

“WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES”

SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“INCLUSIVENESS “

(DESEGREGATION/INTEGRATION)

PLAN

2005-2009

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Prepared by the Office of Accountability/Educational Equity

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INTRODUCTION

This Inclusiveness Plan has been developed to comply with the Minnesota State Desegregation Rule 3535.0100 to .0180 upon notice by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning to the Saint Paul Public Schools. The Plan has been developed and written with the primary purpose of creating and expanding educationally justifiable opportunities that contribute to an inclusive learning environment, which we believe is consistent with the intent of the Desegregation Rule.

The Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education has long-standing policies which prohibit segregation and promote inclusive learning environments and interracial contact both within the district, and between the 10-member districts of the East Metro Integration District (EMID 6067). As a district-wide plan, this Inclusiveness Plan encompasses initiatives that are funded by traditional desegregation dollars from the state of Minnesota and from multiple sources both within and outside the district.

Saint Paul Public Schools are not simply interested in racial balance alone, or merely assimilating new groups of students into a pre-existing educational environment/structure that is reflective of the majority culture. The “inclusive learning environment” which we strive for is one which incorporates the culture, history and intellectual contributions of all racial and ethnic groups into the daily lives of its students, families, faculty and community. An “inclusive” district and its schools, then, should achieve diversity and inclusion throughout all buildings and programs, their governance, staff recruitment, hiring and development, family and community engagement and curriculum. It should encourage the transformation of the existing system to meet the needs of all students¹.

As such, we believe that you cannot provide a world class education—unless you do it in an inclusive learning environment. Our Inclusiveness Plan is derived from the Saint Paul Public Schools vision and strategic plan, which encompasses a “World of Opportunities”. This Plan, and our vision of a World of Opportunities, involves three equally important and inter-related components: A rigorous, world class education for all Saint Paul Public School students, an array of educational choices and opportunities, and an inclusive environment that respects, includes, welcomes and engages all of the cultures which make up our community and our schools.

In short, our Inclusiveness Plan is not a piecemeal effort or a supplemental appendage to the every day business of public education—but rather an integral, connected

¹ Major demographic groups in the Saint Paul Public Schools include: African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American; the children of recent immigrants and refugees; students who do and do not received free or reduced-price lunch based upon family income levels; and ELL students with limited English proficiency (LEP).

reflection of the mission and comprehensive reform agenda of the Saint Paul Public Schools.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

While the MN Desegregation Rule is based on racial balance, it is important to note that there is a very strong correlation between the percent of poor students in a school and the average test scores of those students. This is not to suggest that race is no longer a factor—but rather, that there is a growing intersection of race and class in American education.

That intersection is becoming increasingly crowded with additional complicating factors such as language spoken at home, learning ability, parental involvement, segregated housing, mobility and access to opportunity within school buildings and programs. Add to this mix the level (or inconsistency) of expectations that students face, peer pressure, cross-generational, cross-cultural issues among the children of immigrants and refugees, and it becomes readily apparent that students, families and educators today face significant challenges.

Public schools in the United States are currently occupied by the most diverse group of students in our history. Demographers are predicting that this diversity will only become even more pronounced. Among our school-age population, we have only a single generation before the entire country becomes populated by a majority of students of color. Saint Paul Public Schools view these changes as a tremendous opportunity—as a rich and valuable resource at the heart of our Inclusiveness Plan.

Saint Paul has historically been a city of immigrants. It still is, but the difference today is that the immigrants are not Italian, Irish, Bohemian or Scandinavian. They are Asian/Pacific Islanders, Chicano/Latino, African and East European—with more than 72 state-identified languages and over 120 dialects spoken in students' homes. The mix of students is constantly changing, sometimes suddenly, as with the recent arrival of many diverse immigrants from the African and Asian continents, or sometimes gradually, as with the shift in some student populations from those born abroad to those born in the United States.

The Saint Paul Public Schools' population of students of color has increased from 16 percent in 1976 to more than 73.4 percent at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. Seventy-one percent of Saint Paul Public Schools students are low income. Over 42 percent of our students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. However, these figures tell only part of the story. (See Attachment "A")

Unlike many other urban districts, the population of students of color in Saint Paul is itself diverse. Over 29 of our students are African American, 29 are Asian, 12 are

Chicano/Latino, and 2 are American Indian². One in nine of the students included in the “African American” category are first-generation African immigrants, with significant populations from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Liberia. The Asian students are primarily Hmong, but also include substantial numbers of Vietnamese and Cambodian students. Again, this rich mix of cultures is a major strength of the district’s schools.

Another historic pattern is also being repeated in Saint Paul and in the suburbs. As various ethnic communities seek extended family support and affordable housing, they tend to group together in certain areas of town. This is a natural social process but it presents practical challenges as we work to voluntarily integrate our schools.

II. SPPS OBJECTIVES

Again, while broadly defined (as spelled out in this inclusiveness plan), the objectives of the Saint Paul Public Schools are primarily threefold: providing a rigorous, world class education for all students; offering an array of educational choices and opportunities to all students; and building an inclusive environment that respects, includes, welcomes and engages all of the cultures which make up our community and our schools.

These objectives are derived from the Saint Paul Public Schools strategic plan, which encompasses the district’s five essential target areas that grew out of extensive community input. These target areas are: prepare all students for life; provide clear and accurate reporting; engage the public; create institutional change; and respect and include all cultures and differences.

As stated earlier, this inclusiveness plan is closely integrated with all aspects of providing a world class public education in Saint Paul Public Schools. Consequently, the inclusiveness plan and the district’s long range strategic plan must of necessity overlap considerably.

The objectives and the challenges and opportunities associated with achieving them, are spelled out in greater detail in each of the following sections of this inclusiveness plan.

III. PROVIDING A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION

A. QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Saint Paul Public Schools provide a district-wide curriculum to meet the needs and to serve all students, from birth through adulthood. The Minnesota Standards are embedded in the curriculum, thereby giving all students access to a quality education. Care is taken in its development to include topics and courses that are both global enough to be relevant to a wide range of students and targeted enough to be relevant to specific populations. The Special Education and English Language Learner

² October 1, 2005 MARRS Data

Departments and community advisory groups, such as the American Indian Education Program, Parent Advisory Committee, collaborate on the curriculum to ensure that learning experiences provide perspectives, strategies and selected courses that address the needs of these students.

Secondary students may take a wide variety of courses including African American History, American Indian literature, language and history, Latino Consent Decree classes, courses in science, math and social studies, the Harlem Renaissance, Asian American Studies, Latin American Culture and eight world languages. Elementary students participate in cultural learning activities across the curriculum, including topics such as historical and cultural perspectives in art, indigenous peoples of the Americas and oral traditions.

Experiences with business, museums, NASA, higher education, community-based organizations and other local entities provide all students with access to learning in a variety of forms and styles. Examples include Project Africa which is the study of Africa and local immigration to the United States, the Multicultural Resource Center and the Interdistrict Classroom Partnership Program, which bring together urban and suburban students for academic and cultural initiatives and the Multicultural Excellence Program which promotes academic success for students of color culminating in the acquisition of post-secondary degrees.

Saint Paul Public Schools also promote the best practices of balanced literacy and integrated math. Research shows that students of color do better using these approaches to learning than traditional methods. The Work Sampling System, an evaluation and reporting system, provides an equal opportunity for all children to demonstrate what they know and can do regardless of their developmental level or cultural and language background. Parents are also provided with information and activities that they may use at home to encourage learning and help their students to meet standards.

B. BLUEPRINT FOR BETTER HIGH SCHOOLS

Saint Paul Public Schools launched a year-long community conversation about the future of public high schools in Saint Paul. Minnesota's Governor and our Superintendent convened the first two of these gatherings at the Governor's Residence in Saint Paul, where community members from all walks of life shared their thoughts about what high school graduates need to know and be able to do in the 21st century. In the following months, this conversation was continued at community meetings across the city.

One theme ran through all of these discussions: While people value the breadth of opportunities available in our large comprehensive high schools — from their diverse course offerings to their extraordinary facilities to their full menu of extracurricular activities — too many of our students are getting lost in the crowd.

We heard that students who don't form close, caring relationships with their teachers or their peers are more likely to lose interest in school, achieve at levels below their potential and, in too many cases, drop out altogether.

Out of these conversations grew the Saint Paul Public Schools Blueprint for Better High Schools. Our goal was simple: Every student in our seven large high schools will be a part of a small learning community that connects students to a small group of peers and at least one caring educator throughout their high school career. A growing mountain of educational research shows that creating such small communities of learners increases graduation rates, improves attendance, boosts completion of higher-level courses and, most important, raises student achievement.

