

## MPS Comprehensive District Design Executive Summary

### **Introduction**

In December 2017, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) began a systemic assessment to determine how, after examining exhaustive data compiled by the District as well as local, state and federal entities, we could set about to create a long-term plan that would deliver on six key things: responsive, high quality programs and outcomes; inclusion and access; robust, culturally relevant family and community engagement; financial stability; operational effectiveness and developing a consistent and reliable reputation.

From that initial 2017 data assessment, evolved months of additional study, refinement, stakeholder engagement, more data collection, more refinement, more study and more engagement. What has emerged is a proposal to significantly redesign MPS in three key areas: (1) academics, (2) equity and (3) sustainability with a goal of providing every student in Minneapolis access to a well-rounded education.

The Comprehensive District Design (CDD) proposal includes recommendations that increase all students' academic achievement by giving every student access to instruction that is more rigorous and culturally relevant; eliminating historically inequitable policies and practices that disadvantage students of color and students from low-income neighborhoods and; positioning MPS to be structurally sustainable and able to serve students well for years to come.

### **Board Direction**

In a resolution approved on Oct. 7, 2019, the MPS Board of Education gave direction to inform the final CDD proposal. The [full resolution](#) emphasizes such values as:

- Providing a well-rounded, early childhood through graduation, education so every student in every part of the city is equipped with the academic, social/emotional, and technical skills to be successful in college and/or career
- Including a plan for special education so students can access services near their home and that does not perpetuate school segregation or concentrate services
- Achievability and sustainability
- Providing equitable access to rigorous academic and credit attainment opportunities
- Addressing any policies that perpetuate institutional racism

The administration believes the proposal being presented to the Board achieves those values and directives as well as others contained in the October resolution. Additionally, the proposal is informed and guided by national and local data and research. We also have actively engaged our students, parents and community over the past 18 months and their feedback has been used to shape our final proposal. Administration believes that this proposal is achievable, sustainable and aligned.

## **Key Components**

### Academic Achievement

Improving academic achievement for all students, regardless of zip code, is at the heart of the final CDD proposal. There are four areas of focus in the new academic plan:

1. Early Literacy and Math -- ensuring all students can read by third grade, and adoption of a new math K-2 curriculum
2. Multi-tiered Systems of Support--which allows students to be taught at the levels they are ready to receive that instruction, and with the acceleration or supports -- including cultural -- they need to be successful
3. College and Career -- providing students with the knowledge, skills, mindset and experiences to be successful after high school
4. Equitable Education Design -- which will focus on making everything MPS teaches, everything MPS offers, more culturally relevant. From MTSS to ethnic studies, we want to offer learning that resonates with all students, including and especially students of color.

### *Community Schools*

The CDD supports the foundation for high-quality community schools no matter where you live in Minneapolis. Families attending their community schools beginning in SY21-22 can expect: strong academics; welcoming climate and safe environment; engagement in science technology engineering and math (stem) for all on a weekly basis (k-5 / 6-8); engagement in music and art on a weekly basis; engagement in literacy and math core instruction daily; access to culturally-sustaining curriculum developed and informed with stakeholder input and implemented through an equity lens with a focus on whole-child; access to intentional integration of SEL development; clear expectations regarding positive and welcoming school climates; communication with families; restorative practices aligned to climate framework; and clear expectations for middle level academic programming.

### *Magnet Schools*

The CDD also proposes retaining a limited number of magnet school options. Magnet schools will operate with the explicit goal of increasing racial and economic integration and reducing achievement disparities. Proposed magnet themes include:

- Arts
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM)
- Dual Language Immersion Spanish
- Global Studies and Humanities
- Montessori

Integration funding will be used to support targeted programming, enrichment offerings and the professional development necessary to sustain strong magnet schools in order to improve academic achievement and attract families from outside of their home attendance zone. Targeted student placement staff and recruiters will also be hired to support the placement process and recruitment at these sites.

#### *Career and Technical Education (CTE)*

The CDD proposal includes three centralized Career and Technical Education sites. The first will be the North Tech Center located at North High School. The second will be a Northeast Tech Center located at Edison High School. The third will be the South Tech Center located at Roosevelt High School. The North Tech Center will offer CTE programming with a focus on Information and Technology that will include but not limited to Engineering, Computer Science, Robotics and Web and Digital Communications. The Northeast Tech Center will offer CTE programming in business, law and public safety and agriculture. The South Tech Center will offer CTE programming in Auto, Construction, Machine Tool, Welding and Healthcare.

