ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOPS

Report of Findings

**Prepared by Emerging Wisdom LLC,
March 2020**

Table Of Contents

I. Community Visioning Overview

Between February 29, 2020 and March 12, 2020, the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) held six community visioning workshops for district stakeholders and members of the public at several area high schools. The purpose of these meetings was to gather community input into the district's transformation efforts, using the public's insights to lay the groundwork for a shared vision of the future of education in St. Louis City. The district also solicited the public's feedback to help inform its decision-making regarding how best to resource this vision. As part of this process, participants:

- Learned about the current and evolving state of SLPS;
- Envisioned a system of excellent schools;
- Identified top priorities to help guide the district's transformation efforts; and
- Reflected on the district's criteria for school closure and consolidation decisions.
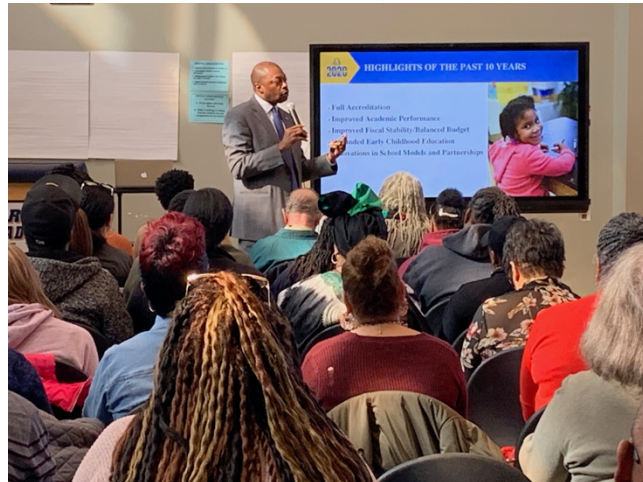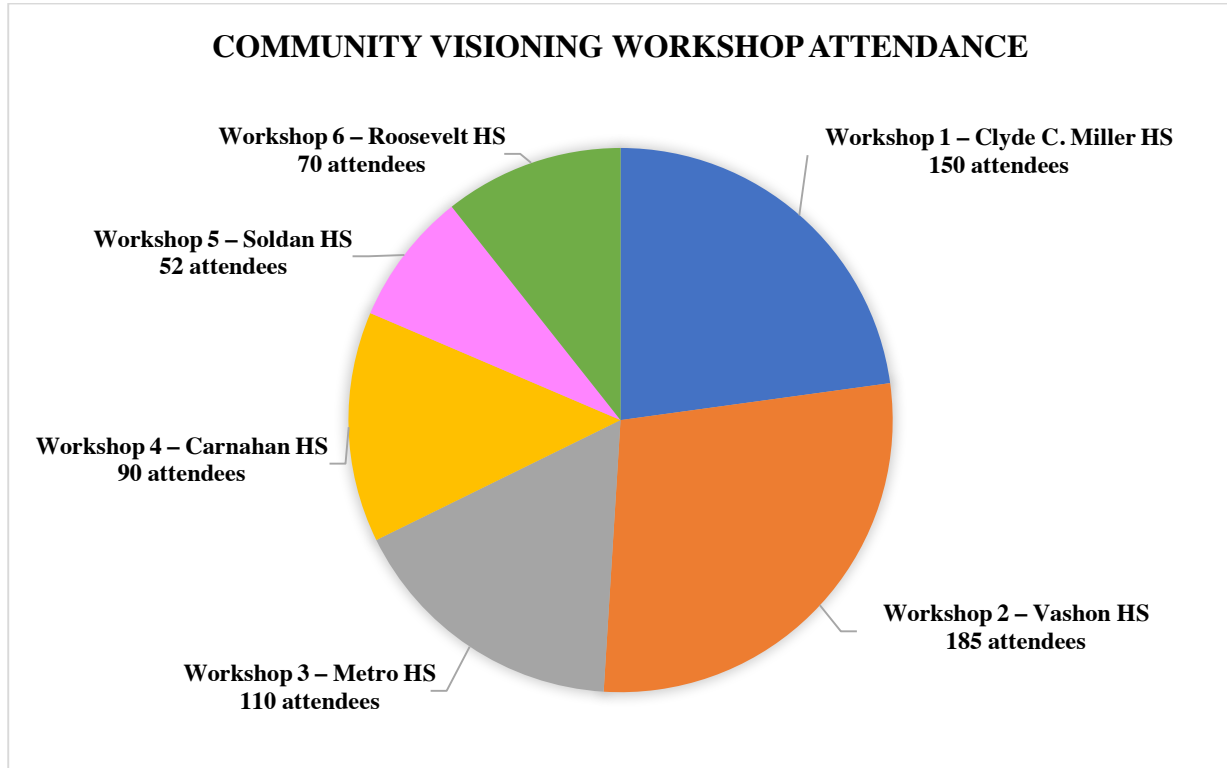
Stakeholders from across the education landscape participated in the district's workshops, including elected officials, SLPS employees, parents, students, community partners, local residents and education reform advocates. More than 650 people chose to engage in these public meetings where they reviewed the district's progress over the last ten years, gained a basic understanding of its Transformation Plan (now in its third iteration), and explored the current operational realities that constrain its function and outcomes.   This information provided participants with a common frame of reference from which to engage in facilitated dialogue about the district's current state, desired future success and top transformation priorities. It also laid the groundwork for more difficult conversations concerning the possible closure and consolidation of a number of SLPS schools to help resource critical changes that could advance increased academic success for students.

The district contracted with a St. Louis based consulting firm, Emerging Wisdom (EW), to facilitate its visioning workshops and public conversations. As external parties, EW's consultants invited open and honest dialogue about the districts' strengths and challenges, capturing a wide range of perspectives and opinions on the district's effectiveness and impacts. These perspectives have been aggregated and analyzed for redundancy in an attempt to reveal valuable public insights that could influence the district's decision-making, actions and investments in the near and long-terms.

This document provides a summary of workshop findings for general review and dissemination. The intelligence that it contains is the result of more than 1,300 hours of public deliberation on the future of St. Louis Public Schools. Its contents reflect the sentiments of allies and critics, both of whom share a commitment to advancing educational excellence and life success for St. Louis City's children.

II. Event Participants

The community visioning workshops were collectively attended by 657 people. The pie graph below details the attendance at each of the six workshops. Workshop #2, at Vashon High School, was attended by the most number of participants (185) and Workshop #5, at Soldan High School, was attended by the least number of people (52).

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

Workshop 6 – Roosevelt HS
70 attendees

Workshop 5 – Soldan HS
52 attendees

Workshop 4 – Carnahan HS
90 attendees

Workshop 3 – Metro HS
110 attendees

Workshop 1 – Clyde C. Miller HS
150 attendees

Workshop 2 – Vashon HS
185 attendees

At every workshop, participants were asked to complete a six-question demographic survey to provide information about their stakeholder type, age, gender, racial ethnicity and the schools attended by their children, if applicable.

Of the 657 attendees, 68% (452) completed the demographic survey.

Stakeholder Type

The table on the following page details the stakeholder type analysis for each district workshop. As a brief explanation, the meeting at Clyde C. Miller Career Academy had 150 people in attendance. Ninety-two participants or 61% completed the demographic survey. Of the 92 who submitted the survey, 29 (32%) identified as SLPS parents /guardians; 55 (60%) specified that they were SLPS employees; 2 (2%) classified themselves as SLPS students; and 1 (1%) indicated that she or he was an elected official.

	Miller		Vashon		Metro		Carnahan		Soldan		Roosevelt		Overall	
Total Attendance	150		185		110		90		52		70		657	
Total Survey Respondents	92		135		75		68		39		43		452	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SLPS Parent or Guardian	29	32%	31	23%	21	28%	19	28%	17	44%	13	30%	130	29%
SLPS Employee	55	60%	63	47%	36	48%	34	50%	14	36%	13	30%	215	48%
SLPS Student	2	2%	2	1%	6	8%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	11	2%
Elected Official	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Other	20	22%	49	36%	16	21%	22	32%	13	33%	22	51%	142	31%

NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.

It is interesting to note that of the 215 survey respondents who identified themselves as SLPS employees, 42 (~20%) also mentioned that they were SLPS parents or guardians.

Gender
The ratio of female to male attendees was roughly 3:1, with 72% of respondents identifying as female; 27% identifying as male; and the remaining 1% not affiliating with a gender.
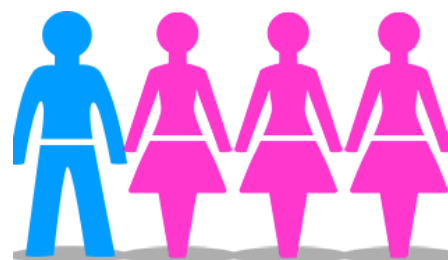
Racial Ethnicity
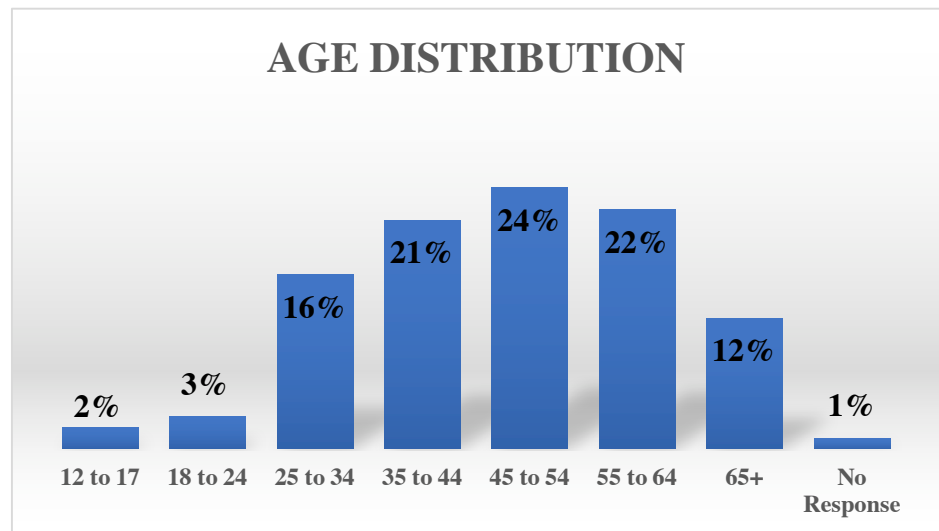Slightly more than half (55%) of the participants surveyed identified as Black; nearly four out of ten (36%) stated that they were White; and 6% indicated that they were either Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American or mixed. Three percent of respondents declined to answer.

RACIAL ETHNICITY

Mixed 1%
No Response 3%
Asian 2%
White 36%
Black 55%
Native American .5%
Middle Eastern 1%
Hispanic 2%
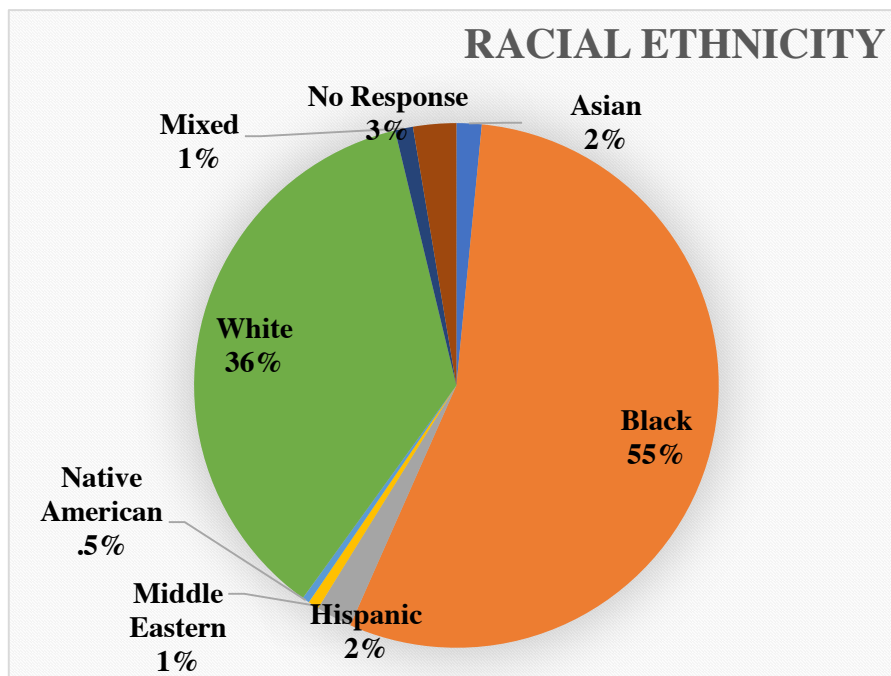
Age

As noted in the accompanying chart, respondents between 45 and 64 years of age comprised slightly less than half (46%) of those who completed surveys. Respondents between 25 and 44 years of age comprised slightly more than one-third (37%).

AGE DISTRIBUTION

12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	No Response
2%	3%	16%	21%	24%	22%	12%	1%

Children In SLPS Schools

Seven of ten (71%) survey respondents stated they did not have children enrolled in the district. For those with children at SLPS, the following information was reported:

- Eight (2%) had four or more children enrolled;
- Seventeen (4%) had three children enrolled;
- Forty-one (10%) had two children enrolled; and
- Fifteen (12%) had one child enrolled.

Parents or guardians identified the schools in the table below as places where their children learn. The number indicates how many respondents were affiliated with that school. Collectively, parents/guardians represented students at 48 of the district's schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2) 31 out of 40 elementary schools (74%)		Middle Schools 7 out of 9 middle schools (78%)	High Schools 10 out of 15 high schools (67%)
▪ Adams – 4 ▪ Ames – 2 ▪ Buder –1 ▪ Clay – 6 ▪ Columbia – 3 ▪ Dewey – 2 ▪ Dunbar – 7 ▪ Farragut – 4 ▪ Froebel – 2 ▪ Gateway – 10 ▪ Henry – 1 ▪ Herzog – 1 ▪ Hickey – 2 ▪ Hodgen – 2 ▪ Humboldt – 3 ▪ Jefferson – 2	▪ Kennard – 13 ▪ Lexington – 2 ▪ Mallinckrodt – 11 ▪ Mann – 5 ▪ Mason – 1 ▪ Meramec –2 ▪ Nance – 1 ▪ Pamoja (PK to 7) – 4 ▪ Patrick Henry – 1 ▪ Peabody – 1 ▪ Shaw –2 ▪ Shenandoah – 1 ▪ Stix – 5 ▪ Washington – 3 ▪ Wilkinson – 9	▪ Busch – 4 ▪ Carr Lane – 1 ▪ Compton-Drew – 3 ▪ Gateway – 5 ▪ Humboldt – 1 ▪ McKinley – 19 ▪ Yeatman – 2	▪ Carnahan – 4 ▪ Cleveland – 1 ▪ Collegiate – 6 ▪ McKinley – 8 ▪ Metro – 25 ▪ Northwest – 1 ▪ Roosevelt – 3 ▪ Soldan – 2 ▪ Sumner – 1 ▪ Vashon – 3

III. Program & Activity Synopsis

Each of the district's community workshops offered the same content and format. Held at locations in the city's Northside, Central Corridor and Southside to maximize attendance and convenience, they were designed to be both informative and interactive, delivering a meaningful participant experience. Workshops were two-hours in length and included two major components, a 20-minute presentation by the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kelvin Adams, and roughly 80 minutes of facilitated small group discussions.
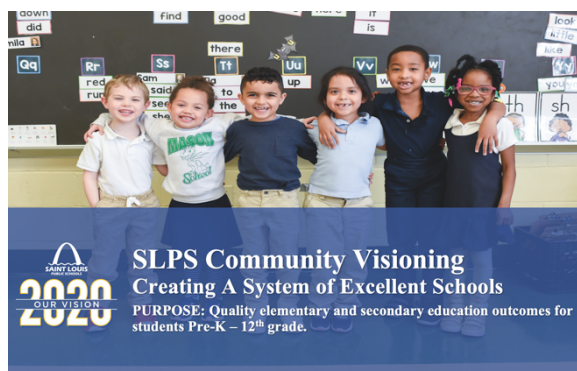

Dr. Adams began the workshops with a high-level overview of the district under his leadership. He delivered a PowerPoint presentation that explained the district's Transformation Plan 3.0, a document that operationalizes SLPS's commitment to building a system of excellent schools, and highlighted both system and school successes during his last 10 years. He also enumerated what makes the district unique, which includes, but is not limited to:

- The vulnerable student populations it serves,
- The prevalence of choice / magnet schools,
- Its largely independent funding of early childhood education, and
- Its costly special education requirements under the city's legacy desegregation agreement.

