



# Leading for Equity

MASA – Great Start Cohort

Dr. Joe Gothard  
December 15, 2021

# Equity

## My journey – Madison, Wi to Saint Paul, MN

•Madison La Follette HS Graduate

MMSD (1993-2013)

- Ed Asst. Lincoln Elementary
- Biology Teacher La Follette
- Head Football Coach La Follette
- Dean of Students/AP La Follette
- Principal Toki Middle School
- Principal La Follette
- Asst. Superintendent Secondary Schools

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage (2013-2017)

- Superintendent

St. Paul Public Schools (2017- present)

- Currently in year two of my second three-year contract
- 7 at large elected board members
- Strategic Plan – SPPS Achieves 2018
- \$500M SPPS Builds - Facilities Master Plan
- Envision SPPS
- 2021-2022 Budget \$908 Million
- \$207 Million ESSER III/ARP**

# About Me



- First generation college graduate and only one of six.





# Equity

## My journey – Madison, Wi to Saint Paul, MN



CENTER FOR CIVIL  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS



# CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS



# Saint Paul Public Schools 7/1/2017 - Present

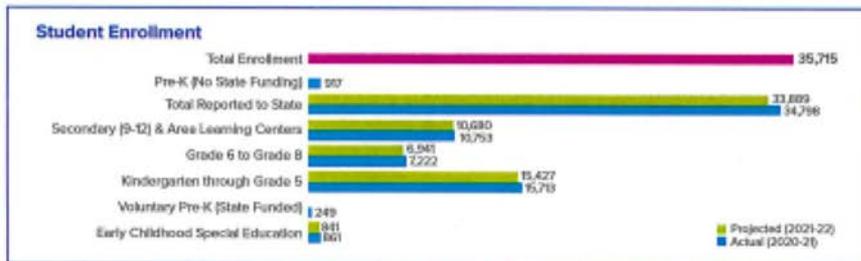
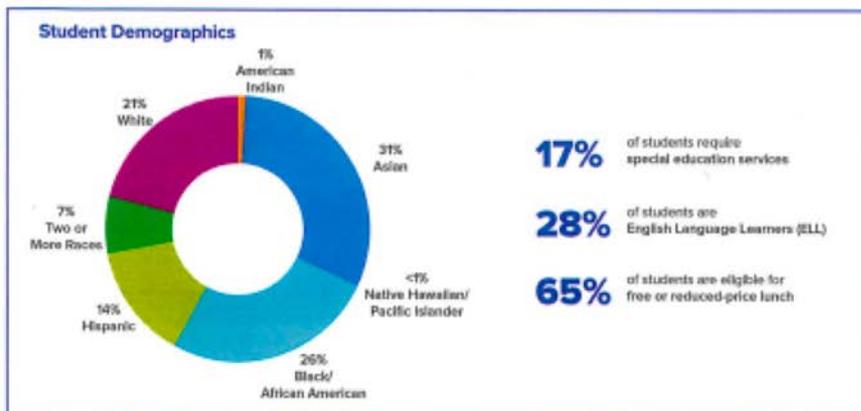
- Currently in year two of my second three-year contract
- 7 at large elected board members
- Strategic Plan – SPPS Achieves 2018
- \$500M SPPS Builds - Facilities Master Plan
- Envision SPPS
- 2021-2022 Budget \$908 Million
  - **\$207 Million ESSER III/ARP**

## Who are we? SPPS Students

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	4,835	13.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	338	1.0%
Asian	10,719	30.7%
Black or African-American	8,858	25.4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	10	0.0%
White	7,318	21.0%
Two or more races	2,850	8.2%
All students	34,928	100.0%

What inequities can you identify in your school district?

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), Minnesota's second-largest school district, offers a world of opportunities for a multi-cultural student population of more than 35,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students. SPPS promotes lifelong learning, serving "students" from birth to age five and adults learning English, earning their diploma or their GED.



#### Staff:

Total Number of FTE Staff (2019-20): 5,978

**3,259** K-12 Teachers

**1,228** Paraprofessionals

**1,176** Support Staff

**315** Principals and Other District Leaders

#### Schools:

Total Number of Schools: 68

**39** Elementary Schools

**3** PreK-8 Schools

**8** Middle Schools (grades 6-8)

**4** Secondary Schools (grades 6-12)

**5** High Schools

**5** Non-Traditional High Schools

**4** Special Education Schools

#### Programs:

Regional and District Magnets: 20

These pathways are available from kindergarten through grade 12. Examples of these specialized learning programs include language immersion, aerospace and the arts.

What does equity mean to you? How do you share with your communities?



