- Inform my parents about education system and how to better support me
- Communication. Some parents don't have phone or know technology
- Provide ipads, computers, technology to communicate with us and school
- Motivation
- Stress at school doesn't help
- Having spiritual care for sts
- I wish we had more field trips
- Reward system for good sts (museum)

-
- Financial support
 - Affordable support service
 - Building a trusting relationship with your instructors/mentors where you feel comfortable having a personal conversation relating your level of learning

-
- Teach parents
 - Because of language barriers we diminish parents

- Understand the pain
- Equity is important, don't attach to numbers
- Some smaller schools have so many needs – defaulted into examples, explain everything
- Registration QR code to register students, they don't have

-
- As a parent there are a lot of barriers to getting help that you need
 - Trying to find tutoring, finding something that is available after school is hard when you're a single parent. Affordability is another issue.
 - Educators need to get to know students and identify and understand behavioral issues. More teaching of values/positive characteristics for kids who don't come to school knowing how to act
 - Students don't get individualized teaching at upper grades
 - Student says school doesn't tell you about the outside world. There are opportunities but there should be more for non-seniors.
 - Start career pathways earlier

May 4, 2023

- Always the frontline, you can't miss a frontline teacher
- Support staff for that teacher
- Knowing that the assistive teachers
- Academic support staff → ESL, counselors
- If every parent could be assured that if a student wants to go to college they should be supported in whatever journey that the student takes
- With funding direct to support the classroom
- Closer relationships
- Immersion program was good
- Having a long-term plan for connections
- Concerned parents
- Energized students
- Role models
- Amazed by the quality of teachers
- Turn over and burnout of teachers
- Support the teachers
 - Para/education assistants
 - Coaches for curriculum
 - Sense of community (parents)
 - Budget allocation, so competitive, attract and retain

-
- Peace, tranquility & harmony
 - Bullying still an issue
 - Information and communication is super important and staff/teachers need all families well informed of school events and opportunities like after-school programs
 - Student shared she wished her teacher would explain more, when asks for help, she feels dismissed and teacher tells her to do it even though she doesn't understand
-

- Good/effective communication in native tongue
- Community in action – over communicating is better than nothing
- Allow BIPOC students to take accelerated classes
- Need classes to be whole rather than picking favorite or popular places
- Teach history at a younger age
- Track how students are learning with the current history
- Measure world languages
- How can we connect this effort to a state-wide initiative
- Inter-disciplinary

-
- Space, inclusive environment, to participate and engage
 - Transportation
 - Safe environment
 - Interpretation
 - Clear and timely communication
 - Need family liaison/cultural liaison/school level and district level
 - Parent engagement coordinator

-
- Genuine support

-
- Looking after school, attending school
 - Homework
 - Must monitor children’s school attendance every day and whether they pass the exams in subjects they are studying.
 - Parents, teachers and school must work together

Question 4: Right now, what do you think a diploma from SPPS will give a student?

Is it good enough to get them to college? Is it good enough for them to take care of their family? Is it good enough to allow them to live a certain lifestyle? Do you think there are different kinds of diplomas in SPPS?

April 25, 2023

- Son graduated HS with 26 college credits → ability to graduate college early
- Adams → Highland
 - Full IB
 - Main track
- Diploma opening door to jobs
- Variety of experiences that make up the diploma that prepare you – i.e., working in a diverse environment
- What is the value of the diploma outside of the extras
- Credit requirements been lowered
 - Confusion as to why
 - If taking Algebra II as freshman – fulfills requirement but would do more math regardless

of requirement

- Staff – different schools have different standards
- It's the path you choose, are you a hard work person or not. Might need a back up plan.
- Schools with different standards but parents need to know so they can make the right choice for their student

- Opportunities, jobs, college
- Graduates feel safe
- SPPS is diverse
- Student from Washington says they liked having higher standard of grad, requirements

- **Group: Karen Students**
- JROTC program will get me to military
- HS provides opportunities and introduces some areas and different pathways after HS
- I feel that I get support in school from teachers ex: what classes to take to get into specific jobs
- Counselors available
- PSEO available in HS

- SPPS diploma doesn't support lifestyle of what you want, does not support your family
- Some area high school diploma can take you to a certain area depending on your goal setting
- Preferably – a college degree b/c these days most companies require a college degree