Dr. Adams maintained that these points of distinction contribute to the district's challenging operating conditions, which are exacerbated by declines in the city's student population, an increasing number of charter schools in the education landscape, and costly inefficiencies, like the district's aging school buildings and $30M+, three-tiered busing program. While he noted these realities, comparing them to conditions faced by similarly sized districts in the region and the state, he also presented elements of a vision that would eventually make SLPS more competitive and impactful. To help underwrite this vision, he spoke about possible school closures and consolidations and then invited participants to share their thoughts and reflections.

Attendees were broken into small groups or think tanks that ranged from 20 to 50 people to discuss their insights, concerns and recommendations. In total, 25 facilitated small groups were convened during the six visioning workshops. Each group considered the following five lines of inquiry:
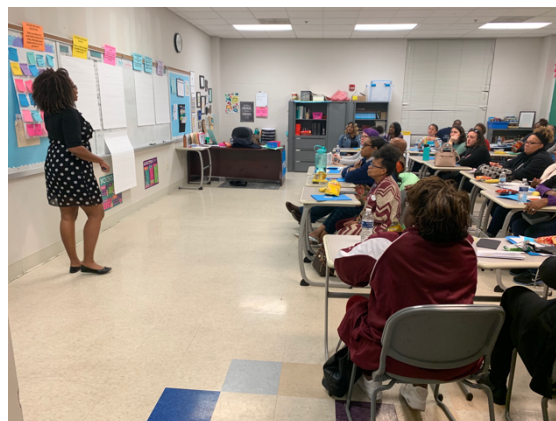
1. When you think of the St. Louis Public School system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?
2. When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the district's top priorities and changes?
4. Do you agree with the criteria that the district has used to inform its school closure and consolidation decisions? Provide your rationales. What additional factors should the district consider when determining whether to close and consolidate schools to resource major system changes?
5. What might be done to lessen the impacts of school closures on district stakeholders and communities?
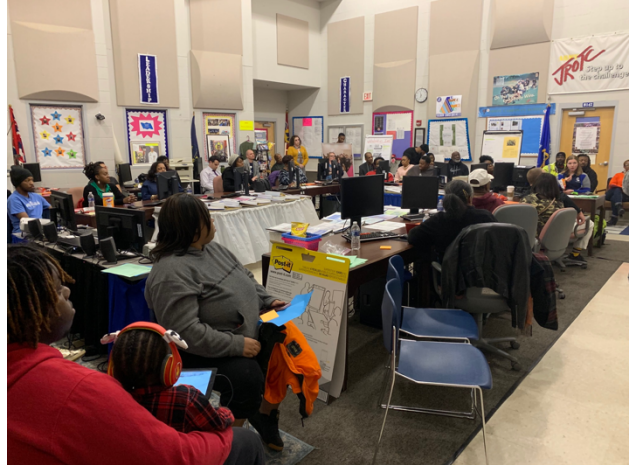
Groups' responses to these questions have been analyzed and synthesized in this report's key discussion findings.

IV. Key Discussion Findings

During the community visioning workshops, facilitators captured insights from each small group discussion on flip chart paper. The input obtained was subsequently clustered to reveal recurring themes and redundancies. These themes are ideas that generated traction in the public discourse and are presented by question in this report. They are accompanied by supporting statements that help to illuminate participants' thinking. Findings for all five lines of inquiry have been summarized on the following pages for ease of reference and review. Complete findings from each small group discussion are catalogued by workshop in this report's appendices.

QUESTION 1: *When you think of the St. Louis Public School system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?*

SLPS Descriptors

The first discussion question posed to each small group gave participants an opportunity to describe the current state of the district using one or two words. Participants offered nearly 800 words, which were clustered into three areas of focus – perceptions of the system, its outcomes and its people. Roughly 70 to 75% of the words were assigned to the system word cloud with the remaining descriptors reflecting public sentiment about SLPS's outcomes and people. These are also graphically presented as word clouds. For each word cloud, the largest text is associated with the greatest frequency of mentions while smaller text indicates words that were used less often.

Perceptions Of The System
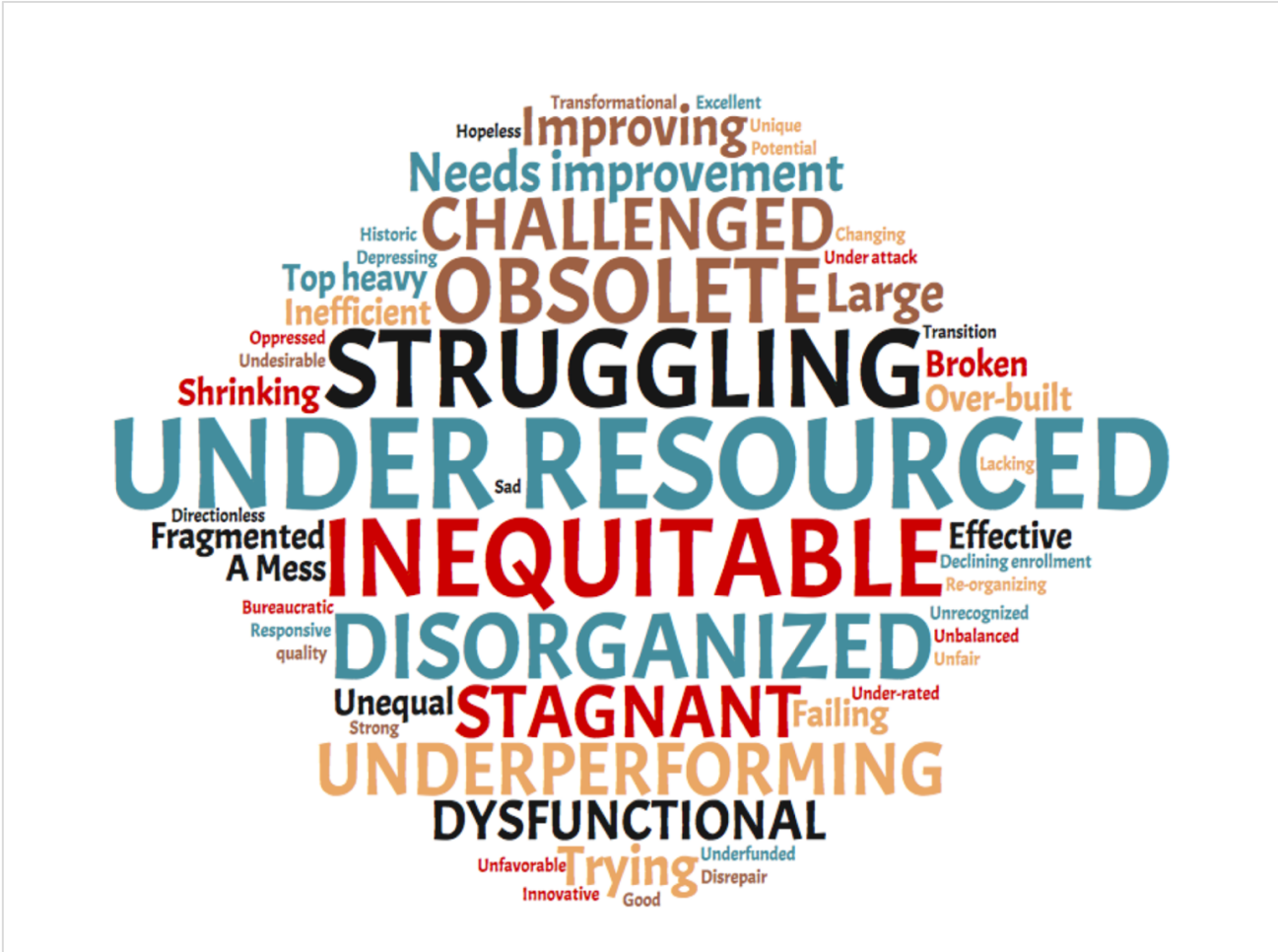
Perceptions Of The District's Outcomes

Perceptions Of The People In The District

QUESTION 2: *When you think of a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?*

What Excellence Looks Like

After reflecting on SLPS's current state, small group participants were asked to describe a system of excellent schools. Their responses greatly overlapped with the district's Transformation Plan 3.0 and are clustered along the plan's five pillars. Five themes were elevated as critical drivers of educational excellence. They are noted below (along with the percentage of small groups that championed them) and are explored with additional themes in the tables on the following pages.

1. Highly Qualified Staff (100%)	2. Safety – Physical, Mental & Emotional (92%)
Small groups maintained the importance of having high quality staff to deliver educational excellence. Recruiting and retaining these staff in critical mass requires attention to their training and qualifications, compensation, diversity, and instructional practices. Workshop participants asserted that successful school systems have staff who are well trained, certified, and meaningfully engaged. These districts provide training in trauma-informed care, culturally responsive pedagogies, and diverse and individualized instructional practices. They also highly compensate, value and empower their personnel.	A safe learning and working environment is an essential component of school success. Students, teachers and staff have to feel comfortable coming to school in order to advance learning. School settings must be welcoming, culturally responsive and affirming. People must be made to feel like they matter, which should be reflected in both the school's daily operations and in its disciplinary actions. Safety, both physical and psychological
3. Enhanced, Culturally Responsive Curricula (88%)	**4. Parent & Family Engagement (76%)**
One common theme was that curricula should be rigorous and prepare students for a multitude of opportunities post-graduation. This may include incorporating enriched and flexible learning experiences, offering exposure to various instructional practices, and providing access to a wide array of electives. Additionally, curricula should be culturally responsive so that students see themselves reflected in the content and learn to appreciate cultures that are different from their own.	Parents and families are actively engaged in student learning and school operations. Families are treated as valuable members of the school community and are considered partners in education and school decision-making. They are supported in being academic allies to their children and their children's teachers. They also engage their schools as hubs for vital family resources and services.

5. Equitable Practices (72%)
Educational excellence requires equitable practices in the distribution of resources, the setting of student expectations, classroom management, school discipline policies, and the delivery of student services and supports. Each school should have the facilities, supplies, books, materials, equipment, staffing, and technology it needs to provide every student with high quality learning opportunities, no matter where it is located. Electives and extracurricular activities should also be universally accessible. And, within schools, staff should hold all students to high expectations; have a culture that does not tolerate discrimination, hostility and bullying; and respond to disciplinary concerns in restorative ways.

Note: More detailed information on these and other vision themes are provided in the accompanying tables.

PILLAR I & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: THE DISTRICT CREATES A SYSTEM OF EXCELLENT SCHOOLS
■ Student Attendance & Enrollment ■ Safe & Secure Schools ■ Financial Sustainability ■ Efficient & Equitable Staffing
COMMUNITY VISION

Schools are emotionally, mentally, and physically safe (23 of 25 groups (92%))	**The District is Fully Funded and Resources Are Fully Utilized (15 of 25 groups – 60%)**
■ All staff have been trained to be culturally responsive / competent. (11) ■ Students and teachers are comfortable coming to school and there is no tolerance for anyone making people feel unwelcome or unsafe at school. Environments are inclusive. (10) ■ Discipline policies are progressive and are not solely focused on punitive measures. They are applied fairly to all. Restorative justice practices are implemented. (6) ■ Bullying, fighting and arguing are minimized. (4) ■ The learning environment is enjoyable and staff and students know they matter. (2) ■ There are social and emotional learning programs in place. (1)	■ The District is fully staffed. (9) ■ The district has money and resources to provide all necessary services. (7) ■ Buildings are fully functional, clean and ADA compliant. (5) ■ SLPS leverages its strengths. For example, some of the best programs are in the smallest buildings, limiting their expansion. (1)

Data Drives Decision-Making (2 of 25 groups – 8%)
■ Data are used to drive decision-making regarding academic programming, trauma-informed practices, healthy start times, busing choices, and curricula. (2)

PILLAR II & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: THE DISTRICT ADVANCES FAIRNESS AND EQUITY ACROSS ITS SYSTEM
■ Workforce Diversity ■ Equitable Resource Distribution ■ Trauma-Informed Classrooms
COMMUNITY VISION

All Students Have Equitable Access To High Quality Instruction And Programs (18 of 25 groups – 72%)	**Mental Wellness Is Prioritized (17 of 25 groups – 68%)**
■ All schools are resourced equitably. They do not have to be magnet schools to get the best resources (note: equitable does not mean equal). (14) ■ All students have access to electives like art, music, AP courses, languages and other specialty courses. (3) ■ There is a deep commitment to eliminate the disparities between the highest and lowest performing schools and neighborhoods. (2) ■ All students can access magnet schools. (1) ■ Special education students are able to access the resources they need. (1)	■ Teachers are trauma informed. (7) ■ Psychological and mental health supports are available to all students. (6) ■ Social services are well coordinated so that students receive the care they need while in school – including crisis care, medical support and college counseling. (4) ■ Schools are responsive to all types of trauma and staff are equipped to respond to students' needs. (3) ■ Staff respond to the needs of students and their families in a non-intrusive manner. (3)

PILLAR II & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: THE DISTRICT ADVANCES FAIRNESS AND EQUITY ACROSS ITS SYSTEM CON'T.

- ■ Workforce Diversity
- ■ Equitable Resource Distribution
- ■ Trauma-Informed Classrooms

COMMUNITY VISION

Curricula And Testing Are Equitable And Culturally Responsive (7 of 25 groups – 28%)	*Teachers Are Diverse And Represent The Student Population (4 of 25 groups – 16%)*
■ Students have equitable outcomes – their backgrounds do not determine their performance and graduation. (4) ■ Curricula are diverse and represent student populations. (3) ■ Testing bias is minimized. (1)	■ Teachers come from diverse backgrounds and social identity groups. (4)

PILLAR III & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: THE DISTRICT CULTIVATES TEACHERS AND LEADERS WHO FOSTER EFFECTIVE, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- ■ Career Pathways
- ■ Teacher Retention
- ■ Culturally Responsive Schools

COMMUNITY VISION

Educators Are Highly Qualified and Invested (25 of 25 groups – 100%)	*Curricula & Instruction Are Innovative, Student-Centered, And Highly Rigorous (22 of 25 – 88%)*
■ All teachers are highly educated and certified. (14) ■ Teachers and principals are invested, caring, and willing to go the extra mile. (9) ■ Staff are afforded intentional and high quality professional development and opportunities. (6) ■ Teachers are qualified, focused on mastery, prepared, skilled at incorporating different learning strategies, racially conscious and have content expertise. (6)	■ Instruction is innovative and provides different learning opportunities, allowing for specialized instruction as needed. (14) ■ Curricula reflect student diversity and expose students to diverse populations/cultures. (6) ■ Curricula include field experiences and trips for students. (5) ■ Students show an interest in learning and are provided more choices in their learning. (3) ■ Curricula are developmentally appropriate. (2)
Staff Are Well Supported And Empowered (21 of 25 groups – 84%)	*Excellence Is The Standard Expectation (18 of 25 groups – 72%)*
■ Teachers are provided competitive compensation and benefits. (16) ■ Staff (teachers and principals) are supported and valued by administration and provided flexibility in decision-making and classroom structure. (8) ■ Educators are happy / highly satisfied. (4) ■ Principals voices are heard. (1)	■ Excellence is the norm. (8) ■ Success is defined by ALL succeeding, not just most, and includes achievement academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. (7) ■ Attendance is high and reflects high levels of student and family engagement. (5) ■ Students, teachers, and administration push past challenges and exhibit greater resilience. (2) ■ Standards for achievement are data-driven. (1) ■ Students strive to achieve excellence and are engaged.