# Equity beliefs...On The Record

- ▶ Your office received a call from a news station requesting you participate in a feature about equity in education
- ▶ For this *practice* exercise you are being provided the questions in advance of the interview.
- ▶ Select one of the questions from the next slide and prepare your response. It is important to keep in mind that this interview will be recorded and broadcast to a wide audience.
- ▶ You will have five minutes, if you finish choose additional questions to respond to.
- ▶ You will be asked to share your responses “on the record” with our group today.

1. Minnesota schools perform well, but we have some of the worst disparities when it comes to education, why do you think that is?
2. I saw a quote from MN Senator Tina Smith that said, “more than 1/3 of Minnesota students are students of color and yet on 5% of teachers in the state are people of color” How important is it to balance that scale?
3. You talked about forging that bond of relationships between students and staff, why do you believe it is so important?
4. How does discipline and the system of discipline in particular when it deals with students of color, how does it play into closing the achievement gap.
5. The death of George Floyd, how has this renewed movement towards social justice impacted you or changed your vision in moving forward?
6. You talked about children and their hopes and dreams, what do you think that long term implications of closing the achievement gap, what does that look like?
7. Do you think that we're in a time right now, where we will see transformative change?



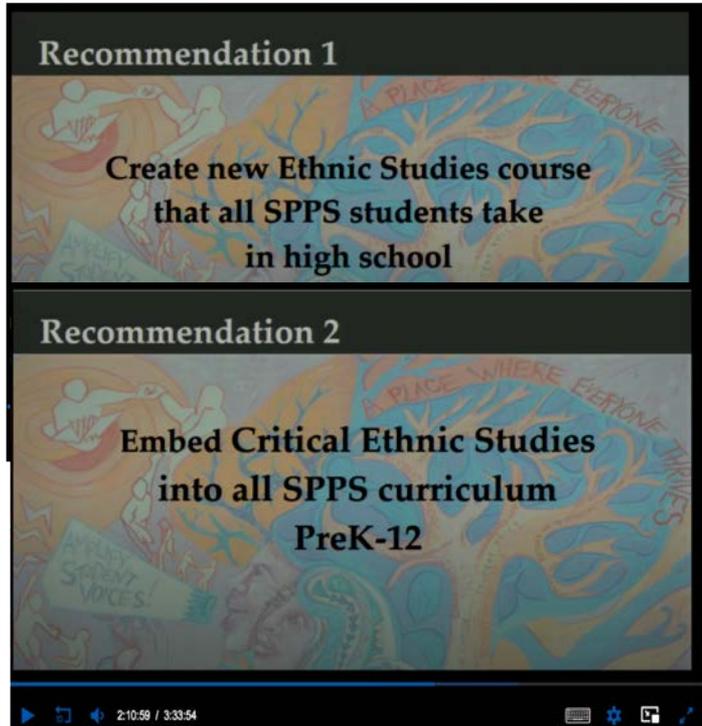
# Student Voice – Ethnic Studies

**Recommendation 1**

Create new Ethnic Studies course  
that all SPPS students take  
in high school

**Recommendation 2**

Embed Critical Ethnic Studies  
into all SPPS curriculum  
PreK-12



A video player interface showing two recommendations. The background features a colorful mural with the text 'A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE TAKES VOICES' and 'SPEAK YOUR VOICES'. The video player controls at the bottom show a progress bar at 2:10:59 / 3:33:54.



# SPPS – Critical Ethnic Studies

## SPPS Achieves

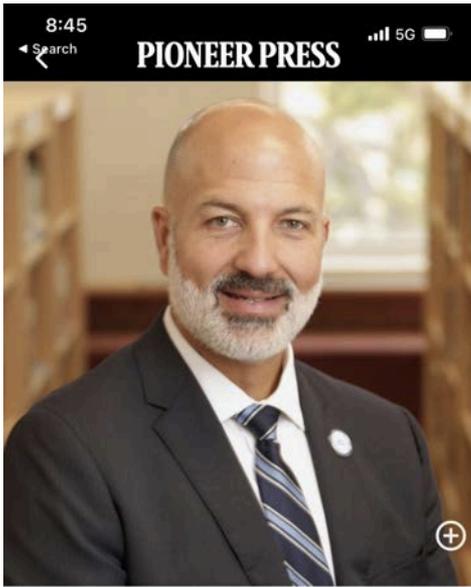
Each student. One community. Endless Opportunities.