- Diploma but with a GPA of 1.5 isn't good
- College isn't the only next step but the diploma means something
- Is a college degree the new standard?
- Diploma is still a basic level of understanding
- GPA is sometimes negotiable – may not mean anything
- Its not always on the kids

May 4, 2023

- Foundation to navigate
- Depends on family to navigate
- Aware of what your student needs
- Some families are unaware of of PSEO classes
- Knowing the amount of credits needed
- Being set up to take that diploma
- Such as not having to take a language in high school but for college they require it

- Making sure they have a foundation for the student track
- We need more trade people, there is a shortage
- Having options, family support
- Depends on student
- They have been lowering credits → less motivated
- Want to get out
- However for others it has been great
- My school graduation rate – 60% in 2021
- 60% I think is motivated
- Critical ethnic studies = really good course
 - Teach the stories of minorities
 - Help students appreciate themselves
 - Even bring parents more inclusion

-
- At this moment, no.
 - Catching kids too late to catch up to be successful at college
 - Need a foundation

-
- Learned a lot of HS have college credit for their desired program – college/career readiness
 - Farnsworth – seats reserved at Johnson
 - Sees diploma as necessary
 - PSEO

-
- No – with the loss learning due to the pandemic, I don't think my child will be ready for college
 - HS diploma will allow you to get a job that requires a HS diploma but having a HS does not necessarily mean you have the skills for certain jobs
 - That you completed the necessary course work and credits to earn a HS degree
 - With career pathways, AP, IB, PSEO and CIS, those courses and pathways can help

-
- Investment opportunities, more positive job opportunity, more diverse background
 - Peace of mind, better opportunity, explore more opportunity
 - Knowledge lasts forever
 - Maybe a spouse

-
- Sometimes no. The students pass to the next grade without the knowledge they need.

-
- The certificate does not mean college readiness. Some are not ready to go to college.
 - Students in St. Paul School who get a certificate are not at the same level. Some do not live up to the standards which is set for college admission.
 - Some graduates are not qualified.
 - Some are well qualified.

Question 5: Is there anything in the SPPS Achieves strategic plan that you think is especially important? Are there any outcomes, objectives or focus areas that are valuable to you, your family, and/or your student(s)? Is there anything you don't see here that is a priority for you? What, if any, resources, relationships, and experiences do you appreciate the most at SPPS?

April 25, 2023

- Focus area: Culturally Responsive Instruction

-
- Student – all important in their own way. All supporting me.
 - More connections to careers
 - Want different classes, but want excellent teachers
 - Like how LGBT is important

-
- Family/Community engagement
 - Together we build a stronger community as a whole 2 hands are better than one.

-
- Equity

May 4, 2023

- Personal finance in addition
- Social emotional learning, academic mentorship assists teacher
- Expanding SEL support across the district
- Engagement events and make events more accessible/available/more opportunities
- Family and community engagement, PACs
- Maybe add a Friday event

-
- Important – Family Engagement & Community Engagement
 - Need to find better ways to reach out to families
 - Advertisement and outreach
 - Helpful to have community liaison to communicate out to families to let them know about events at the school and district
 - College and Career Readiness
 - Create culturally relevant opportunity
 - Get diverse business and community partners

-
- Very high on equity. It is very important each student gets what they need
 - Ready for post high school. Equity provides this for all our students

-
- Systemic Equity
 - Positive School and District Culture
 - Effective and Culturally Responsive Instructions
 - Family and Community Engagement
 - Colleague and Career Readiness
 - Appreciate Family and Community Engagement
 - Provide training to SPPS staff regarding equality
 - Community Partnership Program
 - Develop districtwide culturally appropriate training

Question 6: Dream up what a really good school looks like. Describe the classroom, the cafeteria, the outside, the facility, etc. What does it look like at Elementary? Middle? High School? Is there something your school doesn't have but should have?