PILLAR III & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: THE DISTRICT CULTIVATES TEACHERS AND LEADERS WHO FOSTER EFFECTIVE, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS CON'T.

- Career Pathways
- Teacher Retention
- Culturally Responsive Schools

COMMUNITY VISION

Classes Are Structured To Promote Learning (13 of 26 groups – 52%)	*There Is Collaboration Across And Within Schools (2 of 25 groups – 8%)*
■ Classes have low student-to-teacher ratios (under the state guidelines). (7) ■ Non-conventional learning and teaching practices are used. (6) ■ Classrooms are updated with the latest technology. (4)	■ Educators collaborate with one another rather than compete. (2)

PILLAR IV & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: ALL STUDENTS LEARN TO READ AND SUCCEED

- Student Reading Proficiency
- College & Career Readiness
- English Language Learner Success

COMMUNITY VISION

| *Curricula Are Focused On Preparing Students For Post High School (15 of 25 groups – 60%)*	*School Start Times Are Healthy (8 of 25 groups – 32%)*
■ Curricula prepare students for participation in the trades and for non-college careers. (12) ■ Soft skills are cultivated by placing less focus on benchmarks and state and district assessments. More emphasis is given to developing problem-solving skills and metacognition. (4) ■ Programs teach entrepreneurship and economic / financial education. (3) ■ There are more multi-lingual opportunities. (1) ■ All students are challenged, regardless of grade level. (1)	■ Start times are not so early that children have to get on buses at 5am. (8)
Math, ELA, and Reading Proficiency are a focus (2 of 25 groups (8%)) ■ Curricula in Math and ELA are rigorous. (1) ■ Achievement is beyond math and reading proficiency. (1)	

PILLAR V & CORRESPONDING DISTRICT PRIORITIES: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES SUPPORT THE DISTRICT'S TRANSFORMATION PLAN	
☐ Volunteer & Mentor Engagement ☐ Community & District Pride ☐ Community Partner Investment	
COMMUNITY VISION	
Partnerships Are Formed To Provide Additional Supports To Students (11 of 25 groups – 44%) ■ The district and schools actively seeks out partnerships. (4) ■ Partnerships are developed with universities, trade schools and community colleges. (4) ■ Each school has a set of community partners willing and ready to provide mentors, tutors, internships, and scholarships. (3) ■ Community partners are invited into schools to provide services. (2)	***Community Support And Buy-In (9 of 25 groups – 36%)*** ■ There is sincere buy-in and support from the community for the district. (6) ■ Community needs are supported by the school. The school is more than just a building – it is part of the community. (3) ■ The community is more accountable and invests in the district. (1) ■

In addition to the discussion themes that arose within the District's five pillars, there were three additional themes that emerged for participants when thinking about a system of excellent schools. These include Parent & Family Engagement, Leadership, and Student Supports and Resources. They are outlined in the accompanying tables.

Parent & Family Engagement	Leadership	Student Supports & Resources
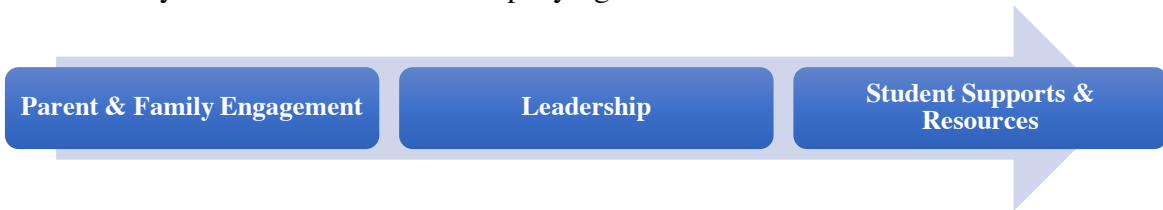
ADDITIONAL PILLAR & CORRESPONDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES – EX. PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	
■ **Ex. Parental Involvement In Learning** ■ **Ex. Parental Supports & Services**	
Parents Are More Actively Engaged With And Supportive Of Schools (19 of 25 groups – 76%) ■ There is high family involvement in PTO programs. Parents are made to feel a part of the school community. (17) ■ Parents support schools and participate in decision-making around how schools are operated. (6) ■ Parents help follow through with academic assignments at home. (5)	***Parents Are Supported By Schools (9 of 25 groups – 36%)*** ■ Families are provided additional supports (wellness, groceries, education, housing) by advocates and community specialists. (7) ■ Flexibility is provided for parents who work past 6 pm. (2) ■ Schools consider parents' schedules and hold events at times that allow for better participation (e.g., not during regular work hours). (1)
There Is Consistent Communication Between Parents And Schools (5 of 25 groups – 20%) ■ There is great communication and teamwork between parents and educators. (4) ■ Parents are viewed as a resource or with valued knowledge bases. (1)	

ADDITIONAL PILLAR & CORRESPONDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES – DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

- **Effective Leadership**
- **Qualified Administrators**

Leadership Is High Quality Throughout The District (5 of 25 groups (20%))	*Leadership Is Qualified And Visionary (5 of 25 groups (20%))*
- There is high quality leadership throughout the system as a whole. (4) - Leadership is well managed and processes are clear. (2) - There are better elected board members. (1)	- Leadership is visionary, forward thinking and proactive. (5) - There are strong district and building leaders. (2) - Leaders have a history of teaching. (1) - Leadership is shared so that one or two individuals are not making all of the decisions. (1)
Leadership Is Accountable (5 of 25 groups – 20%)	*Leadership Demonstrates Genuine Interest In Those They Serve (2 of 25 groups – 8%)*
- Leaders honor their commitments and follow through on their promises. (2) - Leaders are accountable to the community for student outcomes. (3) - Leaders and administrators are rated based on stakeholder and community feedback. (1)	- Leadership is responsive and customer-service oriented. (1) - Leadership is authentic, supportive, and has genuine interest in everyone's success. (1) - Leadership is open to change and feedback from the community. (1)

ADDITIONAL PILLAR & CORRESPONDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES – HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES
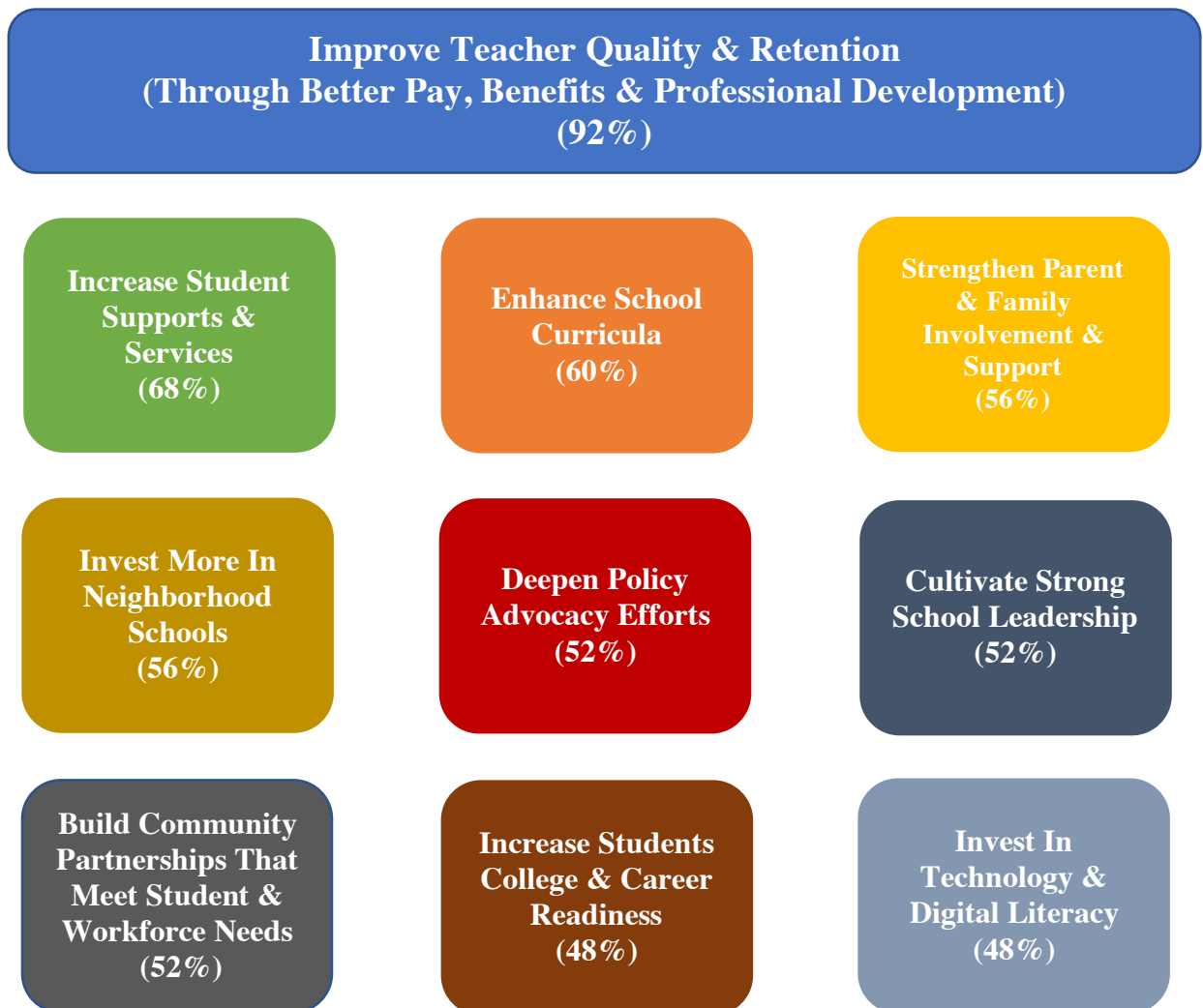
- **Schools Are Well Resourced**
- **Schools Have Extracurricular Programs**
- **Students Have Access to a Variety of High Quality Programs & Services**

Students Have The Resources Necessary To Access Education (10 of 25 groups – 40%)	*Student Services Include Afterschool, Extracurricular, And Enrichment Programs (8 of 25 groups – 32%)*
- Every student has access to IPads, tablets, or computers and internet service.(8) - Students and families are provided full services and supports. Ex. Jennings School District has laundry facilities and groceries for families. (2) - Schools are fully resourced with enough chairs, desks, books, and materials. (1)	- Afterschool and extracurricular activities and programs are provided at all grade levels and meet the needs of students. (7) - Mentorship programs are implemented that enable older students to mentor younger students. (1)
All Schools Are Fully Staffed With Support Professionals (8 of 25 groups – 32%)	
All schools have a full staff of support service professionals (counselors, nurses, coaches, etc.). (8)	

QUESTION 3: *To achieve a system of excellence, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?*

Participants' Top 10 Priorities

Having developed their visions for a system of excellent schools, small groups were asked to consider where SLPS should focus its transformation efforts to yield the greatest positive impacts. In response to this question, they generated a comprehensive list of priorities, almost all of which fell within the five pillars of the district's Transformation Plan 3.0. These priorities, which are presented with supporting statements that clarify the changes that participants want the district to make, are captured in the graphics and tables on the following pages. Among these, however, are 10 priorities that are of greatest significance because of the frequency with which they were mentioned. These signature priorities were recommended by nearly 50% to 90% of the 25 small groups that participated in the district's community visioning workshops. They are featured in the boxes below, followed by the percentage of small groups that noted their importance.

Improve Teacher Quality & Retention (Through Better Pay, Benefits & Professional Development) (92%)

Increase Student Supports & Services (68%)

Enhance School Curricula (60%)

Strengthen Parent & Family Involvement & Support (56%)

Invest More In Neighborhood Schools (56%)

Deepen Policy Advocacy Efforts (52%)

Cultivate Strong School Leadership (52%)

Build Community Partnerships That Meet Student & Workforce Needs (52%)

Increase Students College & Career Readiness (48%)

Invest In Technology & Digital Literacy (48%)

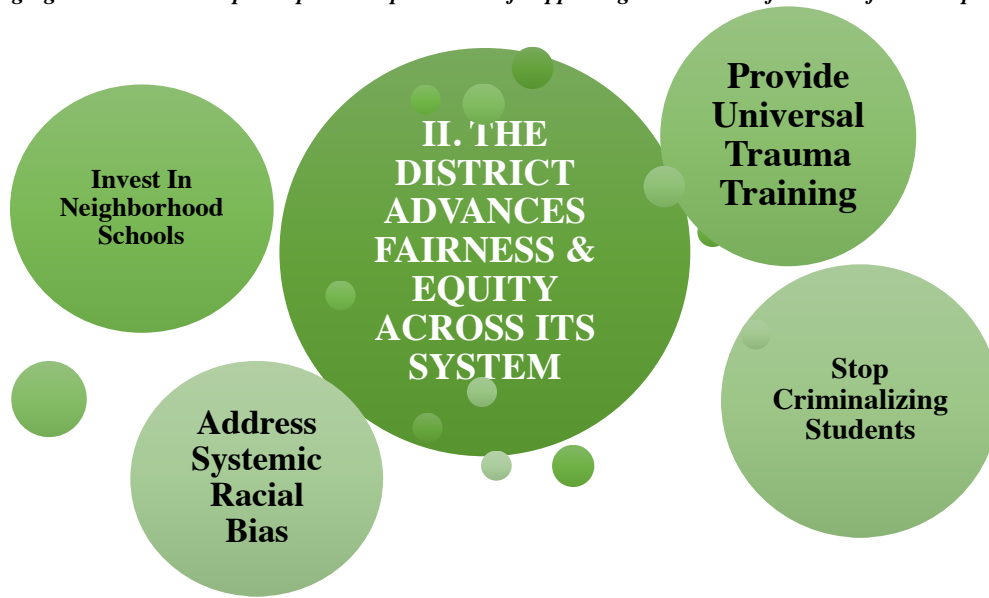## A More Extensive Look At Priorities By Transformation Plan Pillars

The 10 signature priorities recommended by the small groups were part of a broader list identified by meeting participants. A total of 39 priorities emerged from multiple groups as needing concerted action by the district. Where possible, these priorities are organized around Transformation Plan 3.0 pillars to reveal areas of alignment and emphasis.
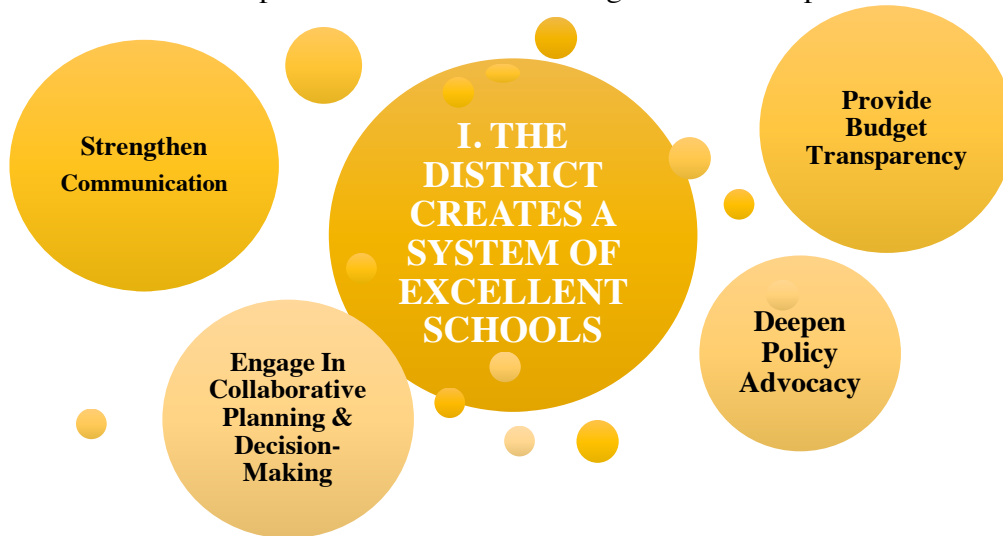

Priorities featured in the bubble graphic reflect the top four priorities by pillar. Size of text is no indication of weighted significance.