*Inspire students to think critically, pursue their dreams and change the world.*

### Ethnic Studies Course Development and Implementation

#### The *Why*

The purpose of *SPPS Achieves* Strategic Initiative 3a: Effective and Culturally Relevant Instruction is to Implement culturally relevant practices within all student learning and programming. Culturally relevant instruction and practices can foster a sense of **belonging**, academic and social engagement, **positive relationships**, and a sense of **empowerment** for students. An Ethnic Studies course provides an experience where culturally relevant practices are grounded in learning environments in which racial and ethnic identity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes.



NEWS

**St. Paul school board to act Tuesday on ethnic studies graduation requirement**

# Critical Ethnic Studies

## Critical Race Theory – EdWeek 5/2021

The core idea is that race is a social construct, and that racism is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies.

Scottsdale, AZ



Cherokee County Georgia



**Critical race theory overtakes Black Lives Matter on Google searches**

# Envision SPPS

## A well-rounded education at SPPS

At SPPS, we believe all students deserve the full range of educational opportunities and student supports that a robust, well-rounded education affords. They deserve nothing less.

- Draft recommendations for school:

- Closures
- Co-locations
- Combining

- Impact on students
- Ongoing discussions



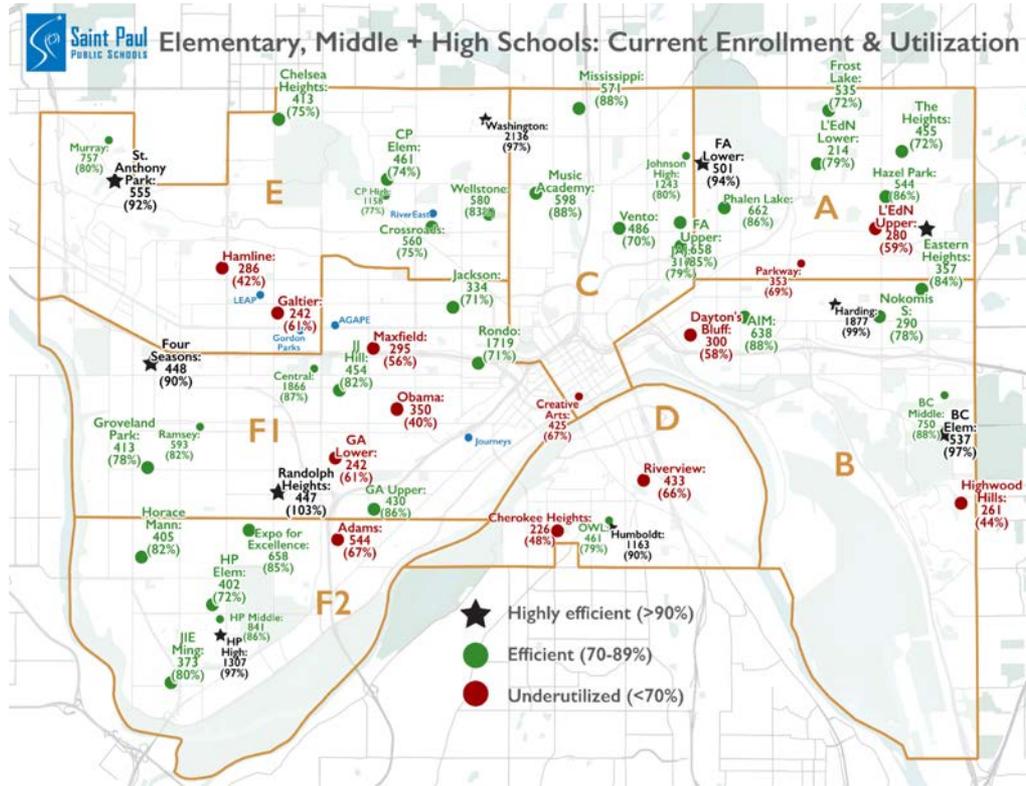
# BOE Recommendations and potential decisions October/November

## School communities envisioning new well-rounded programs

As more details emerge about recommendations and solutions, SPPS will continue to inform families and staff. Once specific school sites are identified, those school communities will be involved in a process to envision how best their school can reflect its students, staff and neighborhood.