While small learning communities have been structured in different ways across the city, the school district has identified five core requirements that all of them must meet. They are:

1. **Set High Standards:** Each community must help all students — not just those bound for four-year colleges and universities — reach high academic standards through rigorous coursework.
2. **Build relationships:** Each community must be organized to connect each student to at least one caring teacher or another adult who will provide guidance and support throughout the high school years.
3. **Connect School to the Future:** Each community must help all students develop goals and plans for life after high school by exposing them to the worlds of higher education and work through participation in post-secondary options programs, internships, career counseling and other efforts.
4. **Promote Professional Collaboration.** Communities must also facilitate collaboration among teachers who work together to design curriculum, improve instruction and address students needs.
5. **Provide Opportunities for all:** Students and parents choose their small learning communities. All communities must be open to all students with no requirements for admission other than enrollment at the larger high school. Aggressive outreach has begun at the middle school and junior high level to ensure that students from all backgrounds are aware of the high school small learning communities and are encouraged to select the community that best meets their educational needs. Along with small learning communities for all students, each high school continues to offer a full menu of extracurricular activities and key school wide programs, such as athletics, band, performing arts programs, world languages, Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate classes.

MOVING FORWARD

Each of Saint Paul's seven comprehensive high schools has made critical decisions about how to create small learning communities for all students. A Blueprint Design Team composed of teachers, administrators, parents, students and others has lead the work in each school. All seven high schools have been asked to include components of their Blueprint implementation in their annual School wide Continuous Improvement Plans approved by the principal and the school site council.

C. EXTENDED DAY/YEAR

AREA LEARNING CENTERS

The Area Learning Center (ALC) programs of SPPS provide additional and culturally-specific learning time to a wide array of diverse students and families in our community through before and after school “extended day” programs, and summer “extended year” programs. Each of these approaches enhances the menu that eligible students and families can choose from as they take advantage of the World of Opportunities that Saint Paul Public Schools provide.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS – ELEMENTARY ALC

There are 45 school sites in Saint Paul where families and students can choose to participate in safe, adult supervised, before and after school activities. These activities are designed to support and enhance each school’s academic curriculum. They also include some physical or social components. The programs are staffed by teachers who already work at the sites. They receive planning assistance from ALC curriculum specialists. This arrangement provides connection to the regular day program assuring a connected and high quality experience for students. Transportation home is also provided.

EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAMS

Saint Paul Public Schools also offer a world of summer learning opportunities for eligible students and families to continue access to opportunities on a year-round basis (See Attachment “B”).

ELEMENTARY ALC SUMMER SESSION

Elementary students can also choose to participate in our regular ALC summer session program. The program runs mornings, 4 hours per day for five weeks. Our goal through this offering is to help students maintain and advance the skills acquired during the regular school year. The curriculum is based on balanced literacy and integrated math, and it also includes supportive experiences such as field trips to museums, libraries, etc. This is a full-service program providing breakfast and lunch, as well as transportation.

SECONDARY ALC SUMMER SESSION

For older students, Secondary ALC summer programs focus on two main objectives. The first is to provide skill building opportunities as students prepare for the Minnesota Basic Standards Tests that are required to earn a high school diploma. The second objective is to provide opportunities for students to complete credits and/or Minnesota High School Standards that are also part of graduation requirements.

In addition, there are a number of other secondary extended year opportunities including:

- LEAP English Academy for students just learning English
- Saint Paul Connections, a career exploration program
- ALC Uni-dale, the SPPS year round alternative high school
- Summit University Education Consortium, a community provider partnership with the Saint Paul Branch of the NAACP and ALC
- Interdistrict Classroom Partnership Initiatives, involving diverse youth from Saint Paul Public Schools and suburban EMID member district schools.

Students must meet ALC eligibility requirements established by the MDE. These requirements generally include risk factors such as free/reduced lunch eligibility, low test scores, attendance issues, etc.

D. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education is an integral part of the success of Saint Paul Public Schools in providing a world class, inclusive education to all segments of our community. Community Education seeks to improve the quality of our community's life by providing lifelong learning opportunities for all members of our community. Last year, SPPS Community Education served 190,000 people through fifteen programs.

Lifelong learning is based on the belief that all people are learners at every age and are entitled to pursue educational opportunities that are meaningful to them. We believe that each person can be a teacher, as well as a learner, at different points in time, by serving as a resource to others and the community at large.

Our Community Education Program encompasses the following primary divisions:

- Family Education
- Adult Learning
- Community Programs
- Instructional Programs

FAMILY EDUCATION

Our programs help preschool children and their families get ready for entering elementary school. This preparation is critical for student achievement throughout an individual's academic career. Parents who participate in our family education program tend to be more connected and involved with both our schools and the surrounding community. And Community Education offers programs for adults who want to achieve more in their lives. In all, Family Education served almost 38,000 diverse Saint Paul residents during the past year.

The Family Education programs of Community Education work as partners with diverse parents to ensure that all students get the right start in their academic careers and those families have appropriate kinds of support along the way.

Family Education offers four primary programs: Early Childhood Family Education provides positive parent/child interaction opportunities and classes for parents and children ages birth to kindergarten; School Readiness helps families get their children ready for kindergarten; Discovery Club (extended day care) provides an informal learning environment for children whose parents need care for their children before and after school; and Working Family Resource Center serves as an educational resource for employees at the work site, so they can meet the challenges of balancing work and home responsibilities.

ADULT LEARNING

Adults who want to achieve more in their professional lives can access a variety of services to

boost their employability and productivity. Free, individualized instruction and classes are offered throughout the day and evening.

Assistance is available for preparing for the GED test, enhancing basic skills, learning English as a second language, and obtaining an adult high school diploma. Participants can also obtain help with career planning, job seeking and job keeping skills, computer and basic technology skills, parenting, special needs assessment and cultural support. Childcare is provided. Many of the programs are offered at the Ronald M. Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning at 1030 University Avenue W. in Saint Paul. Programs are also provided at work sites and many convenient locations throughout the city.

A team of educators provides specialized assistance for individuals who have found traditional education methods insufficient. The team uses proven alternative teaching methods to improve reading, writing and spelling skills. Adult learners progress at a comfortable but efficient pace, using training that is most effective for their personal learning style. This reinforces participants' positive feeling about learning and their own self-confidence. Literacy classes also are offered in conjunction with the Deaf Education and Advocacy Foundation for deaf and hard-of-hearing adults.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Community Programs link our diverse community at large with school district resources. These links are created via classes, community forums on special issues and work/service opportunities for community members and K-12 students. The division also makes available school facilities to support community involvement and collaboration in addressing community issues. Under the leadership of the Community Programs division, district staff and advisory councils meet to address a myriad of community issues.

The Community Resource Program promotes partnerships between community agencies and K-12 classrooms to make curriculum come alive. Through the program, students are encouraged to participate in service-learning opportunities.

At hundreds of locations throughout the city of Saint Paul, almost 1,000 special interest classes are offered through Community Programs. Classes range from the practical (English, driver education, computers and health/safety) to the entertaining (tours/travel, arts/crafts/hobbies and dance/drama/music).

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Many district-wide programs that provide inclusive services to diverse Saint Paul youth are made available through Community Education. Fresh Force serves over 3,000 youth each year at 33 schools, providing thousands of hours of community service learning annually. The Belwin Outdoor Education Laboratory provides a quality environmental and botanical laboratory for thousands of Saint Paul children annually, from both Saint Paul Public Schools and other EMID-member school districts. The Como Planetarium also serves thousands of students each year, from both Saint Paul and EMID-member districts, providing hands on experiences as part of the district's science curriculum.

These and other district programs offer students and adults a wide range of opportunities to learn from each other and the community at large. Saint Paul's diverse population affords a wealth of educational opportunities for all of its citizens through community education (See Attachment "C").

SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER (MRC)

For more than thirty years, the Saint Paul Public Schools Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) served the academic and multicultural needs of students and staff in the district. In the late 1990's, the center was closed as a result of budgetary cutbacks. With the assistance and support of the East Metro Integration District (EMID 6067), the Saint Paul Public Schools Office of Accountability/Educational Equity was able to reopen the Multicultural Resource Center in 2003, initiating both "intra" and inter-district activities related to multicultural education, staff and student development and family and community involvement. During the past year more than 2,000 students and more than 1,000 staff from Saint Paul Public Schools and other EMID-member districts participated in activities at the MRC.

We also make the resources of the MRC available to individual schools, classrooms, staff, administrators and districts via the MRC catalogue on the internet. The MRC offers monthly multicultural staff development training, class field trip activities, a monthly multicultural movie night, and individual assistance to EMID member district staff with lesson plans, utilizing cultural artifacts in the classroom, the loan of artifacts, trunks, multicultural items and a host of additional services. The MRC and EMID also

offer free pick up and delivery of items checked out through a bi-weekly delivery service to all 10 EMID-member districts. (See Attachment “D”)

INTERDISTRICT CLASSROOM PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

As part of its commitment to increasing inter-racial contact, cross-cultural learning and academic experiences between Saint Paul Public School students and East metro suburban students, SPPS has, with the assistance and support of EMID, created the Interdistrict Classroom Partnership Program. The staff member for this position, working with EMID diversity coordinators, has identified more than 350 annual, individual classroom partnerships between Saint Paul Public Schools classrooms and EMID member district classrooms. These classroom partnerships contain both an academic and cultural component and range from environmental, science and math partnerships, to culture club and astronomy partnerships, to special interest partnerships that involve students from multiple districts. This year’s classroom partnerships alone involve more than 1,700 interdistrict transportation bussing trips between students in EMID member districts.