PILLAR I: THE DISTRICT CREATES A SYSTEM OF EXCELLENT SCHOOLS
Top Priorities & Desired Changes

Deepen Policy Advocacy Efforts – 13 (52%)
- Advocate for policy changes in funding allocations, state ECE spending and property tax financing. (6)
- Champion having more resources go to SLPS rather than charter schools. (3)
- Hold local and state officials and leaders accountable around education policies. (2)

Strengthen Communications – 11 (44%)
- Improve transparency at both the district and school levels. Engage in clear and consistent communications with families and communities. (5)
- Develop an app for district, school, staff, family and student communications. (3)

Provide Budget Transparency & Accountability – 10 (40%)
- If SLPS closes schools to underwrite full-scale transformation, it must deliver on its promises. (5)
- Make the budget process more transparent and allow for more community input. (4)

Pursue Transportation Cost Savings – 6 (24%)
- Consider owning busing services. (4)
- Eliminate the three-tiered busing schedule. (2)

Engage In Collaborative Planning & Decision-Making – 6 (24%)
- Stop planning in isolation. Seek staff, student and community input on major district decisions.
- Work to center the community in identifying critical needs and solutions.
- Educate the community – students, parents and educations – on how the system works.

Obtain New District Leadership – 5 (20%)
- Cultivate more educational and political leaders (school board members) who champion the needs of students and make them priorities. (1)
- Remove leaders who resist a more racially equitable school system. (1)

Right-Size The District – 5 (20%)
- Right size or streamline the district so that it meets the needs of current students and can grow exponentially, when needed. Decrease the number of buildings. (2)

Change The Narrative About SLPS – 4 (16%)
- Conduct a marketing campaign that highlights the district's positive attributes and outcomes. (2)

Invest In Neighborhood Schools

II. THE DISTRICT ADVANCES FAIRNESS & EQUITY ACROSS ITS SYSTEM

Provide Universal Trauma Training

Address Systemic Racial Bias

Stop Criminalizing Students

PILLAR II: THE DISTRICT ADVANCES FAIRNESS & EQUITY ACROSS ITS SYSTEM
Top Priorities & Desired Changes

Invest More In Neighborhood Schools – 14 (56%)
- Address the disparities between magnet schools and neighborhood schools. Lobby for more funding and equitable resource distribution to be directed to neighborhood schools. (9)
- Ensure that all schools are adequately and properly resourced with supplies, books, technology, playgrounds etc. (1)
- Promote neighborhood schools with the same intensity that magnet schools are promoted.

Provide Universal Training on Trauma – 7 (28%)
- Provide training on trauma, its characteristics and effective interventions to all teachers, staff and students. This training should be mandatory for all teachers and staff. (7)

Stop Criminalizing Students – 6 (24%)
- Break the school to prison pipeline. Provide mandatory restorative justice education and discipline training for teachers, principals and staff. (2)
- Improve discipline / suspension policies and practices. Implement more effective alternatives. (3)

Address Racial Bias In The System – 5 (20%)
- Better understand the effects of racism and oppression on the district's operating conditions and outcomes. (3)
- Stop chasing the "elusive white parent" i.e. structuring school access and resource distribution around the interests of white families in an effort to attract them to the city. (1)
- Use a racial equity lens in all district decision-making. (1)

Recruit Diverse Teachers – 4 (16%)
- Recruit more African American teachers and People of Color so that students see more classroom leaders who look like them. (3)
- Intensify hiring and recruitment of Black male teachers across all school levels. (1)
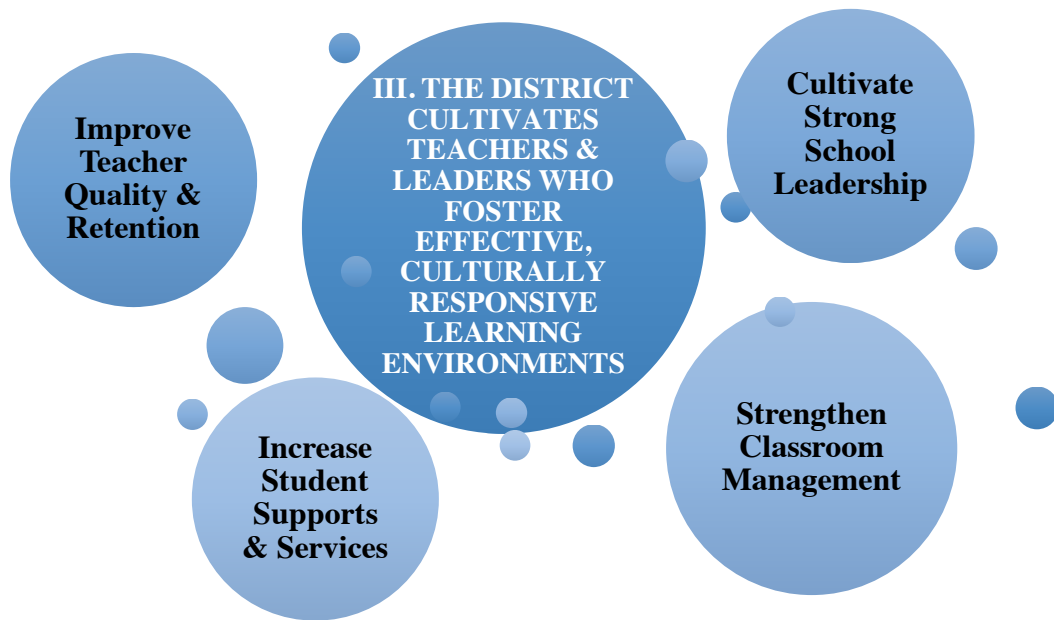
PILLAR III: THE DISTRICT CULTIVATES TEACHERS & LEADERS WHO FOSTER EFFECTIVE, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Top Priorities & Desired Changes

Improve Teacher Quality & Retention – 23 (92%)
- Increase teacher compensation and benefits to more competitive levels. (22)
- Hire more certified, qualified and dedicated teachers, teachers' assistants and support staff. (6)
- Address teacher turnover issues, including how teachers are valued, the quality of their work environment, opportunities for leadership and their low wages. (6)
- Pay for pedagogical, subject matter and trauma informed professional development. (5)

Increase Student Supports & Services – 17 (68%)
- Hire full-time nurses, social workers, and counselors at every school. This capacity is needed to better address the human service needs of students and families. (12)
- Hire more academic advisors. (2)

Cultivate Strong School Leadership – 13 (52%)
- Increase staff salaries and benefits so that they are more competitive. (6)
- Ensure that principals are of the best quality. Retain high quality principals and release those who are not performing. (3)
- Establish a pipeline for principal candidacy. (3)
- Advance accountability in hiring practices. Nepotism exists and gives unfair advantages. (2)

Strengthen Classroom Management – 12 (48%)
- Implement smaller class sizes. (7)
- Create learning environments that motivate students, are safe and build school pride. (2)

Provide Culturally-Responsive Training For All Teachers & School Staff – 9 (36%)
- Provide training on culturally relevant pedagogy, cultural competency and diversity. (6)
- Ensure that all teachers and school leaders are trained to teach and support the student populations that they serve. Many white teachers are working with black children without sufficient understanding of or regard for their culture. (3)

Prioritize Staff Mental Health – 8 (32%)
- Provide more robust mental health and wellness supports for teachers and staff. Both groups are getting burned out and absorb trauma in their jobs. Many are also working two and three jobs to make ends meet. (6)

Enhance & Evolve Instructional Practices – 6 (24%)
- Increase emphasis on experiential, innovative and problem-based learning. (3)
- Embrace a variety of teaching practices to advance student achievement.
- Consider students' learning styles and capabilities when selecting curricula.

Adopt Culturally Relevant Curricula – 5 (20%)
- Ensure that all curricula, by grade level and subject, are culturally relevant to improve student learning and engagement. (5)

PILLAR IV: ALL STUDENTS LEARN TO READ & SUCCEED
Top Priorities & Desired Changes

Enhance School Curricula – 15 (60%)
- Expand curricula to include not only traditional academics, but also significant emphasis on trade skill development, work skills, entrepreneurship etc. (5)
- Modify existing curricula to develop 21st Century life and work skills that make students globally competitive and connected. (4)
- Increase electives, especially in languages, art, music, career options and vocational training (3)

Increase Students' College & Career Readiness – 12 (48%)
- Expand ACT Prep and AP course options for all high school students (3)
- Engage employers, colleges and trade associations around what is required for students to succeed in work. (3)
- Set up scholarship funds for students to get teaching degrees and return to their neighborhoods to teach. Implement the "Grow Your Own" program. (3)
- Provide more education options for students who have no desire to attend college i.e. trade training. (3)

Provide Additional After School & Out-Of-School Opportunities – 9 (36%)
- Increase out-of-school opportunities (field trips) so that students can better apply their learning. (3)
- Enhance athletics through increased hiring and better equipment. (3)

Adopt Healthier Start Times – 8 (32%)
- Use data to support healthier start times and implement them, especially for middle and high school students. (8)

Build On What Works – 7 (28%)
- Look at what is working in the District's existing schools and export this across the system, where applicable. Share effective practices among and between schools. (3)
- Research effective models of systems transformation. (3)
- Protect the district's existing successes. Keep magnet, non-magnet, choice and extracurricular programs that are successful open and fully operational. These are points of attraction for many students and families.

**Reduce Emphasis On Testing – 6 (24%)**
- Find other ways to assess student learning and understanding. Focus more on authentic learning. Too much time and energy is spent teaching to tests. (3)
- Use tests to improve students' performance. The purpose of data collection is for growth.

Invest More Resources In Reading – 5 (20%)
- Expand student literacy resources. Invest in evidence-based reading programs. (2)
- Work to ensure that all students are reading on grade level. (2)

Improve Student Engagement – 3 (12%)
- Strengthen the district's student advisory board so that more students' voices are heard.
- Ask students what they need and want. They are excellent sources of ideas.
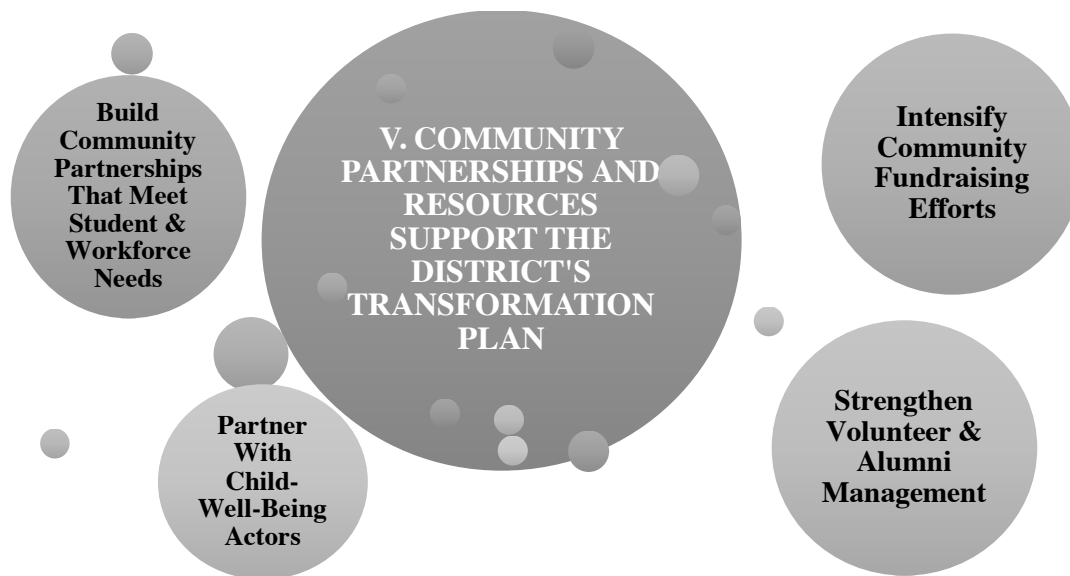
PILLAR V: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES SUPPORT THE DISTRICT'S TRANSFORMATION PLAN	
Top Priorities & Desired Changes	
Build Community Partnerships That Meet Critical Student & Workforce Needs – 13 (52%) ■ Build partnerships with service providers who can offer wrap-around services and holistic supports to students and their families. Many of these providers can offer mental health services, cultural supports and academic enrichment that can improve student learning and outcomes. (5) ■ Assist schools with partner development, especially given their many responsibilities. (3) ■ Partner with trade, industry and business leaders to understand their workforce needs and to solicit mentors, internships and jobs. (2) *Intensify Community Fundraising Efforts – 7 (28%)* ■ Look to community partners for more funding support. Do not rely on tax dollars only to resource transformation. (5) ■ Engage in creative fundraising like "adopt a school," "principal for a day," etc. Work with corporate leaders and neighborhood businesses. ■ Solicit more grant support.	*Strengthen Volunteer & Alumni Management –5 (20%)* ■ Rally SLPS alumni to help support schools that are under threat of closure. (3) ■ Use retired teachers and staff for advice, support and expertise. ■ Help individual schools to develop a volunteer management and recognition program that provides meaningful service experiences. *Pursue Partnerships With Other Education & Child & Family Well-Being Actors (4)* ■ Establish dedicated partnerships with groups like WEPOWER, Empower Missouri and the Deaconess Foundation. Work closely with organizations that advocate for students, families and communities. (2) ■ Seek more coordination and collaboration across systems that support student and family well-being. The education system intersects with the political, economic, housing, health care and justice systems. ■ Coordinate more closely with charter schools. SLPS and charters are both part of the city's education system and must work more closely together on behalf of St. Louis children.

Beyond The Pillars

In addition to the priorities that align with Transformation Plan 3.0, small groups specified four more areas that warranted increased investment and action by the district. These priorities are reported on the next page.