MPS will also continue to meet the federal requirement to offer a minimum of six CTE programs with goal of a minimum of one per career field sector in Business; Agriculture & Natural Resources; Arts, Communication, Information and Technology ; Engineering, Manufacturing, Technology; Health Science; Human Services. Those six programs are aligned to the immediate and projected actual workforce needs of the City of Minneapolis.

#### *Special Education*

Transitions for students receiving special education services will be guided by two principles:

1. to align as much as possible with general education transition rules
2. to reduce the number of transitions as much as possible

If this proposal is approved by the Board, Special Education will review each student's Individualized Education Plan and develop a transition plan if necessary for that student.

We will align with the proposed high school recommendations and keep our 10, 11, and 12 graders in their current schools. Our commitment is to keep transitions to a minimum.

Special education staff will use strategies such as social stories, video modeling, and pre-teaching to help students and families through the process. It is also important to note that all classroom changes are proposed and could be changed at any time to meet the individual service needs of our students. Special education service needs will continue to be reviewed throughout each school year and the necessary adjustments will continue to be made.

### Equity

#### *Changes in Policy & Administrative Regulations*

MPS Board policies guide the work of all District staff and create an accountability mechanism for the public to hold us accountable to our stated values and goals. The District will need to complete a holistic review of all policies and protocols through the lens of Policy 1340. For this proposal policies 5262, 5263, 6120 and 6130 were examined and presented to the Board's Policy Committee on March 5th. And while the Board does not vote on administrative procedures, this proposal does include how placement processes would be modified to support the new policies. The revised policies emphasize:

- placements based on the educational needs of the students
- ability of parents to choose the best fit for their child
- choice of high quality schools in every community
- less focus on transportation, more investment in programming
- easier access to integrated magnet schools
- continuation of sibling preference

While MPS is committed to investing in high quality community schools across Minneapolis, we know that some families will want the opportunity to attend magnet schools, which are organized to specifically promote citywide, integrated learning environments highlighting a specific theme or approach to instruction.

Placement in these schools will be governed by a lottery process and will aim to have economic integration that mirrors the district average - about 60% students eligible to receive educational benefits and 40% who do not. Sibling preference will continue to be a priority.

A set of priorities or weights will be assigned to students during the magnet lottery process and if integration isn't achieved by the first lottery, additional lotteries may be used.

The Special Education Department has likewise developed updated protocols for the placement of students receiving special education services. In the past, Citywide Special Education Programs have been placed in schools based on where there was physical space available. The CDD provided an opportunity to intentionally design the appropriate and intentional placement of the classrooms across our District.

For students receiving Federal Setting I and II services, who have the majority of their services in the general education setting, families would follow the same placement protocols for community schools and magnet options as their general education peers.

For students receiving Federal Setting III services, who have the majority of their services in a special education setting or in general education with supports, they would be placed in the citywide program identified that can best meet their needs that is closest to their neighborhood and has availability at the student's grade level. Students and their families would also have the opportunity to engage in the lottery process for a seat in a citywide program that is located in a magnet school. There will be limited choices of the type of magnet option available to each disability area and there will be a limit to the number of seats available.

For students receiving Federal Setting IV services, the locations of those services will remain stable through the CDD implementation phase. Community school and magnet options will be available to students as their transition back to Federal Setting III services.

#### *Further Implementation of the HR EDIA*

Embedded in the CDD is a continued commitment to recruiting, hiring, and supporting a high-quality workforce of teachers and staff who reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the students that we serve. These efforts are not only foundational to the work of the CDD, but also reflect our sustained commitment to addressing the findings of the HR equity and Diversity Impact Assessment (or EDIA). We will continue to strive towards this critical goal through the continuation of ongoing efforts (Grow Your Own, High School to Teaching pathway, etc.), the launch of new strategies and initiatives (shortening interview and select, protections for teachers at high poverty schools).

MPS is committed to ensuring that all of its students have equitable access to high quality instruction. This is a core belief, one of the most important driving factors for the CDD, and is also mandated by both federal law (ESSA) and state law (World's Best Workforce). This proposal includes the implementation of a three-part plan that looks at which students are attending which schools and how they are assigned, which students are assigned to which teachers within a school, and which teacher are in which schools, especially our highest-needs sites.

### *Other equity considerations*

Implicit throughout the plan is that each recommendation is built to support the premise that every student deserves a respectful learning environment in which their racial and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes.

Adult behaviors must be concentrated on the elimination of gaps, particularly those predicated on a student's race, ethnicity, home language, personal characteristics or culture, and on assurance of educational equity between students.

As curriculum is ever changing, there will be clear expectations that MPS teachers will be engaging in culturally-sustaining curriculum development that includes stakeholder input and focus on whole-child development. This work will be aligned to our Climate Framework that seeks to ensure equitable practices in all we do in Minneapolis Public Schools.