There are also specialty group partnerships with Dodge Nature Center, Bellwin Environmental and Science Outdoor Laboratory, Exchange City, StarBase MN (math, science, aerospace and flight simulator), St. Thomas University (Cultural, Academic & Athletic Program) and the Saint Paul Public Schools’ Planetarium, that involve thousands of Saint Paul Public School students and EMID member district students annually. (See Attachment “E”)

The Classroom Partnership Coach/Facilitator is located at the Multicultural Resource Center, in an effort to ensure that these two valuable integration programs compliment and support one another. The staff members work very closely together and cross-promote one another’s programs and activities.

ETHNIC NEWSWATCH

The Saint Paul Public Schools also allocates more than \$50,000 (annually) to purchase *Ethnic NewsWatch*, a comprehensive database of more than 750,000 newspapers, magazines and multicultural journals of ethnic, minority and native press in America and internationally. These resources are made available free of charge to the 17 high schools and 27 middle/junior high schools in Saint Paul and in the 10-member East Metro Integration District.

Ethnic NewsWatch can be accessed over the internet, by faculty, students and parents, either at school, at home, or in public libraries and other community-based settings. Free training for staff in all EMID-member junior and senior high schools has been offered at the Multicultural Resource Center.

E. PROMOTION POLICY: EXCEL PROGRAM

In response to concerns voiced by parents of color who did not want their children promoted if they did not meet standards at their current grade level, the Saint Paul Public School District initiated a new district-wide program called “EXCEL” — for students who have finished grades 3, 5, and 8 but have not met the requirements for promotion to grades 4, 6, and 9. At present 81 percent of the 555 students in the Excel Program are students of color. The largest group of students within Excel is African American students, who comprise 40 percent of the program participants.

Key features of the-district wide Excel program include:

- A written plan for each student identifying specific ways to help that student improve academically based on his or her strengths or interests;
- A specially trained Excel teacher who will work closely with students and families to ensure success; and
- Specific lessons in balanced literacy (reading and writing) and integrated math that have been proven successful with other students around the country.

Only those students who chose not to participate in an Excel program or who do not fulfill the summer session requirement are fully retained at their current grade level.

Before promoting a student to the appropriate grade level, teachers must have *evidence* that the student will succeed at that grade level. “Evidence” includes:

- Academic progress (both student work and test scores),
- Attendance, and
- “school success skills” such as listening and work habits.

TIMELINE FOR PROMOTION DECISIONS

- In the fall of each school year, teachers begin working with families to create written Academic Improvement Plans for all students not on track to meet grade-level expectations.
- In March, teachers inform families of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 whether the children are on track for promotion to grades 4, 6, and 9.
- In May, teachers and principals make final decisions about a student’s promotion to the next grade and inform families. Students not promoted are enrolled in Excel.
- Summer session classes are held every morning Monday, June 25, through Friday, July 27 (with the exception of the July 4 holiday).

- On August 15th, students who successfully complete summer session are sent letters confirming their fall placement in the Excel program. Students who do not successfully complete summer session are informed that they are being retained at the same grade level.
- In September, Excel students begin intensive instruction in reading, writing, and math. Instructional strategies include a minimum of 120-140 minutes for reading and writing using a Balanced Literacy and Writer's Workshop approach and a minimum of 90 minutes using an Integrated Math approach. All Excel students are strongly encouraged to attend extended learning opportunities.
- Grade 3.5 and 5.5 Excel programs are offered at the elementary schools where students are currently enrolled; and Grade 8.5 Excel programs are offered at the high schools.
- The following June, Excel students will attend their second summer session.
- The following September, students who have successfully completed the entire 15-month Excel program are promoted to grades 5, 7, and 10. Those who have not successfully met requirements will be retained in grades 4, 6, and 9.
- Families are involved in planning and decision-making throughout the 15-month process.

Simply put, when students from all backgrounds want to, and do come to school, when they experience the joy of learning, and when they set goals for themselves that exceed expectations, our schools have truly focused on, and served our community's children. There is substantial consideration being given to moving the grade 8 EXCEL Program to the middle level, starting at 7th grade. Successful completion of this program would include 80% successful credit completion. In addition to credit completion, students would participate in core content classes, to support moving them to proficiency and student success classes. Participation in after school programming and summer school classes may be required.

F. MAINSTREAMING ELL STUDENTS

As mentioned earlier, more than 42 percent of the students in the Saint Paul Public Schools come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. To address the needs of these students, each building or program in the Saint Paul Public Schools has an ELL Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) whose job is to assist in the implementation of ELL models, curriculum development and communication for all English Language Learners in the building or program. The ELL Department also provides funding for translation and interpretation in all buildings and programs.

The ELL Department addresses the needs of its ELL students through the following:

ON-GOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The ELL Department sponsors learning circles for ELL staff to deepen their understanding of professional issues. The TITLE VII Training Opportunities for Practicing Secondary Specialists (TOPS Program) offers content area mainstream teachers at the secondary level a year-long cohort model in which to learn successful strategies for working with ELL Students. The ELL Department also offers several types of collaboration training to assist mainstream and ELL teachers in their building or program. Balanced literacy training is provided from an ELL perspective to support this district-wide initiative. The ELL Department offers on-going monthly training in best practices and professional issues to all its bilingual educational assistants. A new Title VII program, the Saint Paul Academic Reform Model is currently in place in two elementary schools (Homecroft & World Cultures) to develop an ELL best practices model of effective instruction.

COMMUNITY SPECIALISTS

The ELL Department has 5 community specialists whose job is to support their representative language community. Currently, we have specialists in Hmong, Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali. These specialists work with all ELL and SPPS staff to support community outreach and educational meetings, through both in-school meetings and district-wide community committees.

The ELL Department works very closely with the Office of Site-based Management and Family and Community Involvement to offer programs and information events to the larger community. Many events are offered in, or support native languages. The ELL Department also works closely with the Student Application/Placement Center to provide culturally specific quality control in the initial steps of getting students into an educationally appropriate setting.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR SECONDARY LEVEL ELL PROGRAMS

The ELL Department has recently rewritten its entire secondary curriculum to support best practices. The curriculum is standardized and published for all staff. Content area classes at the secondary level provide challenging courses in science, math, health and social studies for ELL students. ELL provides staff and materials for supplemental ELL summer programs as well. The Hmong and Somali dictionaries initiative of Saint Paul Public Schools are projects that are unique in the field of ELL teaching. Saint Paul Schools also support the only on-line ELL dictionary projects of their kind.

LANGUAGE ACADEMIES

ELL Language Academies support elementary aged students who are beginning English language learners. All Language Academy classes are comprised of native and

non-native students. The LEAP International Academy supports the needs of non-English speaking students at the secondary level. It provides an environment for recently arrived immigrant students to learn English. The Kindergarten Language Development Program was implemented to provide early language intervention and best practice techniques, and to ensure that all the kindergarten students make progress toward the appropriate language objectives.

G. Staff Development and Human Resources

In SPPS, we believe that a diverse staff working together for all students provides a culturally rich experience that benefits all. The district has developed a multifaceted recruitment effort to attract a diverse group of highly qualified candidates. At the same time, we have increased our mentoring and staff development opportunities to ensure that we also retain our diverse employees over time. In Saint Paul, we moved to a decentralized site-based selection process that empowers local school sites to select from among the highly qualified candidates to build the best team to meet the needs for that location.

Our recruitment efforts include print advertisements in local community of color news media and major newspapers, announcements on job boards, at churches and community-based organizations and the Saint Paul Public Schools web site. We have received more than 559,000 visits regarding job openings on our web site during the past three years. Our Human Resource Department has recruited as far away as Puerto Rico, where we have successfully recruited Spanish-speaking teachers in a number of different license areas. Other recruiting trips have focused on African American teachers of color in Atlanta Area Colleges, the greater Chicago Area and Washington D.C. Colleges.

We also work very closely with our American Indian Education Program and the broader American Indian community in fulfilling our commitments under the American Indian Education Act of 1988. Our aim is simply to clarify employment needs, improve services and recruit and retain qualified American Indian employees at all levels. Our HR Dept. regularly attends the Native American Indian Education Association's annual national conference, to establish a presence, build ongoing relationships and to promote job openings in the Saint Paul Public Schools.