Strengthen Parent & Family Involvement & Support

(14 / 56%)

- Provide more parent education so that parents understand how they can best support their children. Include life skills training, parenting education, child development etc. (4)
- Pursue creative and innovative ways of increasing parent engagement. Improve the culture in buildings to draw families back to the district. (3)
- Support parents in advocating for their children and in understanding the resources and services that are available to their children and families. (2)

Invest In Technology & Digital Literacy

(12 / 48%)

- Provide laptops / tablets to every student to help facilitate their learning. Equip the hardware with effective learning software. Make sure that teachers are adequately trained in how to use both the software and hardware. (5)
- Work with local tech companies like LaunchCode, Square and Microsoft to obtain laptops and enhanced programming training. These partners can also help the district to expand its technology initiatives and opportunities. (2)

Ensure technological literacy for all students, especially since digital skills have increasingly become work and life skills. Recognize, however, that technology is a support and not a panacea.
- Make sure that the technology that is available works.

Intensify Facility Maintenance & Upgrades

(8 / 32%)

- Invest in schools and ensure that all buildings are clean, safe and ADA compliant. (3)
- Improve building safety by replacing old windows, removing lead and asbestos and upgrading playgrounds, where needed. (4)
- Build new facilities that prepare St. Louis for the future.
- Increase green space and social gathering areas (in the interior and exterior).

Repurpose School Buildings

(6 / 24%)

- Do not add to the deterioration of the community by adding more vacant buildings. Repurpose shuttered school buildings. Possibly turn them into community centers that offer job placement supports, social activities, night classes etc. (4)
- Think outside of the box about what can be done to keep school buildings open. Co-locate schools with businesses and social service agencies. Keep the buildings under SLPS, but rent them out until enrollment increases. Use schools to help address the homeless student population. (2)

QUESTION 4A: *Do you agree with the criteria that the district has used to inform its school closure and consolidation decisions? Provide your rationales.*

General Critiques Of The District's Existing Criteria

During his opening presentation, Dr. Adams explained the five criteria that the district previously used to inform its school closure and consolidation decisions (presented in the circles below). Small groups later discussed these criteria, offering general critiques along with more specific feedback on each criterion.

Academic Performance

Capacity

Building Condition

City-Wide Development

Feeder Patterns
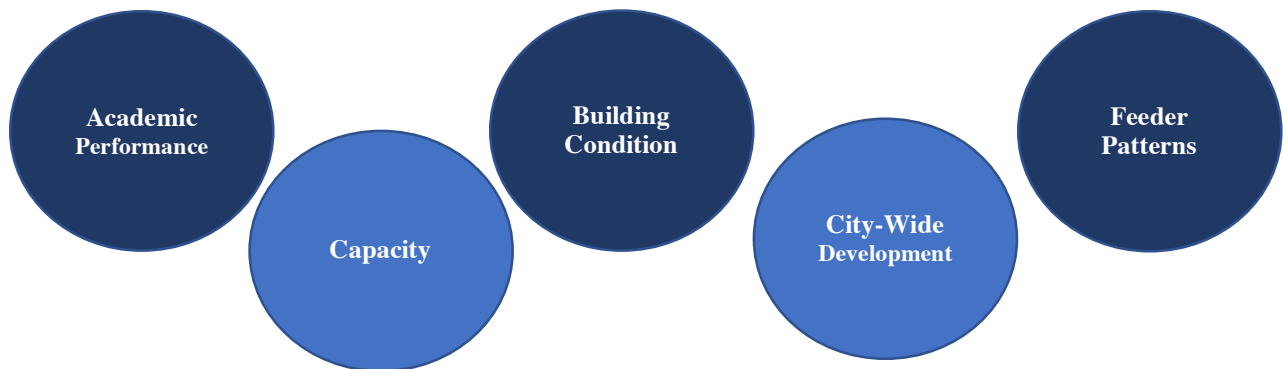
The general critiques or meta-reflections apply to all five of the district's areas of focus. They include the need to apply a racial equity lens to school assessments, a desire for the district to center what matters most to its students and families in its decision-making; and a request that the district be transparent about which of its criteria will most shape its recommendations. The accompanying graphic provides more detailed information on each of these suggestions.

Apply A Racial Equity Lens
- The district needs to apply a racial equity lens to all of its existing criteria. This is completely missing from the discussion. Racism is a root cause of the district's current challenges and conditions.

Focus Most On What Students & Families Want
- The existing criteria do not adequately address the value of school programs, the presence and effectiveness of enrichment programs; the needs of students and families or the extent of facility and infrastructure investments. These are the things that students and families value MOST and that influence their school decisions.

Weight The Factors In Order Of Importance
- Of the five existing criteria, each factor should be "weighted" to ascertain which is the most important factor in the district's decision-making. The district should be transparent with the public about this when announcing its closure decisions.

Specific Reflections On Each Criterion

While a few groups offered general feedback, most had very specific thoughts about the district's decision-making criteria. They noted areas of agreement and disagreement with the district based upon the explanations provided in Dr. Adams' opening presentation. Twenty-five small groups made comments that were subsequently clustered by recurring theme. These themes, and the supporting or clarifying statements that help to elucidate them, are captured in tables on the following pages.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE			
2016-2019 Years of Academic, Attendance, Graduation, College & Career Data			
Criterion Agreement	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Criterion Disagreement*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Look At Growth As Part Of The Performance Standard:* ➔ Performance matters, but the focus should not only be on academic outcomes and grade level achievement. It should also be on growth. The district needs to adopt a growth mindset rather than a mastery mindset. (2) ➔ Growth and progression of students matter more than test scores. (1)	3 (12%)	■ *SLPS Is Penalizing Vulnerable Children & The Schools That Serve Them:* ➔ The inequitable distribution of resources is not students' or parents' fault. They should not be held accountable for the failure of systems. Leaders should be held accountable for failing to support and educate students. (10) ➔ What are the standards for performance for students with IEPs and English Language Learners? (5) ➔ What does academic performance mean for transient students who lack life's essentials? Will schools that work with these students be disproportionately penalized? (1)	16 (64%)
■ *Performance Accountability – Enforcement Of Existing Standards:* ➔ A mastery mindset needs to be the standard. It is not okay to leave children behind. This is how the system got to be in the shape that it is currently in. (1) ➔ Schools should be considered for closing based on performance / test scores. Often when a school has underperformed for so long, the culture of the school cannot be shifted. (1)	2 (8%)	■ *Adult Performance Matters:* ➔ Performance could be more of a reflection on the quality and behavior of district staff and teachers. Teacher quality, training (in cultural competency, trauma and instruction), and attendance are all factors in academic achievement. (3) ➔ The administration is looking for what teachers are doing wrong. (1)	4 (16%)
■ *A Holistic Approach To Performance:* ➔ SLPS should look at schools' ability to meet the full needs of students. This includes an emphasis on academic performance as well as on students' social and emotional interests.	2 (8%)	■ *Environmental & Family Factors:* ➔ Physical environment, safety and family dynamics are factors influencing performance. Students' lives outside of school impact success and overall school engagement. (2)	2 (8%)

NOTE: The number in parentheses following each explanatory statement indicates how many small groups shared this perspective. The total number of small groups included in this analysis is 25. Small groups ranged in size from 20 to 50 people per group, with most averaging between 30 to 35 participants.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE CONTINUED			
2016-2019 Years of Academic, Attendance, Graduation, College & Career Data			
Criterion Agreement	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Criterion Disagreement*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ No additional comments.		■ ***Choice Skews Performance & Limits Options*** ➜ School performance should not be included because some schools have higher academic performance because their students are selected. (1) ➜ Screening students for admission limits choices and affects performance. (1)	**2** **(8%)**

CAPACITY			
Maximum Building Capacity Divided By Its Average 3-Year Enrollment			
Criterion Agreement	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Criterion Disagreement*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ ***Capacity In Context:*** ➜ Capacity matters, but should be reviewed in context, with other factors that influence enrollment. Among these are the city's declining population and the presence of special programs. (3)	**3** **(12%)**	■ ***Different Measures Of Capacity:*** ➜ How capacity is determined is outdated. It needs to assess space for community learning, flexible learning and group projects. (2) ➜ The district needs to determine capacity based on learning opportunities instead of fire code standards. Capacity needs to be about more than just numbers. (1) ➜ SLPS needs to take into account school usage in its capacity considerations. (1) ➜ Measures of capacity are not always accurate or reliable. The district needs to get an outside audit. (1)	**5** **(20%)**
		■ ***Smaller Classes & Schools Are Not Bad:*** ➜ Students learn better in smaller classes and schools. (1)	**2** **(8%)**

		→ It is better to have classes of 15-20 students per class rather than 30 per class. (1)	

BUILDING CONDITION Facility Capital Action Plan (FCAP) Outlines Age, Condition, Deferred Maintenance & Capital Improvement Projects & Categorizes Projects By Building, System & Priority			
Criterion Agreement	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Criterion Disagreement*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Old Building Are Expensive:* → Buildings cost a lot of money to maintain and fix, especially very old ones. (2)	**2 (8%)**	■ *More Neighborhood Decline:* → Vacant SLPS buildings contribute to neighborhood blight and instability. (3) → Demolishing old buildings literally destroys historic buildings in communities and is a catalyst of decline. (1)	**4 (16%)**
■ No additional comments.		■ *Refurbish, Don't Close:* → Old buildings can be redesigned to better fit the needs of today's students. (1) → Refurbish old schools. Do not do away with them. (1)	**2 (8%)**
■ No additional comments.		■ *The Cost of Deferred Maintenance:* → The district needs to stop engaging in deferred maintenance. Make schools more energy efficient to reduce the costs of maintaining old buildings in the long run. (1) → The district has engaged in practices of neglect with regard to its old buildings that have put these schools at a disadvantage. (1)	**2 (8%)**
■ No additional comments.		■ *Benefit / Cost Analysis Of Old VS New:* → Assess the cost of constructing new buildings versus making upgrades in old ones and be transparent about the findings from the assessments. (2)	**2 (8%)**
■ No additional comments.		■ *The Presence of Charters:* → Building cost should not be a factor because Charter Schools are moving into old SLPS buildings and rehabbing them successfully. Why can't SLPS? (2)	**2 (8%)**

CITY-WIDE DEVELOPMENT			
Data Collected From The City Planning Department			
Criterion Agreement	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Criterion Disagreement*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Prepare For The Future* → Get a clear understanding of the city's plans 5, 10 and 15 years from now. Make decisions that take these factors into consideration. This requires a closer working relationship with city planners, leaders and development innovators like the St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) and the Vacancy Collaborative. SLPS's presence is a strong factor in advancing the city's plans. (4) → City development must be considered. The district's plan should be forward thinking and prepare for the future of the city. (1) → When new businesses like NGA come to St. Louis, SLPS should know how they will impact schools and the economy. (1) → Look at demographic projections. (1)	7 (28%)	■ *Legacies of Redlining, Segregation & Patterns of Divestment:* → The majority of development is not taking place in under-resourced communities, like St. Louis' Northside. This means that these neighborhoods are even more vulnerable to divestment, now by SLPS. Using this criterion reinforces the structural inequalities created by redlining and segregation. (5) → Northside gentrification did not benefit community schools. Instead, it has starved existing schools through the creation of private and charter schools. Community schools need greater protection. (1) → Make sure schools are not all shut down within the same area. (1) → Developers have wreaked havoc on North St. Louis and cannot be trusted. (1)	8 (32%)

FEEDER PATTERNS Analysis Of Pathways For Transitioning Students From Elementary School To Middle School & From Middle School To High School				
Criterion Agreement	**No. of Small Group Mentions**	**Criterion Disagreement**		**No. of Small Group Mentions**
■ *Protect Existing Feeder Patterns:* ➜ The district needs to maintain fidelity to feeder patterns so that it does not destabilize strong schools. Sumner used to be at full capacity when it had feeder middle and elementary schools. Vashon used to have more students when it had feeder schools. The middle schools no longer exist and now Vashon has 500 fewer students than it used to have. (2) ➜ Re-establishing feeder patterns from elementary to middle schools could possibly lower transportation costs and travel times as well as help stabilize neighborhoods. (2) ➜ Enrollment in Pre-Kindergarten should be considered in feeder patterns since these children will hopefully attend elementary schools. (1)	5 (20%)	■ *Students Are Already Traveling Outside Of Their Neighborhoods:* ➜ Feeder patterns should not be a significant determinant in school closure decisions given the high enrollment in magnet and choice schools. Students are already having to leave their neighborhoods to get to these schools. (10) ➜ Introducing choice has further contributed to segregation rather than solving the problem. (1) ➜ Consider busing the students in the south, where schools are overflowing, to the north, where schools are under capacity. (1)		12 (48%)
■		■ *Communities Without Feeder Schools:* ➜ Feeder patterns should not be a factor because some communities no longer have feeder school options. This factor is not a fair factor to consider. (1)		2 (8%)
■		■ *Defection To Charter Schools:* ➜ Is the district assessing the number of students projected to transfer to nearby charter schools if it closes its schools? Closures will feed charter school enrollment. (2)		2 (8%)

QUESTION 4B: *What additional factors or criteria should the district consider when making school closure and consolidation decisions?*

Additional Factors For Consideration

In addition to the five criteria that the district used in its last round of school closures and consolidations, community members suggested eight other factors that they want the district to consider in its school assessment process. The top six garnered support from between 20% to 50% of the community workshops' discussion groups and are presented in the graphic below in order of priority. More detailed explanations are offered in the accompanying tables.