Equity and Social Emotional Learning are foundations for students to gain necessary foundational skills as well as accelerate in literacy. Equity is not just an end-goal of effective literacy implementation but starts with how we educate literacy. Understanding the integration and impact of race, culture, language and values plays a role in the level of intentionality of our efforts in literacy implementation.

The CDD planning process found that MPS does not have a tiered approach for school support to strategically allocate resources based on need to transform school climates across the system. As a result, and using Policy 1340, it was embedded in this proposal that equity be a guide in allocating all of our resources including, but not limited to, professional development, coaching/ technical assistance, curricula, supplemental resources, and specialized staff.

### Sustainability

Included in this proposal are recommendations to ensure that we have the necessary resources to accomplish plan goals. These include the operational and structural changes necessary to help ensure the District's sustainability for the next several years and beyond. The sustainability component includes costing, building capacity and usage, transportation, and enrollment projects.

Structurally, the final proposal is based on a community school model with 11 magnet schools placed centrally in the city. The proposal expands CTE programming by focusing on three citywide sites and supports seven comprehensive high schools and an Arts Conservatory at Fair School for 9-12 grade. Additionally, Wellstone would co-locate at the

Fair School site to provide ease of access to co-curricular courses at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. With the available space at Wilder, Heritage High School would move to the Wilder building which provides a more central site and has better facilities for educating students at the 9-12 grade level.

This proposal, based on enrollment projections, would result in eight racially isolated schools, reducing the number of racially isolated schools by 12. We also project we would have seven (7) high poverty schools. One concern many have expressed with this study is how many students would have to transition to new schools in this proposal. Annually, approximately 21% of our students currently transition schools within a school year. Under this proposal, there would be an additional one-time transition for another 14.7% of our Pre-K through eighth grade students.

This proposal, if adopted, would still require changes to ensure financial sustainability. Those changes would include:

- Changing school start and end times
- Finalizing transportation routes
- Redistributing funding sources such as federal grants and integration aid

To ensure structural proposals are accomplished, the District is also bringing forward a 5-year capital plan to support implementation of the CDD. The investment priorities considered were improvements needed for the new magnet school platform and the specific sites recommended in this proposal, building out the facility needs to support CTE programming, and considering other educational adequacy needs to support a well-rounded education in community schools, such as music performance, art and science classrooms. The capital plan also identifies bonding monies needed to continue various district operations that are typically bonded for, such as investment in technology, ongoing building maintenance and renewal and fleet replacement.

Capital Planning is reviewing projects that were previously approved and funded but that have not yet been initiated to determine whether to request the Board approve cancelling any projects to redirect funding to support this plan. The draft capital plan will be modified to meet those financial parameters and brought to the Board of Education for review and comment prior to finalizing the 2021-22 budget due in June.

### **Requested Board Action**

The Board of Education directed the Superintendent to bring forth a set of sustainable and equitable recommendations that improve achievement and outcomes, as well as the daily experiences of students, staff and families across the District. The recommended proposal

represents the response to that Board directive. Therefore, after a review period, the administration will ask the Board to take the following action:

- **Vote on** proposed school grade configurations, attendance boundaries, and program assignments that would take effective beginning with the 2021-2022 school year;
- **Vote on** any necessary policy changes to successfully execute the design;
- **Vote on** aligned future budgetary and capital plan proposals to successfully execute the design; and
- **Review and provide feedback** on implementation plans for academics, evaluation, staffing, communications, and others as necessary; and

### **Conclusion**

The Comprehensive District Design is a significant undertaking and rare for an entire urban public school district to evaluate and propose to re-design so many of its systems at one time. But, we are in an urgent moment in our history as a city. Minnesota as a state has one of the worst achievement gaps in the country. This cannot be allowed to continue. Action is mandatory. The safety and prosperity of all our families, of our economy, of our culture depends on it.

MPS is at a crossroads. We are losing students no matter what we do. We are losing 1,500 students annually-- 80% students of color -- because they are not being well-served educationally. If we don't address the needs of ALL students, we will have to reduce additional school options, close or combine programs, and reduce transportation. We understand that some families are talking about leaving MPS if these changes are made. We hope we can convince them by the time the plan is approved and implemented, that the district we are becoming will be a district in which they want to continue enrolling their student.

The future of our entire community will depend on us being able to deliver a well-rounded education for every student entrusted to us each day. The business communities, the public systems, the neighborhoods and most importantly families deserve to have a public school system operating within its budget, investing in our city's future and serving the students of today and tomorrow.