April 25, 2023

- Everybody succeeds – multiple visions of success
- Everyone is welcomed
- Parent community
- Diversity – feel more included
- Choose your own classes
- More counselors

-
- Relationship with parents
 - School connections (clubs/activities)
 - Listen to parents/students
 - Relationships with staff (principals, counselors, support)
 - Unified high expectations
 - Free activities
 - Teacher training – culturally with students/families
 - Family activities – involvement
 - Understanding mental health in youth
 - Engaging kids that aren't participating without embarrassing them
 - Encouraging students to be themselves in a respectful way
 - Acknowledging positive behavior in students
 - Incorporating music with learning in school (Toolz TV and Gracie's corner) in elementary

-
- Would like recess (more movement)
 - Good food (more than pizza, burgers...)
 - Larger portions

-
- Classes take place outside (some instruction inside)
 - TVs for announcement

- Better school lunches
- Outside places to eat
- Opportunities to learn independently
- Better bathrooms
- Place to go where teachers with lots of knowledge can help you when you need it
- Have more support from teachers – different ways of teaching
- Fun ways for students to get involved in classrooms – would help build community
- School store with tickets
- Health clinic
- Theater/auditorium
- More after school activities and transportation

.....

Group: Karen Students

- Playgrounds for middle school
- Have a school store
- More food options, bigger portions
- Different cultural food (esp. Karen)
 - The samosa doesn't taste like samosa
- The rice is undercooked
- Different beverages
- Definitely having breakfast & lunch – both options

-
- Dream school
 - College campus
 - Where you can go outside
 - Middle school
 - Education focus
 - Elementary – be more creative → arts, elected class, music, etc.

-
- Elementary
 - People are welcoming
 - Buildings need to be changed, colored, decorates
 - Big hallways
 - No major blocks
 - Big pole in the middle of the hall isn't safe
 - If the schools can afford lighting through the roof
 - Curriculum = STEM, ART technology, how much training given to staff. Technology and science.

May 4, 2023

- More diversity for teachers/administrators
- Need culture to show up not be an afterthought
- More pathways
- Teachers that are passionate

- Counselors/support staff
 - Rooted in culture
 - Restrict actions on students who are showing racist behavior and educating them. Being empathetic. Acknowledging what's going on in the life – politics – community – traumatic events
 - Allowing students to have time to be outside – burn off energy
 - Physical activity
 - Exposure to the arts
 - Health and sex education
-

- SEL
 - Counselors in the schools at Cherokee Heights
 - No more standardized tests
 - Diverse options for student meals, diverse foods
 - Culturally diverse foods in cafeteria
 - Culturally relevant spaces
 - Liked the smudging space
 - Adequate support for students in Sp. Ed
 - Adequate support for students with IEP
-

- Pre-K to 12 school/pathway
 - Consistent staff
 - Small classroom
 - Uniform
 - Diverse staff and high quality staff/teachers. Passionate and caring
 - Immersion school
 - Same start and end time for all schools
 - Well rounded schools
 - Fully funded schools
 - Nice building
 - Salary up to date
 - Good PTO/PTA
 - Good food (cultural ethnic menu)
 - After school program with transportation
 - Big gym and field for sports
 - Year round school with multiple breaks
 - We want AC in building
 - Tall windows bring good lighting
-

- Student – make it look like UCLA
 - Parent – curriculum
 - Student – kids learning, kids playing, kids packing their bags, big school, looks like Humboldt, lots of people having fun
-

- Teachers and students must follow rules and regulations
- Respect each other
- Respect
- Security (safe) – safety
- Welcoming to everyone & Everyone shall feel welcomed (school staff should have warm interactions)
- Students should listen to their teachers
- Students shall avoid using phones in the classroom (phone use ban)

Question 7: What is standing in the way of us closing achievement gaps? How can all of us work together to make progress?

April 25, 2023

- Upbringing, different values
- Some students don't seem concerned
- Motivation
- Students will always have different values, levels of engagement
- Children within the same household are very different
- Lots of skills that need to be acquired at home

-
- Road block: use data to drive decision sharing. Use data to desire a system that delivers college drive.