The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is also home to the largest urban population of Hmong persons in the United States. In Saint Paul, we are very fortunate to have so many qualified Hmong and South East Asian applicants within our local recruiting area. In addition, partnerships with local colleges, businesses and grant agencies have allowed the district to develop successful programs to nurture and develop future teachers of color. Unique programs designed to promote specific individual segments are working with high school students, current paraprofessional teaching assistants and other community professionals interested in changing to careers in teaching.

Through these efforts to build internal capacity and promote people of color for positions in our schools, we are striving to make our schools a more welcoming learning community for all of our students. We believe that it is critical to have a diverse group of adults working with our increasingly diverse group of students to ensure that all students feel safe and welcome in all of our schools. Barriers to selecting any one school for any group of students begin falling when we have staff at all sites that positively reflect and value diversity.

The overall percentage of students of color has grown faster than the percentage of adult people of color in the relevant labor market. Because of this, we have created innovative efforts through partnerships with local colleges, businesses and grant agencies that have allowed us to attract additional diverse groups of people to our various employment opportunities. Consequently, the number of employees of color in SPPS continues to grow. Our efforts to increase the diversity of our staff and thereby support the instructional climate in our schools are persistent and permeate everything we do.

We do all of this because schools should be places where students can and do learn. They should be comfortable and safe havens where respect is given and received freely, and where rules are fairly and consistently enforced. Parents, community partners and students themselves have told us that schools need to reflect the diversity of our community and foster an appreciation of our differences.

Only in environments where students feel safe can they have the confidence to challenge themselves to reach their highest potential. They can make the mistakes that help them learn the lessons no textbook can teach. This will not happen by itself. Only through active efforts to increase the mix of employees and then provide them with the highest quality leadership and staff development opportunities, will we be able to have a beneficial and positive effect on all students.

While some Saint Paul schools have created ideal—even award-winning learning settings—we know that others have more work to do. We are providing school leaders with the best professional development in the nation so that they know what the school should look like when it has achieved a student-centered environment. Our year long, Saint Paul Public Schools Leadership Institute develops administrators that can put into place systems and strategies to create an array of learning opportunities within an inclusive learning environment for the kids they serve. Saint Paul Public Schools has successfully recruited staff of color (from both within and outside the district) to participate in the Leadership Institute and it is from this institute that principal candidates are referred to individual school site search committees, for interviews and eventual selection to fill principal vacancies.

On-going Training & Staff Development

Professional development in Saint Paul Public Schools focuses on what all students need to learn to be successful, participating citizens of the world. Teachers and

administrators are provided with strategies and resources that will assist diverse learners in being successful. The Professional Development Department and the Center for Academic Excellence offer opportunities for teachers and administrators to understand and work effectively with diverse learners, such as the Urban Learner Framework. This “Framework” has demonstrated that understanding and incorporating the culture of the child in lessons and classroom activities will take the student to new heights of learning.

Teachers also learn how to advance student learning through Ruby Payne's Framework for Poverty, which allows the teacher to understand the particular situations some students come to school from, and how to adjust teaching and relationships which promote trust and learning.

At Saint Paul Public Schools, professional development is based on an analysis of the performance of all students, particularly closing the achievement gap. Using disaggregated test data, staff provides teachers with information that highlights areas of strength and where improvement is needed. Diagnostic assessments are also in place at critical grade levels and sessions using classroom textbooks and materials are developed to assist teachers in focusing on areas that need to be strengthened.

Our Professional Development Department collaborates with other departments in providing workshops addressing tolerance of ethnicity, learning styles and religions. The department also works with individual schools and district-wide departments to provide information for administrators about sexual, racial and religious harassment.

To provide teachers with continuous improvement, the Professional Development Department also supports teachers who are seeking national board certification. A concerted effort has been put forth for the past several years to recruit teachers of color for pre-candidacy programs, in preparation for presenting their portfolio to the National Board.

For continuity of programs and to ensure that each child has an effective teacher, the district expends many resources in supporting and developing teachers new to the district. These new professionals are offered assistance in how to effectively teach a diverse population of students. They are provided mentors who are master teachers and who can assist in answering questions, discovering resources and generally guiding new teachers to embrace the district's efforts in improving student achievement.

Employee Standards & Job Performance

Saint Paul Public Schools are committed to having competent teachers and staff in all schools. The standards of effective job performance for all staff include the expectation that employees will differentiate their practice to better meet the needs of diverse learners, staff, parents, and community members. Methods for measuring whether staffs are meeting this expectation are part of the standards process.

Saint Paul Public Schools' employee groups have identified and agreed upon standards for job performance that enable us to monitor and measure the success of staff members. Each group based its standards on state or national models and tailored these to the needs of the Saint Paul Public Schools.

Performance standards are currently in place for all licensed staff members. These performance standards include processes for employees to measure their success with students. For licensed staff who are members of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers, a collaborative process was used to develop the "Career in Education Program". This program is a standards-based professional development and assessment program for teachers and support staff. It helps staff members measure the results of their work with our students, to self assess and to continually grow in their professional capacity. (See Attachment "F")

For administrators, the standards are linked to measurements of school success, as well as staff surveys. This standards-based process helps ensure that all employees clearly understand how they are expected to perform within each job category, and how they will measure their continuous growth.

Included in this standards process are steps for supervisors to evaluate job performance and to develop formal improvement plans if an employee's performance is below standard. When an improvement plan is developed, the employee is given help, but the welfare of the students remains our primary responsibility.

IV. CHOICE, APPLICATION AND PREFERENCE

Saint Paul Public Schools offer more than 100 school program choices in more than 74 different locations. The district also continues to offer post-secondary enrollment options for students at a number of high schools, in conjunction with institutions of higher education in the Twin Cities. The district has also supported choice, integration and educational excellence by approving and sponsoring as many as 16 charter schools (at one time), contracting with alternative schools, and expanding course and programmatic offerings at Area Learning Centers.

In addition, Saint Paul was one of the first districts in Minnesota to support the State's open enrollment policy. Today, an increasing number of students travel both to and from Saint Paul (in approximately equal numbers) to attend schools and programs through the voluntary inter-district transfer program. Further evidence of the district's participation in inter-district activities is evident in on-going interdistrict partnerships, including Harambee Elementary School, Crosswinds Middle School, The SPPS/EMID Multicultural Resource Center and Interdistrict Classroom Partnership Initiative. (See Attachment "G")

H. MAGNET SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Among the most popular choices for Saint Paul students are the district's magnet school programs. Magnet school programs have been used successfully in the Saint Paul

Public Schools for more than 30 years and have traditionally formed the cornerstone of our “deseg” efforts. Parents of color and white parents actively participate in selecting from more than 58 magnet programs at 49 school sites (see Table 3). These magnet schools are located in communities throughout the city, and because of city-wide transportation for magnet schools, students are able to take advantage of choices ranging from arts and technology, to environmental studies, language immersion, science, math, technology and world cultures. The participation of students of color in magnet schools is equal to or greater than the representation of students of color in the district as a whole.

Saint Paul Public Schools have participated in the Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Grants Program since its inception. We have recently completed a multi-year effort to develop and implement two new K-12 thematic program strands. One is in environmental science and the other in information technology. Battle Creek Elementary (K-6), Cleveland Middle School (6-8) and Harding High School (9-12) offer an environmental strand that capitalizes on the natural setting of nearby Belwin Nature Center (Valley Branch). World Cultures (K-6), Highland Junior High (6-8), and Como Park High School (9-12), are implementing a technology strand.

These schools were selected and the programs were designed to promote both academic excellence and the integration of students from diverse backgrounds. It is our belief that these new choices/opportunities significantly enhance our ability to attract students from throughout Saint Paul and surrounding communities to a world class educational opportunity in an inclusive environment.

I. THE STUDENT APPLICATION/PLACEMENT CENTER

The role of the district’s Student Application/Placement Center is to help parents connect with schools and programs within the school district. In addition to English, services and information are provided in Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Sign Language and Italian.

Services provided include:

The administration of the school application process: Saint Paul offers parents a variety of school choices for students from four years of age through high school. There is an application process for elementary magnet and citywide option schools as well as all secondary schools. Student Application/Placement Center staff also manage waiting lists as well as daycare transfers and elementary transfers that are used to access neighborhood elementary schools.

Outreach: An important part of the application process is outreach. Staff from the Student Application/Placement Center hold parent information sessions in partnership with Head Start centers, School Readiness programs, private preschools and special interest groups (Special Education, ELL, various parent groups, etc.). Many of these sessions are given in Hmong, Spanish and Somali as well as English. The

Application/Placement Center also supports initiatives which promote Family and Community Involvement by participating in and providing multi-language support at, the Parent Information Fair and other activities throughout the district.

Intake services: Students who are new or returning to the school district come to the Center for an intake appointment. During the appointment, basic information is gathered and a school record is initiated. The student's previous school district is contacted so that records may be forwarded. If students require special education services, the previous district is contacted to help determine the correct school identification and alert district personnel of the student's enrollment. Students who have a home language other than English are given a language assessment to determine eligibility for ELL services.