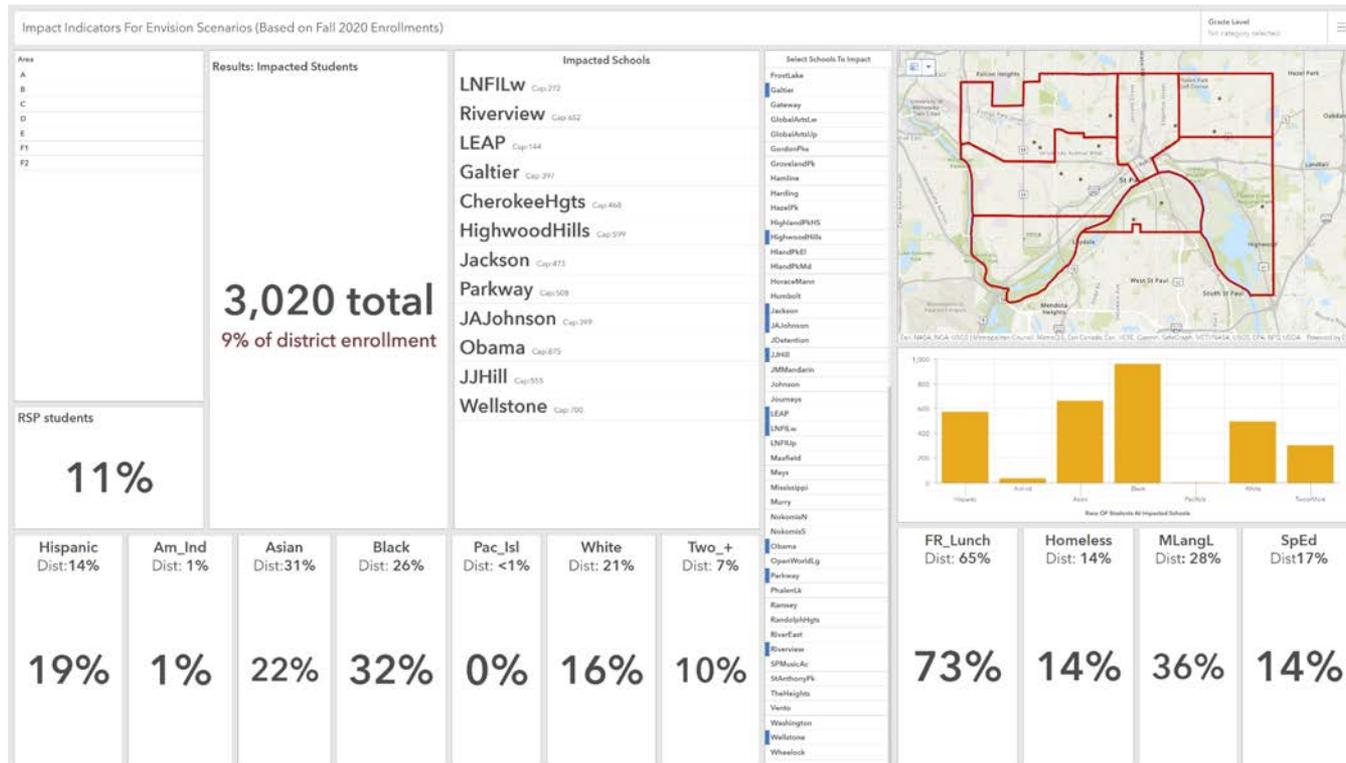
Together, school communities will be able to build a strong, welcoming well-rounded program that supports its students, families, staff and community.

# Envision SPPS



# Total Systemic Impact - Current Snapshot

If all the scenarios are carried forward:

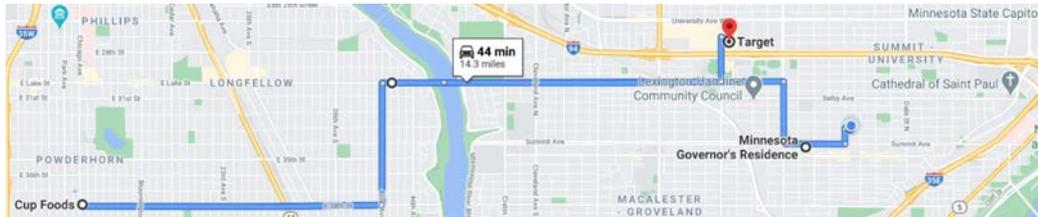




# Community.Trauma.Race

May 25, 2020

- Trauma – Philando Castille worked for SPPS when he was murdered
- Riots
- Fear
- Message to staff/families/students
- SRO local/national



# Be ready for your Oprah moments...or create them



- Lists of 3's
- Verbal period (.)
- I don't know is OK, just not for every answer
- Storytelling is powerful

# The wheels on the bus...haven't moved - Crisis communication



- **Control the narrative**
- **Share accurate and timely information**
- **Involve the Board chair**
- **Do not use press to manage conflict**

# Leadership Matters!

- Someone else does not have to be wrong for you to be right. -Coach George Raveling



Email: [joe.gothard@spps.org](mailto:joe.gothard@spps.org)



Phone: 651-767-8152



Twitter: [@joegothard](https://twitter.com/joegothard)



LinkedIn: [joegothard](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joegothard)