-
- Example: my Karen friends differently than me but we arrive at the same answers
 - Blame game
 - Parents
 - Educators
 - Humble ourselves
 - Sometimes limited resources
 - Let's do what we can control for the time we have, they feel welcomed, connected
 - We can't wait for the teachers to change race, it has to occur NOW
 - Relationship NOW
 - Belief that every child can learn
 - Expectations realistic and authentic
 - Take into consideration experiences, students may know something but we teach differently and make it seem like our way is the best and what they know isn't of value
 - We aren't embracing what is brought
 - Use resources
 - Sometimes you have to make investments
 - Minnesota Reading Corp
 - Use different intentions (specifics)
 - Programs to help different learners
 - Teachers that know how to teach

- Equal access to academic programs like advanced classes
- Students learning another language can be seen as a disability but it is actually a gift
- One parent households can be barriers because the parent can't provide as many supports
- Societal issues like race, class – we all need to come together. Vote, be active in your community.
- Assessments skewed towards white students
- Biases in assessments impact how students of color perform
- Assessments like ACT should be available in other languages
- Make students more aware that achievement gaps exist. Many students can't sit and take the assessments – learning disabilities, language, other barriers
 - Shift away from standardized testing
- ACT/SAT becoming optional for college admissions. Puts more emphasis on student to see if college requires ACT/SAT.
- Creating portfolios for students shows more student progress. Standardized tests only show what students know at the time of taking the test.

May 4, 2023

- Student attendance
- Some students do not want to learn the content
- Engagement in the school community
- Curriculum=inaccessible and inconsistent from school to school
- Students who have jobs
- Mental health and trauma
- Inconsistency in access to services from school to school
- Educator fatigue from having to do so much within the schools
- Inequitable resourcing across the district
- Safety concerns leading to poor attendance
- Inequitable access to resources across the district
- Ideas – make sure schools have full time staff:
 - School nurse
 - Adult library

-
- Adequate support for students w IEPs
 - Safety
 - SEL, generational trauma
 - Courses offered equitably across district
 - Challenging opportunities (more of)
 - Hands on opportunities, interactive activities
 - Cultural relevant instruction, affirming identity
 - Expanded pathways
 - Historical education – more culturally diverse history lessons in school
 - Multiple perspectives in history, history before colonization

-
- Have an open dialogue between the students, parents, and school
 - Language barriers, you can't make a change if you can't speak to one another
 - Get more families into the school to participate

- More conversations with the teachers – two parent conference days a year isn't enough
- Not enough interpreters
- If there was more connections between the student, family, and schools then the families would feel like they are being heard
- Have more school buses for high school students or have an adult on each city bus route that is not the driver or the police
- Standing outside waiting for this city bus in the winter is not safe
- New bathrooms are safer
- Safety is a big concern for students feeling empowered in school and to do their best
- More mental health supports that are accessible and affordable for all parents → leads to students feeling more safe and leads to less violence
- Feeling like students get less support when they move to high school. There's more support offered in elementary/middle
- Having more staff trained to deescalate situations
- Parent said that her son needs support at school, he has been overwhelmed but the teachers don't respond when she calls and he doesn't ask for help

-
- Good teachers
 - Ethnic studies
 - Recognize student success and achievement each month

-
- At home problems getting in the way
 - More support at home
 - Equity is at the top. Like SW fighting for extra help
 - Getting each student what they need
 - Set the bar high
 - The scholars that aren't getting need more help so they don't fall through the gap
 - Educator are paid enough, they're fired
 - Educators that want to be here

Question 8: What should the district know right now?

April 25, 2023

- The St. Paul community needs to know what it is going to take to bring families that we've lost
- Our staff needs to feel proud of working in St. Paul
- Kids need to thrive
- We often implement things that we don't evaluate
 - SPPS needs to evaluate how we are progressing on the strategic plan.
- Embrace all diversities
- Getting into the classes that are my first choice

-
- 114 languages but we only translate 4
 - Creates parent/teacher disconnect

- I'm supposed to drop my kid at school – a school I don't even know the language spoken
- 5-7 didn't even know ABC's
- Engage quiet students
- The main teachers that send students out of class sit out of PA and important meeting
- After effects of covid
- What kids have experienced hasn't gone away even though covid has
- Traumatic experiences but don't believe in therapy
- Black people ≠ therapy culture
- Last hired first fired – inhibit diversity in hiring
 - Criminal records
 - Citizenship status

May 4, 2023

- Bussing. Ask Metro Transit if there can be SPPS student only routes
- Students may bring a weapon for protection on the bus; resulting in weapons in the school
- Kids have to cross really busy streets to get to bus stops
- Attendance is very impacted by city bus
- Is this a temporary fix? Or will we go back to yellow busses?
- What are the impacts on attendance from bussing? Are we collecting this data?
- Can any of the schools that are empty be repurposed into housing for students?
- Not having access to outdoor space at all schools at all the levels.