A health screening is given with the goal of determining whether health conditions exist that will be a barrier to learning. Immunizations are offered so students will be in compliance with state laws. Referrals to health care agencies are made. Since many of the families who come to the Center are new to the city, referrals are also made to MinnesotaCare and local health clinics.

Enrollment: School enrollments are monitored on an on-going basis to determine available space in schools so that parents who come through the Center can be aware of all available options.

Related services: Other services provided at the Center include processing of open enrollment applications and registration for home schooling. The Student Data Department holds district archives and is responsible for issuing transcripts, copies of diplomas, school records and immunization records. They also provide information for colleges and other post-secondary institutions, interdistrict school transfers, prospective employers, armed services, police and many community agencies.

The Center is open year round to assist parents. It is also open for extended hours in the days leading up to the start of school to allow students to be enrolled and ready to start school on the first day. This past year more than 5,000 incoming students were served at the center between July and November. (See Attachment "H")

Staff at the Center include civil service, educational assistants and licensed staff (teachers, counselor, nurses). Many members of the staff speak more than one language and represent the communities served by the Center.

J. THE STUDENT APPLICATION SYSTEM: PRINCIPLES GOVERNING STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

The system for assigning all students to schools is based on three general principles:

1. Families should be given a voluntary choice of schools for their children and, to the greatest degree possible, these choices should be honored;
2. Children from the same family should be able to attend the same school; and

3. Preference for access to a school is usually given to those who live nearest to the school.

For those cases where a school has more applicants than it can accommodate, the district has adopted a hierarchy of preferences based on the above principles to determine which applicants will be accepted into a school. Those preferences are detailed below.

Definitions

Magnet school – a school that is available as a choice to all students in the city. Transportation is provided by the district from any point in the city (more than one mile from the student’s home) to each magnet or citywide school.

Attendance area – the geographic area assigned to a school by the Saint Paul Board of Education in accordance with statute. Every address in the city is assigned to a specific attendance area at each grade (see attached maps). Most schools have attendance areas, but some are also defined as citywide schools and have a citywide attendance area.

Preference area – a geographic area defined by the Saint Paul Board of Education surrounding a citywide school. During the application process, students in this area receive geographic preference for that school. Unlike an attendance area, however, this geographic preference is not applied to late applications or to second or third choices.

K. THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

In January, a school choice/services catalog is sent home and made available throughout Saint Paul and on the district’s web site. This catalog gives a brief description of each school in the district, as well as EMID interdistrict schools. It also includes application forms and instructions for their use. During January and February, there are a variety of informational meetings ranging from community gatherings and single-school open houses to a district wide parent fair.

Families submit applications for the following school year to the Student Application/Placement Center in January and February. Application deadlines are at the end of February for secondary schools and mid-March for elementary schools. Elementary students can indicate first, second, and third choices. Secondary students can indicate first and second choices. All on-time applications are entered into a database and assigned random numbers. Once all data entry is completed, the sorting of applications begins. Late applications are processed after on-time applications. For each school, applications are sorted into the hierarchy shown in Table 1. Students are accepted according to the hierarchy until the school’s capacity is reached. If the school is full before all students in a category have been accepted, the random numbers assigned to the students determine which students within that category receive their

choice. All students who have chosen a school but were not accepted to it are put on a waiting list according to the hierarchy of preferences and their random number.

Parents are notified of their acceptance to a school and are asked to confirm their acceptance within a set period of time. Students are called from waiting lists when the district learns (or parents fail to confirm) that students notified earlier will not be attending a school at which they have been accepted. Because the process creates a disadvantage for those who move to the district after the application deadlines, the order of the waiting lists changes on July 1, giving preference to all students from the school attendance area. The order of the waiting lists after July 1 is shown in Table 2.

For those students who live in a magnet school's attendance area but who do not attend that school, the array of choices includes other magnet schools in the city or a select range of other extended attendance area schools. District transportation is provided for students who live beyond the prescribed walking distance from home to their school (one mile).

Table 1. Hierarchy of Preferences for Accepting Students Prior to July 1st

On Time Applications

First Choice

- Attendance Area or Preference Area; Siblings in School; No Siblings in School
- Out of Attendance Area; Siblings in School; Articulation Preference (Spanish Immersion program only); No Siblings in School
- Out of District*; Siblings in School; No Siblings in School

Second Choice

- Attendance Area; Out of Attendance Area; Out of District*

Third Choice (elementary schools)

- Attendance Area; Out of Attendance Area; Out of District*

Late Applications

First Choice

- Attendance Area; Out of Attendance Area; Out of District*

Second Choice

- Attendance Area; Out of Attendance Area; Out of District*

Third Choice (elementary schools)

- Attendance Area; Out of Attendance Area; Out of District*

* Out of District students are accepted at a school only when all in-district students who have applied for the school have been placed.

Table 2. Order of Waiting Lists after July 1st

Attendance Area Residents

- First Choice, On Time; ; Second Choice, On Time; Third Choice, On Time
 - First Choice, Late; Second Choice, Late; Third Choice, Late
- Out of Attendance Area
- First Choice, On Time; Second Choice, On Time; Third Choice, On Time
 - First Choice, Late; Second Choice, Late; Third Choice, Late
- Out of District*
- First Choice, On Time; Second Choice, On Time; Third Choice, On Time
 - First Choice, Late; Second Choice, Late; Third Choice, Late

L. RANGE OF SCHOOL CHOICES IN SAINT PAUL

One of the identifying features of the Saint Paul Public Schools is its vast system of school choice, one of the most extensive in the country. This system was developed largely in response to district and state requirements to achieve integration through voluntary means.

More than half of the elementary schools are designated as magnet schools. This designation indicates two primary characteristics. First, the school is organized around a specific focus, either a subject area focus (e.g. math/science, technology or arts, etc.) or an approach to instruction (e.g. Montessori, International Baccalaureate (IB), Open School or language immersion). Second, the district provides transportation to the school from any area within the city of Saint Paul (more than one mile from the student's home). A list of magnet schools appears in Table 3 below. Parents may also request other (non-magnet) neighborhood elementary schools within the district (but outside their attendance area), provided that they can arrange their own transportation for the student to the school. In addition, gifted and talented programs are available in nearly every school in Saint Paul.

At the secondary level, all nine junior high/middle schools and all seven senior high schools are available to students in any area of the city (space permitting), with district transportation provided. Secondary schools have developed specialized programs and small learning communities within their building to expand the range of choices at this level. These specialties are detailed in Table 4.

Table 3. Elementary Magnet Schools in ISD 625

<u>School</u>	<u>Magnet Focus</u>
Adams	Spanish Language Immersion
American Indian Magnet	American Indian History and Culture at Mounds Park All Nations School
Battle Creek Elementary	Environmental Studies

Benjamin E. Mays	Communication Arts and Leadership at Rondo Education Center
Capitol Hill	Gifted and Talented (Gr. 1-8) at Rondo Education Center
Cherokee Heights	West Side School of Excellence (Gr. 4-6)
Crossroads Montessori	Year-round Montessori Education
Crossroads Science	Year-round Inquiry Science
Downtown Kindergarten	Workplace Kindergarten
Expo for Excellence	Thematic Learning in Cross-Graded Groups
Farnsworth	Aerospace Science
Four Seasons A+	Year-Round Arts-Based Education
Franklin	Music
Frost Lake	Technology and Global Studies
Galtier	Science/Math Technology
Hancock/Hamline	University Collaborative
J. J. Hill	Montessori
Jackson	Preparatory Magnet
L'Etoile du Nord	French Language Immersion
Linwood A+	Arts-Based Education
Longfellow	Humanities
Maxfield	School of Excellence
Mississippi	Creative Arts
Museum Magnet	Interactive Museum Model at Rondo Education Center
Nokomis	Montessori
Open School	Open Education
Riverview	West Side School of Excellence (Gr. K-3)
Roosevelt	West Side School of Excellence (Gr. K-3)
Paul & Sheila Wellstone	Downtown K-8 School
Webster	Enrichment in multiple areas
World Cultures and Languages	World Cultures at Mounds Park All Nations School

Table 4. Secondary Specialty Programs in Saint Paul Public Schools

<u>Senior High School</u>	<u>Specialty Programs</u>
Arlington	Government/Policy Making, Health and Environment, Information Technologies
Central	Gifted and Talented, Performing Arts, International Baccalaureate, Building Technology
Como Park	Business/Math Technology, AP
Harding	American Indian Studies, School to Career Pathways, Graphic Communications, International Baccalaureate

Highland Park	World Cultures, Chinese, International Baccalaureate
Humboldt	High Schools that Work
Johnson	Business and Marketing Management
International Academy (LEAP)	English Language Learners

Junior High/Middle School

Program Focus or Specialty

Battle Creek	House-based system, American Indian Studies
Cleveland	Pre-Advanced Placement, Partnership with Science Museum
Hazel Park	Traditional middle school
Highland Park	World Cultures
Humboldt	
Murray	Math/Science
Ramsey	Gifted and Talented, Humanities
Washington	Technology for Learning

(See Attachment "I")

SPPS Ongoing Conversation on School Choice

Below is an outline of our multi-year effort to strengthen and sustain Saint Paul's system of public school choice.