1. Transportation / Travel Impacts 52%	2. Neighborhood / Community Impacts (48%)	3. Cultural & Historical Significance (40%)	4. Staff & Student Placements & Moral (36%)	5. Parent Impacts (24%)	6. Student Safety (20%)

ADDITIONAL FACTORS THE DISTRICT SHOULD CONSIDER			
Other Important Factors	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Other Important Factors*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Transportation / Travel Impacts:* ➜ The district needs to consider the impacts of school closures on student travel times and transportation costs. How long will children have to be on buses? The goal should be for either the same amount of time as before the closures or less time. (6) ➜ The district needs to reinforce its commitment to neighborhood schools. If it fixes the inequalities across schools, it will fix the transportation issue. This is what is best for children and for the neighborhood / village. (3) ➜ Establish a maximum distance for students to travel between home and school to limit negative travel impacts. The other option is to set maximum travel times. (2) ➜ Consider partnering more with charter schools to help reduce costs, especially on transportation outlays. (1) ➜ Can public transit be used to transport students? (1)	13 (52%)	■ *Neighborhood / Community Impacts:* ➜ A school closing does not just impact students, teachers, and families. It impacts the surrounding community's social, cultural and economic sustainability. Closure adds to blight, instability, divestment, losses in property values, crime, the fracturing of struggling neighborhoods and disruption of community culture. (9) ➜ Some schools may be the only places in a neighborhood where families can access resources like after school services and supports. Closure takes these resources away. (2) ➜ If schools have a strong community presence, they should not be closed because these relationships are difficult to build and nurture. Ex. Roosevelt Community Council (1)	12 (48%)

NOTE: The number in parentheses following each explanatory statement indicates how many small groups shared this perspective. The total number of small groups included in this analysis is 25. Small groups ranged in size from 20 to 50 people per group, with most averaging between 30 to 35 participants.
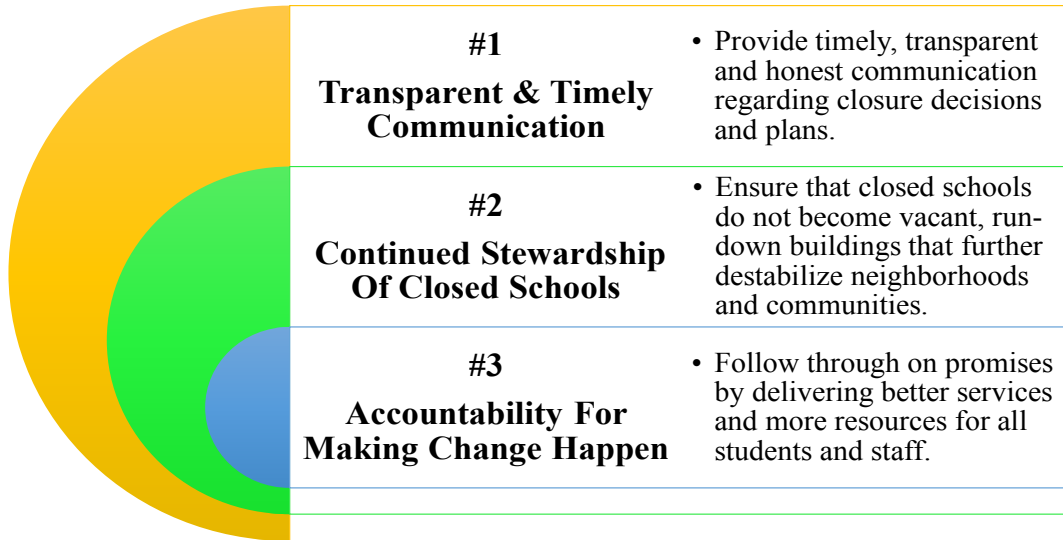
ADDITIONAL FACTORS THE DISTRICT SHOULD CONSIDER			
Other Important Factors	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Other Important Factors*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Cultural & Historical Significance:* ➜ Consideration should be given to schools' cultural and historical value. Respect the past. There is a lot of pride in the history of schools, especially among alumni. (3) ➜ Sumner should be kept open given its distinguished past and historical significance as the first Black high school west of the Mississippi River. Closing Sumner High School contributes to the erasure of historically Black landmarks and communities. (3) ➜ The architecture of old buildings is great. New buildings are often uninspiring. (2) ➜ Use historical value as a marketing tool to attract federal funding and support. (1) ➜ Schools' historical significance helps to provide a clear identity. (1)	10 (40%)	■ *Staff And Student Placements & Morale:* ➜ Where will everyone go? Will students and teachers be provided a choice of where to attend/teach or will they just be assigned? (4) ➜ How much notice will be given? Will decisions be made after teachers have signed their contracts for the year and have no choice of where to go? This will decrease their investment in the school and decrease teaching effectiveness. (1) ➜ Consider teacher morale. (1) ➜ Teachers are more likely to leave certain schools over others, especially given the competitiveness of county districts. (1) ➜ What happens to administrative staff? (1) ➜ What is the impact on students who attend schools that close? What message are we sending them – that their school is not good enough? (1)	9 (36%)
■ *Parent Impacts:* ➜ Closing neighborhood schools and making schools farther away will further isolate parents. Parents will have more difficulty traveling across town to participate in school functions and activities. (3) ➜ Parents need quick access to their children. (1) ➜ Parents' perceptions of the district will change when schools close. This could result in reductions in enrollment and an embrace of charter schools as more viable options. (1) ■ If a school has a strong PTO and partnerships, refrain from closing it. Determine what is needed to improve all other outcomes. (1)	6 (24%)	■ *Student Safety:* ➜ The crossing or combination of certain neighborhoods will increase safety concerns. There are rival gangs that are now divided by schools, but combining them would create huge problems. How will we keep kids safe if we do this? (4) ➜ Some students may totally opt out of school rather than go to buildings where they feel threatened or unsafe. (1)	5 (20%)

ADDITIONAL FACTORS THE DISTRICT SHOULD CONSIDER			
Other Important Factors	No. of Small Group Mentions	*Other Important Factors*	No. of Small Group Mentions
■ *Business Support & Involvement:* → Get local business to adopt schools. To what extent are these partnerships already in place? (2) → Make SLPS more responsive to local businesses that want to engage and provide support. Currently, SLPS is hard to engage. (1) → Involve local businesses in building management and rehab when SLPS cannot do it any longer. (1)	**4** **(16%)**	■ *Equity:* → Due to external forces (ex. divestment in North City), it is likely that more schools will be closed in already blighted areas. Instead, the district should consider renovating or building new schools in these neighborhoods to help spur neighborhood residency and stronger markets. Find out from city leaders what areas of North City show the greatest possibility for resurgence and invest in these locations. (2) → How will downsizing affect the overall equity of education if schools are closed and consolidated? (1) → Comparisons are not equitable. How do you compare Metro to Vashon? (1)	**4** **(16%)**
■ *School Specialization:* → Consider schools' special niche in the system… Who are they serving and how? Do the schools have special curricula? Do they serve large concentrations of specific types of students (ex. ELL)? If the schools are unique to the district, do not close them; invest in them. (2)	**2** **(8%)**	■ *Charter School Presence:* → Look at how close a potentially closing school is to a charter, private and/or parochial option. The presence of these schools can easily draw students away. (2)	**2** **(8%)**

QUESTION 5: *What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on district stakeholders and communities?*

Recommendations For Mitigating Adverse Impacts

Workshop participants made 12 high level recommendations for lessening the negative impacts of school closures, which are presented in the tables on the following pages. However, three of these recommendations were put forth by almost every small group. They include:

#1 **Transparent & Timely Communication**	• Provide timely, transparent and honest communication regarding closure decisions and plans.	
#2 **Continued Stewardship Of Closed Schools**	• Ensure that closed schools do not become vacant, run-down buildings that further destabilize neighborhoods and communities.	
#3 **Accountability For Making Change Happen**	• Follow through on promises by delivering better services and more resources for all students and staff.	

More detailed information on the top 12 recommendations follows.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS	No. Of Small Group Mentions
1) *Provide timely, transparent, and honest communication throughout the entire closure process.* ■ Ensure there is a strategic plan and vision that is communicated early and often to community stakeholders. (10) ■ Provide a clear line of sight into the decision-making process that includes the results of the community visioning meetings, why actions were chosen, why other actions were not chosen, and where budgeting and resources will be allocated. (11) ■ Allow for feedback and ongoing communication from community members by holding additional community meetings (like the community visioning meetings) and/or allowing the community to directly address the superintendent. (6) ■ Use a variety of communication modalities, including social media platforms, meetings with families, the district's website, a phone help or question line, etc. to give families access to information easily and to help them get their questions answered in a timely manner. (5) ■ Include a long-term plan for SLPS in the vision. (2)	20 (100%)

NOTE: The number in parentheses following each explanatory statement indicates how many small groups shared this perspective. The total number of small groups included in this analysis is 20 since this question was added after the initial community visioning workshop. As some groups made more than one supporting statement per recommendation, the numbers in the parentheses may equal more than that of the total number of groups supporting that recommendation. Small groups ranged in size from 20 to 50 people per group, with most averaging between 30 to 35 participants.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS	No. Of Small Group Mentions
2) *Ensure that there is a plan for buildings that will no longer house schools by repurposing, selling, or maintaining them. Do not leave school buildings vacant and abandoned.* ■ Do not allow closed buildings to negatively impact the surrounding neighborhoods because they are left vacant or are sold to developers who hold onto them while awaiting neighborhood gentrification. (15) ■ Consider innovative ways to repurpose buildings through community partnerships so that SLPS can maintain ownership rights over the buildings, but have others take on some of the costs. For example, the district could turn closed schools into shelters for homeless students and families; rent the buildings to small businesses and/or entrepreneurs at reduced costs; or establish alternative learning environments for adults. (10) ■ Understand the negative impacts that closed and vacant schools have on neighborhoods – crime increases, property values decrease, and resources become more scarce. (5) ■ Assess the economic impacts of school closures. Work with the City of St. Louis to evaluate the impacts on neighborhood stability, housing vacancies, property taxes, and potential development or redevelopment prospects that might occur near closed schools. (2)	**18 (90%)**
3) *Ensure that the plan for closures and consolidations results in better schools for everyone.* ■ The educational outcomes and opportunities provided to students and families should be better than what they currently have. (5) ■ Make sure that the remaining schools are equipped with greater resources than are presently available to all students. (3) ■ Operate the remaining schools at full staff capacity, with high quality teachers and increased support staff, including librarians, counselors, nurses, social workers etc. who are on site daily. This will help to reduce the student / teacher ratio and incidence of unmet student needs. (5) ■ Provide schools with the resources and equipment that they need (ex. chairs, working bathrooms, flexible seating, cafeteria seating) prior to the arrival of new students. (2)	**15 (75%)**
4) *Facilitate smooth transitions so that students and families are not negatively impacted.* ■ Hold a welcoming event for incoming students so that they can team build, meet their teachers, and explore their new schools prior to the first day of school. (6) ■ Allow students and families to choose what schools they will attend if their schools are closed. (3) ■ Provide additional supports to students who will be transitioned to new schools by offering counseling and other community resources that mitigate the negative impacts of their schools closing. (2) ■ To ensure safe transitions, be intentional about developing student relationships, particularly among those who have not interacted before or who have had negative interactions in the past (ex. feuding groups from different neighborhoods). (1)	**8 (40%)**

	TOP RECOMMENDATIONS	No. Of Small Group Mentions
5)	**_Increase parent, family, and community involvement in decision-making._** ■ Present choices and options to families, staff, and relevant stakeholders that invite their participation in the district's decision-making process. (4) ■ Allow families to choose what schools their children will attend if their schools are closed. Provide them with reasoned recommendations along with information about potential new schools so that they can make informed decisions. (3) ■ Heighten community engagement. Hold community events. Partner with neighborhood businesses and community partners. Get involved in community activities. SLPS should be a presence in the community and build meaningful, positive relationships, especially following school closures. (3)	**7 (35%)**
6)	**_Do not close any schools._** ■ Closure will have huge, negative effects on the community. (3) ■ Instead of closing schools, create innovative ways to use them, generate funding, and maintain them. For example, half of the buildings could be used for school purposes and the other half rented to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs obtain more affordable rents; students are exposed to leaders in the community; and the district's schools remain open. (3) ■ Invest in struggling schools and address the underlying reasons that led to them being considered for closure. (2) ■ How can neighborhood schools be built up to make them more attractive to families? (1)	**6 (30%)**
7)	**_Provide advanced notice of closures; do not rush the decision or the process._** ■ Allow for a transition year so that the process is not rushed and resources are thoughtfully put into place. (3) ■ Communicate the plan as early as possible so that families and staff have time to prepare for change. (3)	**5 (25%)**
8)	**_Maintain cohesion and community among school community members, staff, and families._** ■ Work to maintain cohesion among school community members, even in the midst of change and movement. Do this through thoughtful staffing decisions and communication activities. Make sure that staff and faculty move with students to help maintain these relationships, morale, and performance. (2) ■ Allow high school students who are juniors and seniors to finish learning in their current settings while transitioning rising 9th graders to new schools. (2)	**4 (20%)**
9)	**_Allocate resources equitably._** ■ Ensure that resources follow students so that those who are negatively impacted do not end up attending schools with insufficient resources. Schools that remain open need enough resources to serve everyone. (2) ■ Maintain a focus on equity for all schools and students. (2)	**3 (15%)**
10)	**_Prepare staff for the potential impacts on them._** ■ Communicate to staff how closure and consolidation decisions will impact them. Consider how new staff will be hired, how staff who are displaced will be transitioned, and the extent to which existing staff will be laid off. (2) ■ Allow staff to choose their reassignments. (1)	**3 (15%)**

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS		No. Of Small Group Mentions
11)	**_Preserve history._** ■ Preserve the history and legacy of closed schools as well as the special moments in these building by setting up a museum at the district's office or at the Missouri History Museum. (2)	**2** **(10%)**
12)	**_Combine magnet schools and neighborhood schools._** ■ When possible, combine magnet schools with neighborhood schools to gird them up. For example, relocate JROTC and VPA into Roosevelt and have students take common core classes together. (2)	**2** **(10%)**

V. Conclusion

The findings in this report seek to accurately convey public sentiments communicated at St. Louis Public Schools' community visioning workshops. These workshops provided community members and district stakeholders multiple opportunities to weigh in on SLPS transformation efforts, with specific foci on creating a system of excellent schools and redirecting district resources. District leaders are now in a position to incorporate the public's intelligence and insights into their deliberations as they reimagine and reconfigure the city's portfolio of schools to advance the learning and life success of all St. Louis children.

APPENDICES:
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION
WORKSHOP REPORTS

APPENDIX A:
CLYDE C. MILLER CAREER ACADEMY WORKSHOP
# SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2020

St. Louis Public Schools
Community Visioning Workshop Demographic Overview
Workshop #1 – Clyde C. Miller High School
Saturday, February 29, 2020

On Saturday, February 29, 2020, **150 people** attended the first of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **92 (61.3%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With six of ten attendees (61.3%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was SLPS employees at 60%, followed by SLPS parents/guardians at 32%. *NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.*
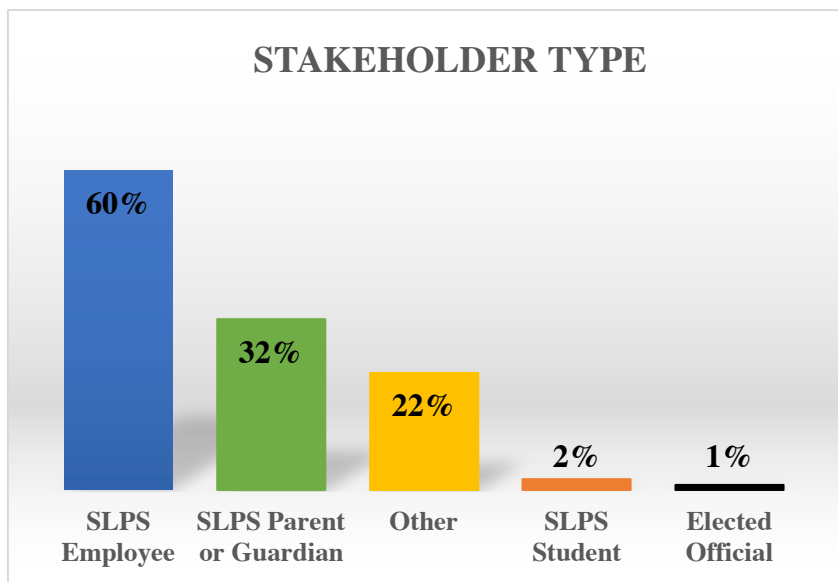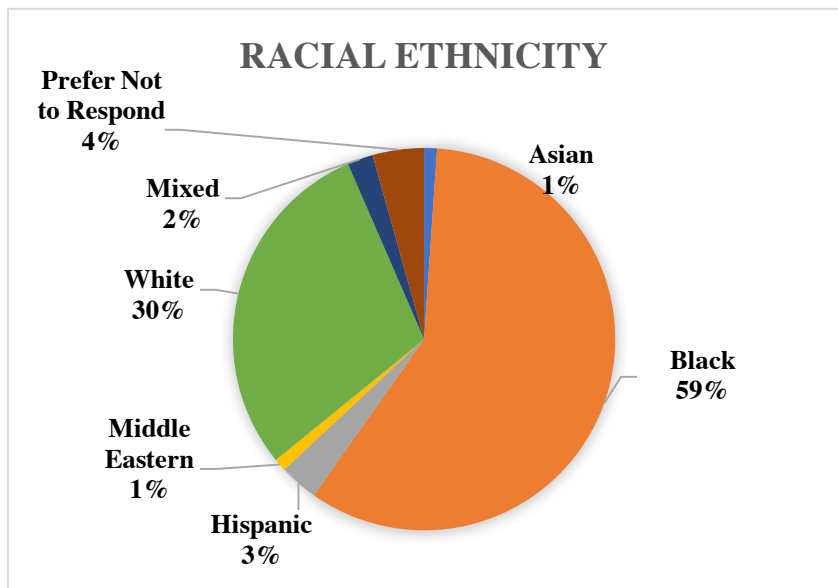
Gender

Nearly 72% of the respondents identified as female; 26% identified as male; and the remaining 2% did not affiliate with a gender.