-
- Feels schools are secured (locked during the day)
 - Needs more intervention for bullying/worries about bullying

Question 9: Building a Safer Community: Is there anything that makes you feel safe (in school or as a member of the SPPS community)? Is there anything that makes you feel unsafe? If so, please discuss.

April 25, 2023

- More training for staff on how to deal with conflict
- When staff members intervene

-
- Teachers stand in hallways
 - Familiarity – know community members, say hello, welcome
 - Lack of isolation
 - Sense of community – feel like you believe
 - Everyone needs to own that they have a role in keeping the building safe
 - Community – transparency – everyone understand their roles
 - Developing and implementing plans that are unique to each building

-
- **Group: Karen Students**

- What are the schools doing to address safety and drugs?

-
- Enforcement of gun law
 - Enforce more security in the school environment
 - Outreach to community for a better firearm training

May 4, 2023

- Firearm training

-
- New doors (uniform locking system)

Question 10: Is there anything that we didn't ask that we should have? What isn't here that you would like to see? Are there any questions you have? Please share your question(s), and any answers that your group discusses.

April 25, 2023

- Priorities
- Better food
- Health – physical, mental
- Safety
- Sense of belonging
- More opportunities for career growth for staff and training for growth

-
- I was tired when I came, you boosted our energy, my spirit, thank you

-
- What should the district prioritize?
 - Teacher salaries – make sure that teachers have what they need to be successful in the classroom
 - Workforce retention – mentorship programs for first year and student teachers
 - Mentors for language academy students
 - More tutoring for students – more opportunities than just AVID
 - Updates to schools – more buildings with AC
 - Make sure parents know what supports are available if they need language support, support for single parents, etc
 - Make tutoring available after school hours for high schoolers
 - Positive experience in SPPS → change the narrative
 - SPPS has kinder, worked in SPPS for 2-3 years as a para
 - Alumni at central, works at office for equity. Director of support. Student relationships
 - Grandkid at SPPS
 - Worker at office of school support, two kids in SPPS

- Girls group, SPPS alumni and now worker at SPPS with a 2 year old son
- Urban schools have the same opportunities as suburban schools
- What does educational success look like?
 - Preparation
 - High expectations
 - Support “middle tier” students
 - His kid would skate by and no one expected more

May 4, 2023

- The first unit was about how you see yourself and it helped me understand myself and my community. How to approach things differently
- I had a UMN internship on disparity and health about the inconsistencies. Being heard in the healthcare community.

-
- National Parents Union – www.nationalparentsunion.org
 - Khalia Pringle

-
- Mental health support



**Engage! Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS)
Community Conversation & Dinner
25 April 2023**

Circle Share-in Notes⁴

Prompt: *Something I've always want to hear about myself is [that I am] ...*

- You belong
- You're a great leader
- You're still young
- An artist
- You're very fine
- You're handsome
- You're a hard worker
- You're a nice person
- I could listen to you talk all day
- You're funny
- You work so hard
- You're trustworthy
- Don't give up
- You're brave
- You're enough
- You have a big heart
- You're resilient
- You're beautiful
- You're strong
- You're wonderful
- You're great at video games
- You're handsome
- You're loved
- You're caring
- You're a good daughter
- You're worthy
- You matter
- I love you
- You're strong
- You're durable
- You're kind

⁴ Due to audio malfunction, circle share-in notes not captured for the May 4th event.

- You're enough
- You care
- You're a good mom
- You deserve the best that life has to offer
- You're strong
- You're feelings are valid
- You listen
- You love your family
- You matter.
- You're beautiful
- You're courageous
- You're blessed
- You're a feminist
- You're the best
- You're talented
- You're strong
- You aren't a mistake
- You're enough
- You're doing enough
- You are a gift
- Your hair is beautiful
- You're the tallest person I know
- You're a good son
- You're words matter
- You can keep going