Several years ago Saint Paul Public Schools launched a comprehensive effort to evaluate the district's school choice system and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of families and our city in the decades ahead. The review began with a Community Conversation on School Choice. Almost 700 citizens attended eleven community meetings across the city and submitted written feedback forms to identify school choice issues for consideration. Individual additional meetings were held with specific communities of color (African American, American Indian, Chicano/Latino, Hmong and Somali) to ensure culturally responsive input.

Based upon this feedback, specific options for change in the district's school choice system were developed (to explore further)—from transportation service, to budgeting, to marketing schools.

A joint school-community task force conducted an extensive examination of these options for change in the transportation and choice practices that hold the district's choice system together, including the 25,000 miles that our school buses drive every day to transport more than 40,000 students safely and efficiently to and from school. After reviewing all recommendations from community members, the task force recommended that the district conduct further research on three specific categorical options for change:

1. Providing citywide transportation for *all* elementary schools.

2. The creation of several regions of the city, within which most elementary schools would receive transportation service.
3. Reducing the walking distance from its current 1 mile limit to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, in an effort to promote greater attendance at schools closer to students' homes.

Following a discussion with the Board of Education during the current school year, staff members have continued to develop and research these options for change.

Survey on School Choice Change

The district asked all site council and district advisory committee members, as well as other key stakeholders in the Saint Paul Public Schools, to complete a survey about the recommended potential changes in the choice, attendance and transportation areas of our elementary schools. Because changes in our transportation system would affect all schools in the district, we asked all site councils, including those at junior and senior highs to complete this survey.

The survey included questions on the three options for change, listed above. Specifically, it asked:

- If the district should consider moving toward citywide transportation for all elementary schools.
- How regions of the city should be constructed if the Superintendent recommended and the Board of Education chose to adopt such a structure.
- What types of programs should exist within every region of the district, should the Board adopt a regional choice plan for elementary schools.
- What criteria should be used to decide which schools, if any, would continue to receive citywide transportation service?
- Whether or not families would be more likely to send their students to an elementary school that is between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 mile from home, if the student was offered transportation within that distance.

The results of the School Choice Changes survey will be used, along with other analyses, to develop specific options for change in transportation service and attendance areas.

Report to the Board

District staff presented the specific options for change in transportation service provided by the task force, our schools, and the feedback from school communities and the general public. We expect the Board to continue to review these recommendations and as we have stressed since the start of our Community Conversation on School Choice, any changes approved by the Board would be phased in over time, starting no sooner than two years out at the earliest.

V. BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

M. COMMUNITY OUTREACH WHICH PRECEDED THIS PLAN

During the past year, the Superintendent and school board members have held specific meetings with parents and community representatives of color and received formal written assessments from each specific community of color within the school district. The Superintendent has also held additional regular meetings with parents and leaders in communities of color and in immigrant and refugee communities in the district. Board members, the Superintendent and senior staff have also participated in culturally specific community gatherings, requesting input, offering support, welcoming parents and community members and demonstrating that the involvement of all parents is a priority for the Saint Paul Public Schools.

Specific outreach for this plan occurred through meetings and discussions with the district's Community Collaborative Deseg Council (Enrollment Committee) , School Board members, members of the administration and senior staff, with district-wide multi-cultural advisory committees, community-based service providers, ethnic-specific parent conferences and discussions at school board meetings. There were also significant discussions at full school board meetings, committee of the board meetings and during the presentation of annual reports to the board from ethnic-specific advisory committees. Finally, the director of the Office of Educational Equity has been involved in numerous meetings with a diverse array of school, community and ethnic representatives to discuss their specific educational concerns and the contents of this plan.

A listing of the membership of the Community Collaborative Deseg Council/Committee is provided. (See Attachment "J")

N. FAMILY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Saint Paul Public Schools Family and Community Involvement efforts involve a three-pronged approach to maintain and improve the effectiveness of district and site-specific partnerships between families and the schools their children attend:

1. Community Wide Services and Events
2. Support for School Family & Community Partnership Work
3. Support for District Staff Engaged in Family Involvement Work

In the first area, we offer district-wide events such as the Parent Information Fair, Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, and workshops geared to meet the needs of specific communities – African American parents, American Indian parents, Chicano/Latino parents, Hmong parents and Somali parents – and workshops to address specific parent interests, such as Gifted and Talented Programs, homework, or summer school. There is also support for independent parent groups, such as PTAs or PTOs through the Network of Education Action Teams (NEAT). As issues arise, parents and

community members have the opportunity to provide input on key district policies or programs through focus groups and community forums.

Our work is also based on the National Center for School, Family and Community Partnerships framework of six types of involvement:

1. Parenting
2. Communicating
3. Volunteering
4. Learning at home
5. Decision Making
6. Collaborating

COMMUNITY-WIDE SERVICES AND EVENTS

- **Parent Information Fair (PIF) – January**

The annual Parent Information Fair (PIF) is a pivotal event in the school-choice selection process. It affords parents the opportunity to learn about the wide array of choices offered at magnet schools, citywide option schools and neighborhood schools, as well as the variety of programs available within schools and interdistrict schools. The Saint Paul Public Schools also invited all private, charter and religious schools in Saint Paul to participate in the district's Parent Information Fair. By meeting with principals and other staff, as well as parent volunteers at many booths, visitors to the PIF are able to get a personal feeling about how well any school in Saint Paul and its programs would foster their children's success.

The Student Application/Placement Office is at the PIF, fully staffed to explain the choice process to parents, even to help parents complete their paperwork on the spot, should they choose to do so. District-wide programs and services, such as English Language Learners, Special Education, Gifted & Talented Services, Student Wellness, Food Service, Site-Based Improvement, Community Education, Transportation and Title 1 also are present with information for parents on how they contribute toward meeting the needs of students and families. Community-based organizations that work in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools to promote student success participate as well, to add to visitors' understanding of the strong and far-reaching community connections which are available to support their children.

To make the PIF available to as many families as possible, Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Khmer and American Sign Language interpreters are available to escort families around the fair. Extensive outreach to various communities of color is conducted prior to the PIF, in collaboration with the Saint Paul/Ramsey County Children's Initiative, Ramsey Action Program Head Start, Saint Paul's public housing sites, the Office of Educational Equity and many community-based organizations and media.

Enhancing the PIF, an exhibit of student work highlights the high expectations and accomplishments of students in the Saint Paul Public Schools. A free family activity

area is sponsored by Saint Paul Public Schools Discovery Club Program, where parents with young children can take a break from the serious work of school-selection and enjoy quality time together. With more than 170 booths available, it is again important to note that all religious, private and charter schools in Saint Paul are also invited to participate in the PIF.

- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner – April
- Parent Toolbox Information Sessions
- Workshops for Diverse Communities:
Examples: Hmong Parent Workshops; American Indian Parent Workshops; African American Parent Workshops; Latino Parent Workshops; Somali Parent Workshops
- Parent Workshops on Topics of Interest
Examples: Gifted and Talented services; Homework; Summer School; and Special Education
- NEAT – Network of Education Action Teams – Support for PTO, PTA, and other parent organizations working with our schools.
- Focus Groups and Community Forums as needed to bring parent and community voices to key district policies.
- Volunteer recruitment and placement.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL, FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WORK

Support for school-based family and community partnership work is focused on work with individual schools committed to best practices and effective planning for forming school-family-community partnerships. A great share of this work occurs through the Partnership Schools Network. It also occurs through participation in School Quality Reviews and School Comprehensive Improvement Plan (SCIP) review process, looking at family and community partnerships as part of the core work of schools. Embedded in this work is a drive towards creation of safe, welcoming and respectful environments for all families at every school, and using divergent strategies to form productive relationships with diverse families with different cultures, languages, educational experiences and economic conditions.

- Network of Partnership Schools:
 - Affiliated with National Network of Partnership Schools
 - Based on the research-based framework developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein
 - 29 current member schools in Saint Paul
 - Program modified to support Saint Paul Public Schools SCIP process
 - We provide training, on-going technical assistance, planning support, hands-on assistance in implementation of programs and networking
- Communication of upcoming events, emerging practices, and new resources through quarterly newsletter and monthly events updates.

- Participation on School Quality Review and SCIP Review teams to identify strengths and concerns found at sites, and to suggest best practices.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF ENGAGED IN FAMILY PARTNERSHIP WORK

Support for district staff include: networks of staff working in the field of family involvement, as well as volunteer coordinators; training in such topics as homework design, the *Can We Talk?* parenting program and *Motheread/Fatheread* family literacy program; and a lending library of family involvement resource materials.