Racial Ethnicity

Nearly six of ten (59%) respondents identified as black; three of ten (30%) identified as white; 7% identified as either Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian or mixed; and the remaining 4% declined to provide a response.

STAKEHOLDER TYPE

- SLPS Employee: 60%
- SLPS Parent or Guardian: 32%
- Other: 22%
- SLPS Student: 2%
- Elected Official: 1%

RACIAL ETHNICITY

- Prefer Not to Respond 4%
- Mixed 2%
- White 30%
- Middle Eastern 1%
- Hispanic 3%
- Black 59%
- Asian 1%

Age

As noted in the chart, five of ten (51%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 and 64 years of age; and another two of ten (21%) identified as 65+ years of age.
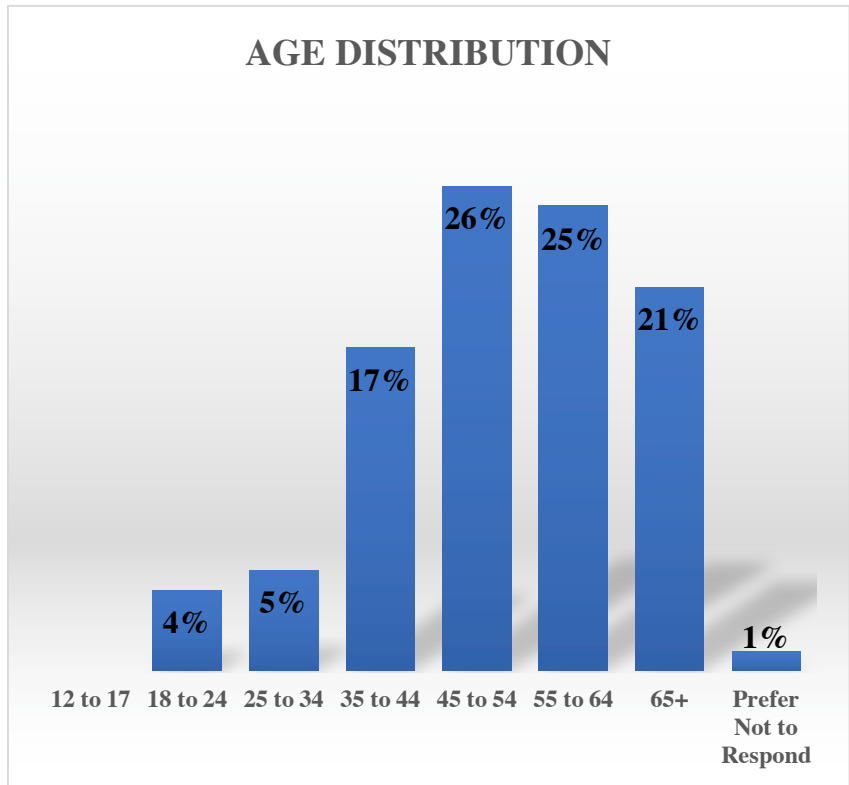
Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly seven of ten (70%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 30%, the following was reported:
- o One (1%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Three (3%) had three children enrolled;
- o Nine (10%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Fifteen (16%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	Prefer Not to Respond
4%	5%	17%		26%	25%	21%	1%

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of attendees identifying that school. Parents represented students from 14 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)	Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Adams – 1 ▪ Clay – 2 ▪ Columbia – 1 ▪ Dunbar – 1 ▪ Farragut – 2 ▪ Gateway – 2 ▪ Jefferson – 1 ▪ Kennard – 4 ▪ Lexington – 1 ▪ Wilkinson – 1	▪ McKinley – 7 ▪ Gateway Middle – 1	▪ Collegiate – 2 ▪ Metro – 2

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Roughly 80% to 90% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Rebeccah Bennett;
- ▪ Chelsey Carter;
- ▪ Jessica Perkins;
- ▪ April Warren-Grice, Ph.D.; and
- ▪ eNiCol Scates.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Clyde Miller Academy – Saturday, February 29
Rebeccah Bennett

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcomes Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Old and stagnant (5) ▪ Under-resourced (4) ▪ Trying / Promise (4) ▪ Struggling (2) ▪ OUR city public schools ▪ Lack of responsibility ▪ Lack of communication ▪ Unique opportunity	▪ Has schools that range from best to needs help	▪ Majority Black students ▪ Adequate educated staff ▪ Safety of staff and students ▪ Resourceful / high leverage ▪ Lack of pay ▪ Accommodating / inclusive

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ More staff diversity and culturally competent teachers ▪ Better trained substitute teachers ▪ Sufficient, highly qualified staff	***Increased Student Support Services & Resources*** ▪ More social services in schools during school hours – trauma supports, safety and security services etc. ▪ More support staff – mental health providers, social workers and counselors, nurses ▪ More financial education planning and higher education planning (college, trade schools, community colleges etc.) ▪ Increased medical supplies and equipment ▪ Sufficient resources for every school
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Racially equitable distribution of resources across all district schools ▪ Cultural competency /diversity training for all staff ▪ More multi-lingual opportunities	***Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships*** ▪ Schools have respectful relationships with parents, involving them in decision-making and training them in advocacy and how to get needed resources ▪ More parent participation and engagement
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Routine field experiences / trips for students ▪ Deepened emphasis on active learning and not just rote learning / homework ▪ Resource rich media centers that expand students' access to information, including libraries and multi-media centers ▪ More technology and all of the training that comes with it	***Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness*** ▪ Growing partnerships between area universities and SLPS schools ▪ More exposure to careers and college, starting in middle school ▪ More partnerships with trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges to maximize students' career options
Strengthened Collaboration with Government ▪ Strong partnership between the Mayor's Office and SLPS ▪ More efforts to get school funding from the city's community and economic development projects	***Miscellaneous*** ▪ Fully shared responsibility with fully shared accountability ▪ A critical mass of advocates fighting for public schools

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Improve Staff & Teacher Quality	▪ Increase pay as a means of attracting and retaining higher quality talent. Currently, District staff get excellent training and then leave SLPS for suburban systems that pay more. ▪ Ensure that all staff and teachers receive cultural competency and diversity training. Many white teachers are working with black children without sufficient understanding and regard for their culture. This disconnect impedes learning.
Priority 2: Be More Student-Centered	▪ Give teachers and principals more latitude in the running of their classrooms and schools. Empower them to center students' needs in their instruction and school climate efforts. Too often, these efforts are limited by rigid structures that do not serve the best interests of students.
Priority 3: Support Parent & Community Engagement	▪ Embrace parents in all of their complexity because they are essential partners in advancing student success. Too often, it feels like building leaders do not want parents in the building. In addition, many families are highly transient, resulting in frequent movement of students among schools. Even with this population, creative efforts must be made to establish meaningful relationships among parents, schools and the community in order to advance what is in the best interest of students.
Priority 4: Adopt A Small School Model	▪ Lower the student-teacher ratio wherever possible. Small schools are better able to respond to the capacities and needs of students. They offer better learning environments and support the development of stronger student and family relationships. Even large schools can be organized around a small school model.
Priority 5: Increase Support Staff & Services	▪ Currently, schools do not have enough counselors, social workers, nurses and other support personnel to help meet students' needs. When these resources are in place and easily accessible, learning is supported and strengthened.
Priority 6: Ensure Racial Equity In Resource Allocations	▪ Some schools in the system have far more resources than others. Schools whose students have the greatest needs often have the least amount of resources to meet these needs. More resources need to be given to these schools.
Priority 7: Strengthen District Marketing	▪ SLPS needs to do a better job of selling the value of the education that it provides, especially to families that are moving to charter schools. More has to be done to promote its brand.
Priority 8: Show More Love	▪ Students need and are looking for love. Love is the key ingredient that they need to learn and succeed in life.
Priority 9: Rethink School Hours	▪ Early start times, especially for teenagers, are not best for learning. Change instructional hours to better align with student learning.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Conditions	▪ This factor is problematic. The District has at times not maintained its buildings as a way of trying to force the closure issue. It has had a practice of neglect.
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Development	▪ Get a clear understanding of the city's plans 5, 10 and 15 years from now. Make decisions that take these factors into consideration. This requires a closer working relationship with city planners and leadership. SLPS's presence is a strong factor in advancing the city's plans.
▪ Safety Infrastructure	▪ Look at crime and safety patterns and structures that surround the schools. The presence of police and fire stations near schools makes these buildings safer places for children and families.
▪ Neighborhood Impact	▪ Consider whether closure further destabilizes already struggling communities, adding to blight, instability and divestment in ways that are very difficult to overcome.
▪ School Utilization for Afterschool Activities	▪ Some schools may be the only places in a neighborhood where after school services and supports are provided. Closing these would present even greater community harm.
▪ Travel Time / Transportation	▪ The District needs to consider the impacts of school closures on student travel times and on its transportation costs. How long will children have to be on buses? How long will it take for children to walk to their nearest school?
▪ Student Safety	▪ Downsizing and consolidation could result in additional safety concerns that increase students' vulnerability.
▪ Keep Sumner Open!	▪ Sumner advocates want the District to keep the school open given its distinguished past and historical significance as the first black high school west of the Mississippi River.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Clyde Miller Academy – Saturday, February 29
Chelsey R. Carter

<u>Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcome Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Hopeful / Trying (4) ▪ Many Challenges / Struggling (3) ▪ Dysfunctional ▪ Obstacles ▪ Innovative ▪ More resources ▪ Change ▪ Concern ▪ Poor oversight ▪ Unprofessional ▪ Longevity ▪ Home ▪ History	▪ Good education ▪ Failing ▪ Inequitable ▪ ▪	▪ Family (2) ▪ Neglected and Victimized ▪ Togetherness ▪ Great Superintendent ▪ Surviving ▪

2. **When you imagine of a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Quality & Caring Staff ▪ A caring principal who understands all factors concerning students and families ➔ Greets families and students everyday ➔ Knows the community ▪ Quality teachers ▪ Qualified staff with an open-door policy ▪ Provide teacher and staff training in emotional intelligence, cultural competence ▪ Show staff and teachers appreciation	*Qualify Support Staff for Students* ▪ Social workers and more therapeutic services ▪ Counselors and ICA's ▪ Subs, custodians, and security that really care about the community ▪ Community volunteers ▪ Develop Go-Fund Me's to support staff in crisis
A Holistic Community Centered System ▪ Community needs/desires/wishes must be at the center of discussions about schools ▪ The school is more than just a building, it's a part of the community ▪ Schools should be connected to businesses	*Student Success* ▪ Success of students in the system looks like students that are academically, socially, emotionally, and physically healthy
Addressing Student Trauma and Mental Health ▪ Adequate counseling per student (not just once a week or when a traumatic event happens, traumatic events happen all the time) ➔ Adequate means actually addressing, pursing, and solving student concerns around mental health and traumatic events ▪ Support students in LIFE	*Creating Equitable Not Equal Schools* ▪ Pad failing schools with more resources ▪ 1 school is not ALL schools, develop more opportunities for schools to define success ▪ Maintain high academic standards by creating multiple pathways of support for students

Question 2 Continued

Updated Resources	Staff Success
▪ Updated books and supplies ▪ Updated technology	▪ Success of staff in the system looks like students that are academically, socially, emotionally, and physically healthy
Quality Academics ▪ Highly rigorous Math and ELA curriculum ▪ More early childhood education interventions	*Parental Involvement* ▪ Reaching out for assistance ▪ Being responsive to school requests/PTA
More Responsive & Professional SLPS Administrative Staff ▪ Responsiveness and collegiality ▪ High level of customer service for stakeholders	*Strategic & Better Use of Financial Resources* ▪ Are we spending money appropriately? ▪ Do we have adequate state funding?

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Recruit and Retain Highly Qualified Staff	▪ Force SLPS administration to get out of the "who you know" model and prioritize staff that are the most qualified to do the job. ➜ Don't hire politically or because of personal relationships—hire people that will deliver the best outcomes. ▪ Offer competitive salary, benefits, and incentives. ▪ Maintain standard HR policies.
Priority 2: Increase Financial Resources	▪ Find more state and federal financial resources.
Priority 3: Improve Transportation	▪ Allocate more money to this issue.
Priority 4: Create More School Choice Options	▪ Allocate more money for parents and students to choose the best options.
Priority 5: Eliminate & Address Racism	▪ You can't think about achievement without addressing racism. ▪ Train people to be conscious about fixing broken systems that are the consequences of racism. ▪ Acknowledging redlining and other inequitable practices that put schools in North St. Louis at a disadvantage. ▪ Focus on equity and not equality.
Priority 6: Trim Financial Costs	▪ Repurpose un-used buildings. ▪ Don't waste funds on teachers that aren't working.
Priority 7: Student Mental Health and Trauma Support	▪ Provide ongoing training for staff and teachers around trauma-informed support for students. ▪ Spend more money on counseling and social work services. ▪ Ensure that support is continuous for students experiencing trauma through organizations like Hopewell and Grace Hill.
Priority 8: Involve Surrounding Community	▪ The community that the school is in must be a part of the school's ecosystem.
Priority 9: Acknowledge Charter Schools as Competitors	▪ NAACP recently said that charter schools are the death of public schools, but STL has yet to acknowledge this. ▪ Charter schools are only in North St. Louis. Why is this?
Priority 10: Overhaul Discipline	▪ Improve parental appearances when children get in trouble – if a parent isn't available develop a "sub-parent" system. ▪ Change suspension policies. ▪ Offer anger management support for students. ▪ Recognize the life of a student before deciding on disciplinary actions.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **General Critique:** Factors Need To Be Weighted	▪ Participants wanted to know which factors gets the most "weight." If a school is to close, is it **mainly** because of an old building or was it capacity and/or test scores too?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance (Disagreement)	▪ Schools should NOT be considered for closing based on performance/test scores. Individual student performance is not a marker of the school but of the system and it's not fair to blame the child for their failure.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance (Agreement)	▪ Often when a school has underperformed for so long that the culture of the school cannot be shifted and because of racism, staff, and systemic issues the school will continue to fail academically regardless.
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Development	▪ Participants believe that when new businesses like NGA come in, SLPS should know how the new business will impact the school and the community's economy.
▪ Equity	▪ Participants want SLPS to consider how this will affect the overall equity of education if a school is closed.
▪ Impact on the Community AND Climate of the Community	▪ A school closing does not just impact students, teachers, and families. It can impact the surrounding community and its social, cultural and economic resources. We have to consider the collective consequences of a school closing.
▪ Strategic Plan Around Closing and Reopening	▪ Participants believe there should be a strategic plan around school closing. Will it happen in 1 year, 5-year, 10 year? And then conversely, there should be a strategic plan in place for reopening/rehabilitating schools.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Miller – Saturday, February 29, 2020
Jessica Perkins

