

**St. Louis Public Schools  
Community Visioning Process  
Parent Action Committee Roundtable  
Meeting Summary – February 20, 2020**



**Note:** This was the first roundtable conducted and facilitators were given roughly 45 minutes to ask five questions. Additionally, due to a scheduling error We decided to only ask three of the five questions:

- 1. When you think of a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?*
- 2. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities? What are the most important changes that District should make to positively transform the system?*
- 3. What critical factors should the District consider when determining whether to close and consolidate schools to resource major system changes? (We did not have time to discuss the validity of the existing factors.)*

This summary only highlights the additional feedback provided by the members of the Parent Action Committee. The unique responses for this audience are highlighted in blue on the small group individual summaries. All other responses (in black text) were voiced at the community visioning sessions.

Twenty-nine parents participated in the roundtable discussion; and two small group roundtables were conducted.

St. Louis Public School District  
 Community Visioning Process  
 Parent Action Committee Roundtable  
 Lorren Buck & eNicol  
 Thursday, February 20, 2020

1. **When you think of a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**
  - Inclusivity: all abilities, all parents, all ethnicities **and languages honored**
    - a. “Meet students where they are...and the same for meeting parents and the surrounding community”
    - b. Schools serve as a hub/center for the whole community – Community school concept
  - Resource Equity across all schools
    - a. Quality Teachers and Leadership, FT Nurses at **every** school, updated pedagogy and textbooks
    - b. Access to Safety - within the school and surrounding neighborhood (e.g. updated school HVAC, no dilapidated building nearby, even sidewalks, etc.)
    - c. Access to Community Partners
  
2. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District’s top priorities? What are the most important changes that District should make to positively transform the system?**

Priorities	Changes within the Priority
Priority 1: Focus on Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set building capacity at 75% (do not exceed)</li> <li>● Reestablish “traditional flow/path” for students to graduate to/through each neighborhood school</li> <li>● Improve Home &lt;math&gt;\leftrightarrow&lt;/math&gt; School proximity</li> <li>● Health Start time for schools: 8:30AM (evidence-based start time)</li> </ul>
Priority 2: Focus on Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer wider variety of foreign language courses at each school</li> <li>● Offer after school program at all elem., middle, and h.s. (diverse options - not just basketball at the “black schools” but soccer, tennis, and experiential learning programs too)</li> <li>● Offer more rigorous courses/lessons at every school</li> <li>● Prioritize equal and equitable access to community partners at every school</li> <li>● Improve teachers’ access to resources in neighborhoods that have fewer resources</li> </ul>
Priority 3: Focus on Collaboration/Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate more with community partners</li> <li>● Encourage and support Parent Advocacy Groups</li> <li>● Hire more Family Community Specialists for every school</li> <li>● Be Transparent about processes and policies for accessing resources for students, schools, communities (e.g. some schools and parents are exposed to navigating the system while others are not)</li> </ul>

3. What critical factors should the District consider when determining whether to close and consolidate schools to resource major system changes?

Factor	Possible Rationale
Location and Transportation	Preserve community - don't disconnect students/families from their neighborhoods while also, considering the footprint around the schools (e.g. vacant homes). Re: Transportation - strategically study the current impact of busing on children, families, communities.
Ability to Collaborate with City Gov't.	<a href="#">Schedule Neighborhood Clean Up Days - great way to build community and trust while building up the neighborhood</a>
Educational Needs of the surrounding Community	<b>Think:</b> How can this school be used for community learning after hours? Establishing <b>a more holistic approach to education</b> is key to our survival. Re-purposing school buildings for community advancement vs. complete shut down is another option as well.
Examine Current Distribution of Funding	May be able to better identify factors contributing to higher scores, diverse courses, more activities at certain schools
Changing Marketing/Narrative that Magnet Schools are for "the elite"	This narrative hurts neighborhood schools and those who attend them and teach at them.