The Office of Family and Community Involvement also provides technical assistance and capacity-building services to school staff and administrators, community-based service providers, and other community groups upon request (with translation and/or interpretation services from ELL and Community Relations as necessary).

O. WORK WITH COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE PROVIDERS, EDUCATORS, LOW-INCOME PARENTS AND PARENTS OF COLOR

MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Students from low socioeconomic families and children of color face an uncertain time in US education. Their economic and social conditions can deteriorate with little outside support or relief in sight. Mobility, coupled with curriculum reforms—if carried out one school at a time—will almost certainly place them at great risk. An ongoing concern is whether there is sufficient commitment in our community and state to significantly and directly address the problems related to educational equity.

The educational system must change and be powerful enough to engage the public at all levels on common issues in the decision making process. It is with the vision and commitment to change that the Saint Paul Public Schools have established educator, parent and community committees to provide input in the policy-making, funding, education reform and family and community engagement process. These committees are providing valuable voices in the process driving school change and developing conditions for success for all students.

Each committee is unique in how its members see the educational system meeting the needs of their community, due to cultural diversity, language diversity and religious diversity. When incorporating these concerns, suggestions and recommendations together, it is our belief that they make Saint Paul Public Schools a better, more inclusive environment for all.

To improve the academic performance of low-income students and students of color, the Saint Paul Public Schools are working with Community Advisory Committees that have specific ties to communities of color, immigrant and refugee families and low-income families. It is also our intent that these efforts build the capacity and strengthen

the engagement of these families in the education of their children. Among the groups collaborating with the Saint Paul Public School District are:

African-American Leadership Council
 African Immigrants Community-Based Organizations Committee
 American Indian Education Program, Parent advisory Committee
 Chosen to Achieve (African American, faith-based) Mentoring Program Advisory Committee
 Hmong Educators, Parent and Community Committee
 Hmong ELL Advisory Council
 Hmong Student Mentoring Initiative
 Latino Consent Decree Parent Advisory Committee
 Latino Educators, Parents and Community Committee
 S. E. Asian Community-Based Organizations Comm.
 Somali District-wide Parent Group

WORK WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

Community-based groups, organizations and direct service providers have not always felt invited or welcomed in Saint Paul Public Schools, yet these organizations can bring so much into our urban schools and classrooms for students and families. It is with this vision and commitment that these community-based organizations have agreed to work with us—as genuine partners—to help support the efforts of the district to provide a world class education to all children.

These community-based providers operate after school and in-school programs, which include tutoring, language instruction and work on issues related to the unique cultural needs of specific groups of families and students. They focus on supporting our district-wide curriculum and standards. For no cost, or for a small fee, these providers offer individual tutoring and mentoring to students who have been identified and referred by their teachers as academically resilient learners. With this assistance, these students are able to work toward meeting their individual and group academic and behavioral goals.

These community-based organizations have credibility and they have pre-existing relationships with families, churches and other service providers in our community. Therefore, they are able to work effectively with staff, students and families in a more unified, thought provoking and supportive manner than the schools can alone. These organizations go a long way with us in engaging many non-traditional families, ultimately strengthening their interest in and commitment to, their children's education.

Among the many organizations with which we work with are the following:

ACTS of St Paul
 Boys & Girls Club of St Paul

Building Blocks
 C.L.U.E.S
 Collaborative Movement for Improvement
 Freedom School
 Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley
 Greater Saint Paul Council of Churches
 Hope International Health & Social Services
 Hmong Minnesota Pacific Assn.
 Hmong American Partnership
 Hmong United International Council of MN (18 Clans)
 Immigration Task Force of the Twin Cities
 Interdenominational Black Ministerial Alliance
 Jewish Community Center
 Lao Family Community
 Lao Society
 Martin Luther King/Hallie Q. Brown Center
 Merriam Park Community Services
 Paul & Sheila Wellstone Center (Neighborhood House)
 Northern Star Boy Scout Council
 Project Spirit
 Project Africa
 Saint Paul American Indian Center
 St Paul Urban League/ MNENABL/Youth Entrepreneurship Education Program
 Save our Sons
 Summit University Education Consortium
 United Cambodian Assn. Of MN
 United Way of Minneapolis/St Paul Area
 Women's' Assn. of Hmong and Lao
 YWCA of St. Paul

CULTURAL PARENT OUTREACH EFFORTS

In direct response to requests that we be respectful and inclusive of all cultures and groups in our community, and to increase the engagement, involvement and awareness of parents of color in the education of their children, we regularly institute culturally specific events in neighborhood centers, churches and public housing projects throughout Saint Paul. These meetings have generally taken the form of specific individual workshops on topics of interest, or conferences with multiple workshops on how school budgets are determined; attendance issues; serving on the school site council; school-wide continuous improvement plans; closing the achievement gap; No Child Left Behind legislation; school choice; and ensuring that our students' academic needs are being met.

One of the significant outgrowths of these gatherings is that they have helped build and maintain relationships between teachers, administrators, low-income parents, immigrant and refugee parents and parents of color, thereby helping increase student

achievement in these families and communities. It is our firm belief that families should have their perspectives heard and be able to share their expertise with others. Parents can and should learn how to collaborate with school staff, other parents and community members to work more cohesively with the school district in meeting the needs of all the students.

At the same time, it is important to increase the skills of parents with marginal educations themselves, so we can take a proactive approach and solve problems before they escalate and create a safe, effective and respectful educational environment.

Toward these ends, the district is involved in the following outreach efforts to parents of color throughout our community:

American Indian Education Program, Parent Advisory Committee Conferences & Workshops (ongoing); monthly Pow Wows
 African-American Parent and Community Conferences & Workshops (ongoing)
 Chicano/Latino Parent and Community Conferences & Workshops (ongoing)
 Hmong Parent and Community Conferences & Workshops (ongoing)
 Latino Consent Decree Parent Committee Conferences & Workshops (ongoing)
 Somali Parent and Community Conferences & Workshops (ongoing)

**Office of Site Based Improvement
 Parent and Community Activities in communities of color**

Site Based Improvement and Parent and Community Involvement Informational Meetings are regularly held throughout the district. Recent Parent and Community Involvement Workshops included “Introduction to Saint Paul Public Schools Programs and Services”, as well as “general site council information. Parent and Community Workshops have also been held on “Building Leadership Capacity on Site Councils.” Workshops regularly occur in each major community of color: American Indian; African American; Cambodian; Chicano/Latino; Hmong; Somali; and Vietnamese.

Other sessions open to parents throughout the district and in individual communities include: How to Create a Diverse Site Council, and district-wide Multicultural Celebrations.

A series of Chicano/Latino Parents and Community leaders’ Focus Group Meetings have recently been held on the city’s West Side.

The district also sponsors an annual Statewide Site Council Seminar in Brainerd, MN. At recent conferences, break-out sessions on issues of diversity and parent and community involvement have occurred at the conference. African American, Chicano/Latino and Hmong and other Asian community participants and presenters meet to discuss issues affecting their students, families and communities.

VI. COMPLIANCE

The Office of Accountability/Research, Evaluation and Assessment collects and submits racial balance data as required by the State of Minnesota and is responsible for providing ongoing monitoring of all the district's programs. The district identifies racial and ethnic background through parent self-identification/declaration only.

The Transportation Department of the Saint Paul Public Schools establishes bussing routes on a bid basis using contractors for the majority of routes. The routes are developed and bid so the length of time by students on the busses does not exceed one hour.

The Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education has a long-standing policy in place mandating the use of multicultural, gender fair curriculum throughout the district. One of the district's strategic focus objectives is "respecting and including all cultures and differences."

The district also has a Student Human Rights Officer, an Out For Equity Coordinator, Indian Education Program Coordinator, a 504 Coordinator, a district Ombudsperson, Title IX Coordinator, Enrollment Committee, which serves as the Community Collaborative Deseg Council (See Attachment "J"), and an Adult Human Rights Specialist, who are responsible for ensuring that students and staff are safe and free from discrimination and harassment. These offices, councils and individuals are responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations relating to gender, sexual orientation, racial, religious and ability discrimination and harassment, through the implementation of a reporting and complaint process. Students and staff also receive training on sexual, racial, religious and sexual discrimination. The Human Rights Specialists ensure enforcement of Title VI and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX and MS Chapter 363.

P. DESEGREGATION FUNDING

The district's expenditures of State and local desegregation revenue for 2005-2006 are expected to total approximately \$22 million, based on current enrollment projections and adjusted pupil units. The majority of costs beyond regular instruction are those for the district's extensive magnet programs, Student Application/Placement Center, Indian Education Program and transportation within and across the district (See Attachment "K").

One of our new compliance/accountability initiatives has been to have Area Superintendents sign-off on individual School-Wide Continuous Improvement Plans (SCIPs). These individual SCIP documents drive budgets and programs at individual schools and provide a more consistent opportunity to monitor and improve the use of desegregation dollars. Lou Kanavati, interim Superintendent, has recently initiated a district-wide review of Integration Revenue expenditures in the district (as a follow up to

the recently released MN Office of the Legislative Auditor's report), to ensure full accountability with the MN Deseg Rule

VII. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Q. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Saint Paul Public Schools provide a number of opportunities for citizens from throughout the community to voluntarily participate on advisory committees and influence the decision-making process. These opportunities include individual school Site Councils; the Citizens' Long Range Space Planning Advisory Committee (CLRSPAC); the American Indian Education Program, Parent Advisory Committee; the Special Education Advisory Committee; the Citizens' Budget and Finance Advisory Committee; the Latino Consent Decree Parents' Advisory Committee; the Community Education Advisory Committee; the School Choice Task Force and the Gifted and Talented Services Advisory Committee.

Apart from the Indian Education Program and Latino Consent Decree, Parent Advisory Committees, whose composition is determined by law, the composition of the other committees is not always consistently representative of our student population. In some instances, the district has made partial headway toward diversity, as is the case with School Site Councils, which are less than one-third people of color. This is an ongoing concerted effort on the part of the district to recruit, retain and develop representation from all communities in Saint Paul.

Because these are voluntary opportunities, the district is involved in outreach, marketing and recruitment effort to ensure that each advisory committee is as representative as possible of the district. We are committed to increasing the representation of parents of color on these committees, to mirror (as near as possible) the representation of the students and families in the Saint Paul Public Schools.

The other challenge and opportunity related to community outreach is that the Saint Paul Public Schools have "upped the ante" (raised expectations) in terms of inviting parents of color to work with us and provide us with constructive criticisms and recommendations for improving the education of all students. The district will continue to hold on-going parent conferences, dialogues and workshops in communities of color, and with parents who speak languages other than English at home. We also intend to remain vigilant, to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all parents in Saint Paul, not simply those who are comfortable with power and are capable on their own of navigating the public education decision-making and policy process.

R. POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

The Saint Paul Public Schools are always looking for ways to increase the number of students who go on to obtain post-secondary degrees, particularly in view of the skills

needed to advance in the changing world of work. Part of this challenge, however, is to ensure that we are encouraging low-income students, students of color and the children of first-generation immigrants and refugees to do so as well. We vigorously promote college fairs and other post secondary opportunities through the network of partnerships that we are now building with community service providers and parent conferences in communities of color. We hope to piggyback on those planned events by encouraging participation and assisting with marketing and promotion through in-school networks and community media.

These efforts have been further supported by three specific programs: The SPPS Multicultural Excellence Program, which assists and encourages students of color (district-wide) to plan for college admission and success; the WOW (Working Outreach for Weighted-Class Inclusiveness) program (Operating in 3 high schools), that has successfully increased the participation of under-represented students in honors classes); and the AVID Program (operating in 9 middle/jr. and high school sites), which has similar objectives.

S. EQUITABLE FUNDS DISTRIBUTION

The Saint Paul Public Schools have traditionally used desegregation funds for choice and for magnet school programs, magnet specialists, district-wide materials and transportation. Magnet programs were initially funded by federal magnet grants, and then required state and local desegregation funding for their continuance. Because these programs take years to develop and strengthen their instructional focus and format, there has been little opportunity to move the funding from program to program, or neighborhood to neighborhood. In reality, it would require incredible financial resources to ramp up all of the successful programs in a timely, effective, district-wide manner.

The district also is continuing to investigate the implementation of a “student-weighted funding allocation formula,” to determine how we might more equitably distribute resources across the district, without uprooting long-term magnet and specialty programs that have enjoyed success for a number of years. Such a wide-scale shift in resources, especially on the heels of \$65 million in budget cuts over the past 6 years is extremely difficult. The district intends to continue this investigation, but the intended results may very well be years in the making, particularly in the midst of NCLB and state-wide education reform movements.

T. THE CHOICE/APPLICATION CONUNDRUM

The success of the Saint Paul Public Schools choice agenda has also produced challenges. Maximizing school choice for families, keeping attendance area schools available as the first option and providing sibling preference and neighborhood attendance preference for families, results in some schools filling up faster. The fact that most protected class students do not live throughout the district (the result of housing discrimination and the concentration of affordable housing in certain census

tracts in the city)³ and the voluntary requirement of the Minnesota Desegregation Rule, also present challenges to the district.

Among the greatest challenges the district faces is that of students who arrive in Saint Paul after the application deadlines—or, after the start of the school year. Because the application process takes place in the spring, it is extremely difficult to estimate the number of late applicants, what programs they might be interested in, and how to accommodate their special needs (particularly language and special education needs)—after the start of the school year.

In some weeks after the beginning of the school year, as many as 500 families will seek to enroll their children in district schools. Of these late arriving students, a high percentage are English Language Learners, and many have special education needs. It goes without saying that the vast majority of these students are also students of color. (See Attachment “L”)

The challenge for the district is how to meet the needs of these students and families without concentrating the students in individual schools (the ones that still have space); how to keep siblings together in the same buildings; and most important, how best to address the educational needs of students with language and learning challenges—while still meeting the “racial balance” requirements of the Minnesota Desegregation Rule?

Clearly, it is not in the district’s best interest or that of individual schools, or groups of students, to concentrate protected class students in racially isolated buildings. Many of these buildings may very well already be in duress because of the concentration of poor students, students of color or building-wide academic challenges that stem from the choices of parents, neighborhood/attendance area demographic shifts, or the practices of prior years. At the same time, parents of color choose sibling preference in racially isolated buildings at the same rate that white parents choose sibling preference in buildings “racially isolated” with white students.

The good news is that students of color are making annual improvement on tests, are enrolling more often in honors and AP classes, and are graduating at improved rates. We are moving forward on many fronts. The district must continually ensure that these efforts are effectively connected—that they are system-wide—and that families and communities have long-term engagement and a long-term commitment to the success of these initiatives. (See Attachment “M”)

To address some of these challenges the district created the Office of Educational Equity and charged it to work with all departments to find a way to get out in front of those challenges. The district is now implementing a number of short-term changes in order to get a handle on this conundrum. We are under-filling the number of seats in individual buildings, in order to allow for a more balanced distribution of late arriving

³ *A Dream Deferred: The 50/30 Housing Research Initiative Final Report*, July 1999, Published jointly by The Urban Coalition and the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice, U of MN

students. We are also reserving ELL and Special Education classrooms in individual buildings across the district, to meet the needs of late arriving students. The district has also increased the number of Language Academies at the elementary and secondary level to meet the needs of students with significant language challenges—while making every effort not to “tip” the racial balance within those buildings.

Again, these changes will take place gradually, but it is our intent to employ every option (within the parameters of the deseg rule) in identifying equitable ways to try and prevent schools from getting out of compliance with the deseg rule in the first place.

VIII. THE OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY/EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The Office of Educational Equity (OEE), part of the district’s Office of Accountability, advises the district’s efforts in both intra- and interdistrict desegregation and inclusiveness. The office is responsible for advising the administration on the Saint Paul Public Schools’ multifaceted effort to ensure that all students have equal access to a quality education and an equal opportunity to learn to high academic standards. OEE includes responsibility for the following departments and programs:

- Senior staff member (Superintendency)
- American Indian Education Program and Parent Advisory Committee
- Administrative liaison between SPPS and the East Metro Integration District, individual district members and intradistrict activities: Harambee Elementary School; Crosswinds Middle School; and direct Supervision of the Multicultural Resource Center and the Interdistrict Classroom Partnership Initiatives
- Title IX Coordination
- The SPPS Community Collaborative Deseg Council
- Administrative Liaison for the Latino Consent Decree and LCD Parent Advisory Committee,
- Coordinating the district’s mentoring and tutoring programs,
- Serving as the Administrative Liaison for district –sponsored Charter Schools, and
- Out for Equity, the district’s LGBTQ&A Program

The director of OEE reports to the Chief Accountability Officer and is a member of the Superintendent’s Advisory Support Team (SAST).

The Office of Accountability and OEE are also responsible for monitoring individual school demographics and advising the district and individual schools on compliance with the MN Desegregation Rule.

For information or questions related to this Inclusiveness Plan, or other district inclusiveness activities, please contact Yusef Mgeni, Director of OEE, at 651.767.8338 or yusef.mgeni@spps.org

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – SPPS Student Demographics/MARS Data

Attachment B – Summer Programs

Attachment C – Community Education

Attachment D – Multicultural Resource Center 2006 Year-end Report

Attachment E – Interdistrict Transportation Projections 2005/2006

Attachment F –The Saint Paul Career in Education Program

Attachment G – Support for Inter-District Integration Initiatives

Attachment H – Student Application/Placement Center Report 1999-2006

Attachment I – Secondary Schools Handbook

Attachment J – SPPS Community Collaborative Deseg Committee

Attachment K – Integration Revenue Budget 2006-2009

Attachment L – ELL Learner Demographics

Attachment M – Test Results 2000 - 2006