**St. Louis Public School District  
Community Visioning Process  
Parent Action Committee Roundtable  
Amanda Tello & Jessica Perkins  
Thursday, February 20, 2020**

- 1. When you think of a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**
  - Safety
  - Technology
    - Up-to-date and relevant
  - Equity
    - Magnet, choice schools are accessible
    - Support services/community partners
    - No gap btw white/black students
    - High teacher retention
    - Fully staffed/certified teachers
    - All schools have social workers, counselor, family/community specialists, nurse
    - Children learning at or above level
  - Community at large is invested in the district
  - [Compliance with IEP/504 \(IDEA\)](#)
  - Accountability to the vision and measurements that are tracked/published
    - Welcoming culture of transparency, equity and accountability
    - Accessibility to information/transparency
  - Welcomes/wants my child/staff and teachers want to be at school
    - Connected, love, care, invested
    - Lift each other up

2. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District’s top priorities? What are the most important changes that District should make to positively transform the system?

<i>Priorities</i>	<i>Changes within the Priority</i>
Priority 1: Improve Teacher (all staff) Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive compensation for all staff</li> <li>• Teacher professional development including culturally responsible/trauma informed, parental engagement</li> <li>• Improved compensation for after school activities/reimbursement</li> <li>• Appropriate classroom size</li> <li>• Teacher assistant elementary/middle school</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Certified teachers</li> <li>• Leadership autonomy to make decisions at a school level</li> </ul>
Priority 2: Improve External/Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Update all school websites</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Training students to develop webpages</a></li> <li>• Empathy training at district/teacher level</li> <li>• Student portal needs to be updated in a timely manner/someone to help teachers upload information</li> <li>• First point of contact needs to be listed on the website and know information i.e. who to transfer parents to etc.</li> <li>• Talk about what is going right within the district, highlight successes</li> <li>• Community knowledge around how they can contribute to the district and what is going on in the district</li> </ul>
Priority 3: Improve Facility and Equipment by Making Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic needs are met restrooms, running water, heat/ac, desks, fresh paint, test for lead ensure there is lead free paint/water and communicate results</li> <li>• Safe/operational playground</li> <li>• Improve technology – smart boards, sufficient number of computers to do testing/Chromebook</li> <li>• Sufficient space for # of children, sufficient space within buildings for art, technology. Language, music and gym programs</li> <li>• ADA compliance</li> <li>• <a href="#">Working AP systems</a></li> <li>• Proper allocation of resources across schools</li> </ul>
Priority 4: Focus on over-all Health of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Later start times - improves student success</li> <li>• Healthier lunches</li> <li>• Air filters</li> <li>• <a href="#">Environment – no plastic</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">More recess time and not taking it away as punishment</a></li> <li>• Consideration around how we are measuring testing scores</li> <li>• Family advocacy/ parent involvement/accountability</li> </ul>
Priority 5: City Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships – community, charter schools, creation of sister schools, between other city schools, county schools</li> <li>• <a href="#">Tax dollar allocation (equity between city/county)</a></li> </ul>

3. What critical factors should the District consider when determining whether to close and consolidate schools to resource major system changes?

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Possible Rationale</i>
Building age & condition (Yes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Older buildings are costlier to maintain</li> </ul>
Examine Impact on School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If schools are consolidated will classroom sizes increase? If so, teacher assistants need to be provided so that teachers can adequately interact with students.</li> <li>▪ Can the school provide the resources needed for more students? If so, there needs to be an increase in resources provided – these are already low as is.</li> <li>▪ Teachers should be moved from closing schools to provide schools with more activities, such as art, music, etc.</li> <li>▪ Consider PTO strength, disbanding a strong PTO could have a negative side effect.</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are already long bus times for students, will closing schools create longer bus times? If so there needs to be caps on bus times implemented. How far will students have to ride on the bus?</li> <li>▪ Given many will be taken out of their neighborhoods, there should be a consideration to partner with charter schools for busing needs.</li> </ul>
Preserve Community and Focus on Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to look at the map and not isolate certain parts of the city. Meaning do not close down all of the north city schools while leaving south city schools open, this disconnects families from their neighborhoods.</li> <li>▪ Consider comfort level of students who must leave their neighborhoods.</li> </ul>