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Under-resourced (4) ▪ Disorganized (2) ▪ Struggling (2) ▪ Shrinking ▪ Understaffed ▪ Obsolete ▪ Inequitable ▪ Directionless ▪ Challenged ▪ Unfavorable ▪ Effective ▪ Our Story	▪ Improving	▪ Passionate ▪ Diverse (2) ▪ Inclusive ▪ Unprofessional (2)

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ All school staff receive competitive compensation and benefits ▪ Teachers and support staff are qualified and certified; and there are no vacancies ▪ Every school has the appropriate supports, especially a FT nurse, social worker, and college counselor (HS) ▪ Staff is appreciated and recognized for efforts	*Educates the Whole Child and His/Her Family* ▪ Support services are available to address the social, emotional, mental and health needs of the student and family ▪ Provides parent education (GED, financial literacy, budgeting, parenting skills and child development) ▪ Only the best is expected from students in academic achievement outcomes, as well as character development
Greater Parental Involvement ▪ Serve as a resource or knowledge base ▪ Models volunteer habit to students ▪ Ensure students are following through at home	*Focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* ▪ Resources are distributed equitably to ensure all students have the best opportunity for success. ▪ All HS have equitable electives (i.e., AP courses, languages) ▪ All students, regardless of ethnicity, are disciplined fairly ▪ Students are exposed to and respect cultural and ethnic differences
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Provide a broad-based innovative curriculum that is rigorous and prepares students for the future, regardless of interest in college or vocational careers ▪ Curriculum is aligned with students' future endeavors ▪ Curriculum is aligned to state standards to ensure post-high school success ▪ Schools have 21st driven technology ▪ All students are exposed to remedial (i.e., in school or afterschool) and/or enrichment options, when possible	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* ▪ Social, emotional, physical health and mental health needs of students and families are met in a respected and non-intrusive manner ▪ All people who interact with children should be trained in trauma informed practices

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness ▪ Growing partnerships between area universities and SLPS schools ▪ Students are exposed to careers and college, beginning in middle school ▪ Maximize students' career options by partnering with trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges 　Maximize students' career options by partnering with trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges	*Safe Environment* ▪ Schools are bully-free (teacher to student, student to student and student to teacher) ▪ Classrooms have proper lighting, heating and A/C
Culture ▪ Respect and appreciation for all, regardless of differences and disagreements ▪ Set and communicate high expectations for principals, teachers, students and families ▪ Ensure everyone shares the vision of success for the school and themselves	*Facility Maintenance and Appearance* ▪ Schools (and surrounding area) are welcoming and clean (esp. bathrooms) ▪ Adequate heating and cooling ▪ ADA compliant 　No peeling paint

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Whole Child Focus	▪ Access all students, especially PK, to understand support needs. ▪ Partner effectively with non-profits to support students' needs (mental health, remedial services, etc.). ▪ Increase electives (languages, AP courses, art, music and vocational training) for HS students. ▪ Allow students to select electives (aligned with their interests) and make them accountable for their learning. ▪ Implement healthy start times for MS and HS students. ▪ Re-evaluate the gifted assessment because it is racist.
Priority 2: Relevant and Challenging Curriculum	▪ Expand curricula to include not only traditional academics, but also significant emphasis on trade skill development and work skills at all levels. ▪ Allow teachers to have input about the curriculum choices for their students. ▪ Provide additional out-of-school opportunities (field trips) so that students can see the application of learning. ▪ Expand tutorial services for any student having difficulty in any subject (from elementary to high school).
Priority 3: Hiring and Retaining Qualified Staff	▪ All school staff receive competitive compensation and benefits. ▪ Establish a pipeline for principal candidacy and support existing principals and teachers in their professional development.
Priority 4: Safe Schools	▪ Implement trauma informed training for all staff interacting with students. ▪ Improve building safety by replacing old windows, removing lead and asbestos and upgrading playgrounds, where needed.
Priority 5: Improve Working Environment	▪ Provide more autonomy to principals for local decision-making. ▪ Minimize micro-managing of teachers and support staff. ▪ Treat educators as professionals.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 6: Full-Time Support Staffing in All Schools	▪ Hire full-time nurses, social workers, counselors at every school. Must do a better job of addressing the human service needs of students and families.
Priority 8: Assessments	▪ Reduce the number of assessments and ensure testing is needed and deliberate; find other ways to assess learning and understanding. ▪ At state level, advocate for less standardized testing (Note: this isn't the only way to establish achievement).
Priority 9: Trauma-Informed Instruction & Support	▪ Understand and respect the living conditions and arrangements of students. ▪ Train staff, teachers and students on trauma, its impacts, interventions and needed supports.
Priority 10: Staff Mental Health	▪ Provide more robust mental health supports for teachers and staff. Both groups are getting burned out and absorb trauma in their jobs. Many are also working two and three jobs to make ends meet.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age and Condition	▪ Also consider history of building in the community and within educational history.
▪ Distribution and Location of All Schools in City of St. Louis	▪ Look at how close a potentially closing school is to charter school, private and/or a parochial option. A charter school can easily draw students away, especially if the public school isn't delivering results.
▪ Diversity	▪ If possible, when consolidating one school with another, it would be great to increase the diversity of the merging school.
▪ Student Safety	▪ Consider how merging MS or HS may lead to increased fighting. This doesn't mean schools shouldn't be merged, it just means students from different schools need to build relationships before school begins.
▪ Travel Time / Transportation	▪ MS and HS students should travel no more than 30 minutes/trip on a bus. At the elementary level, the District should attempt no more than 15 to 20 minutes or ensure neighborhood schools.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Clyde Miller Academy – Saturday, February 29 (Please change this info for future events)
April Warren-Grice

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcomes Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Under-resourced (4) ▪ Needs improvement (3) ▪ Misaligned resources ▪ Help ▪ Sad ▪ Potential ▪ History ▪ Vision ▪ Evolving ▪ Disrepair ▪ Too many schools ▪ Victim ▪ Establishment	▪ Inequitable (3) ▪ Failure (3) ▪ Unrecognized high quality ▪ Poor quality ▪	▪ Underserved ▪ Great students ▪ Capable ▪ Community

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

No Child Left Behind ▪ Giving our kids what they need to succeed ▪ A place where all kids and adults want to go ▪ Schools/staff/culture that inspires curiosity ▪ Helps kids discover what they don't know ▪ Healthy schools ▪ Later starts ▪ Exercise during the day ▪ Teaching soft skills—relationship building, SEL, life skills, etc. ▪ Help students think long-term ▪ Loving our kids	***Vision with Common Language and Equitable Practices in all Buildings in the District*** ▪ Equitable resources and supports across all schools—Social workers, nurses, counselors, programs in ALL schools ▪ Accountability and access to the board
High Quality Faculty ▪ Hiring and keeping the best, passionate, and experienced teachers who use culturally relevant practices and who want to teach in the district. They are provided: ➜ Training and support ➜ Resources ➜ Meaningful professional development ➜ Incentives ➜ Competitive salaries ➜ Respect at all levels	***A Community-School Model That Leverages Community Partnerships*** ▪ Creating a culture that creates and maintains good relationships with the students and communities ▪ Allowing students, parents, and educators to create an event that is family oriented. ▪ Creating a family-school village. ▪ Providing parental support ▪ Filling gaps ▪ Providing experiential learning, fieldtrips, internships, and etc. ▪ Helping students get certifications for job placements

Question 2 Continued

Interactive and Engaged Learning ▪ Through technology and simulators	*Customized Student Learning* ▪ One-on-one planning sessions with students, parents, and teachers to look at assessments to create a plan to raise achievement for students— similar to an IEP conference, but for all students.
Connected & Aligned Administrators at All Levels ▪ Every administrator has input and knows what is going on	

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Policy Advocacy & Change	▪ Lobby the state to address punitive funding leakage tied to desegregation and payment of charter schools. ▪ Funding formula for school is tied to property values. Lobby with the state to look at a different way to fund schools. ▪ Assess the parameters of curriculum development — advance more flexibility for different results. ▪ Explore governing structure. Should it be tied to city governance or something else?
Priority 2: Establish a Culture of Trust, Courage, and Respect	▪ Create transparency. ▪ Share data openly. ▪ Be willing to be vulnerable, even if things don't go as planned. ▪ Work with and for the community in partnership.
Priority 3: Educate the Community (Students, Parents, and Educators) on How the System Works	▪ Understand social and emerging community dynamics. ▪ Consider the city's urban planning and bring leaders together to discuss SLPS's size and locations. Ex: when the feeder schools were removed from Sumner, this added to the low numbers in Sumner High. ▪ Understand the effects of racism and oppression.
Priority 4: Innovative Learning	▪ Use state of the art technology in schools and allow students to learn how to use it for real world applications. ▪ Create opportunities for kids to work in the community to rebuild the community.
Priority 5: Better Internal Systems at District Administrative Level	▪ Make sure systems work and that administrators are competent to run them.
Priority 7: Child Advocacy	▪ Work with people that advocate for students, families, and communities.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Comparisons aren't equitable. You can't compare Metro to Vashon.
▪ Repurpose Buildings	▪ Repurpose buildings and recognize their historical value. Use this as a marketing tool to get federal funding and support.
▪ Future Plans	▪ Some community members are trying to make Sumner a Historical Technological campus.

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ Bus travel Time	▪ With the closure of schools, some children may be on the bus longer. Goal should be the same time or less.
▪ Student Safety	▪ Rivals from different schools might make merging difficult and dangerous. In addition, some students may totally opt out of going to school.
▪ Oppressive Power Structure	▪ We should invest in struggling areas to create a stronger market. Some people and organizations are investing in charter schools and businesses to suppress the community.
▪ Marketing or non-marketing of schools	

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Clyde Miller Academy – Saturday, February 29 (Please change this info for future events)
eNiCoL

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcome Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Lacking resources (3) ▪ Top-heavy *(lots of central office admin; not enough school-based support staff)* ▪ Separate "but" equal ▪ Underrated ▪ Vast ▪ dynamic ▪ Too many schools ▪ Struggling ▪ Fragmented ▪ Evolving ▪ Promising ▪ Help and solutions ▪ Developing	▪ Inequitable	▪ Staff struggling to help ▪ Too few teachers of color ▪ Resilient ▪ Diverse community ▪ Trauma affected students ▪ ▪

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Community ▪ Respect and collaboration ▪ Engagement ▪ Consistent, open communication	*Equity (resources)* ▪ Access to technology ▪ Funding ▪ Advancement placement opportunities
Strong Leadership (Principals and District) ▪ Accountability ▪ Transparency ▪ Courage ▪ Frequent assessment of efforts and adjustment of practices vs. stagnation, implementation & moving on to the next effort	*Diversity in Staff, Students, and Curriculum* ▪ Revisit what "full inclusion" looks and feels like ▪ Choices in schools and classes
Holistic View of Education ▪ Restorative justice ▪ Innovation /forward-thinking /action ▪ **Must answer this question:** How do we address the special/unique needs of students, especially those facing crises?	*Better Focus on Special Education* ▪ Hire more qualified teachers ▪ Education should = academics + behavior management ▪ Implement mandatory re-evaluations by 3rd party

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Generate More Opportunities for Students	▪ Establish relationships with more community partners. ▪ Set up scholarship fund for students to get teaching degrees and return to their neighborhoods to teach (e.g. Ft. Zumwalt). ▪ Implement the "Grow Your Own" program. ▪ Re-Define "Gifted" standards. ▪ Get rid of classical education as the end goal. ▪ Provide more resources for special needs students. ▪ Provide more resources for reading.
Priority 2: Re-Analyze Resource Allocation and Distribution	▪ Ensure highly qualified teachers are assigned across all schools vs. being concentrated at "certain schools." ▪ Analyze where money is coming from. ▪ Senate Bill 570 (tax abatement for corporations) - lobby and vote to have funds redirected to neighborhood schools. ▪ Aim accountability at Mayor and Clayco.
Priority 3: Teacher Retention and Support	▪ Prioritize current teachers vs. focus on net new. ▪ Utilize paraprofessionals. o Establish clear path for career progression

Priority 4: Restorative Justice	▪ Change the narrative:
	   o Critically look at who the student population is.
	   o Provide culturally-responsive training for all teachers and school leaders.
	▪ Assess the state of communities.

Priority 5: Buildings	▪ Stop adding to the deterioration of the community: o e.g. boarding up school windows/doors ▪ Re-purpose buildings.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ The District needs to consider the unequal distribution of resources in schools and in the neighborhoods as this directly impacts academic performance.

▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Condition	▪ "Adams didn't provide a clear plan." The District needs to:
	  ➜ Compare demolition costs to the cost of investing in other high need areas.
	  ➜ Be transparent with data.
	  ➜ What will you do with historical buildings?

▪ Racial Equity and Justice	▪ This is **completely** missing from the discussion and racism is root cause.

▪ Assessment of Schools' Needs	▪ District is looking from the outside in. Instead, it should ask:
	  ➜ What does Sumner need?
	  ➜ Consider student trauma, community trauma.

▪ Community Partners	▪ Students need greater access to jobs. Community partners can help with placements.
▪ Social Education	▪ There's a lack of understanding, a disconnect from teachers and leaders regarding student's and families' lives outside of schools and how this impacts success and overall school engagement.

APPENDIX B:
# VASHON HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

On Tuesday, March 3, 2020, **185 people** attended the second of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **135 (72.9%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With seven of ten attendees (72.9%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was SLPS employees at 47%, followed by other stakeholders at 36%. While the survey didn't ask for a designation when someone answered "other," some respondents volunteered designations, such as interested resident, community member or SLPS alumni.
NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.

STAKEHOLDER TYPE
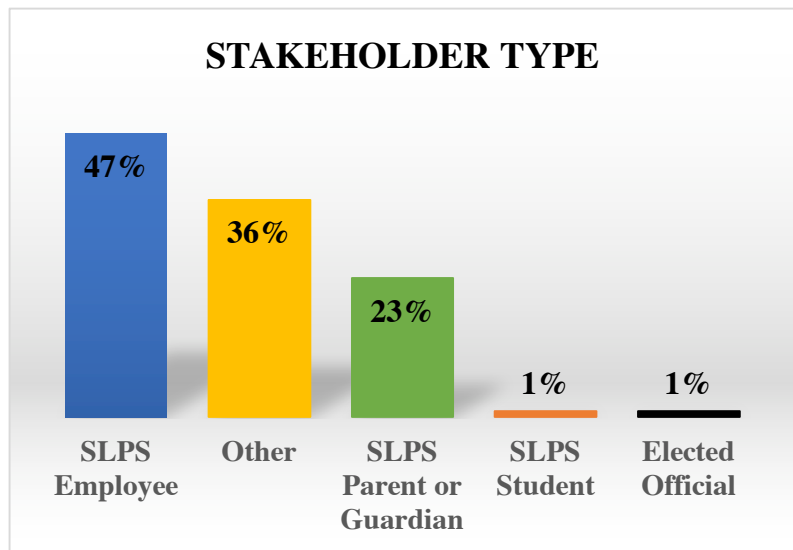
Gender

Nearly seven of ten (68%) respondents identified as female; 30% identified as male; and the remaining 2% did not affiliate with a gender.

Racial Ethnicity

Seven of ten (71%) respondents identified as black; 24% identified as white; 4% identified as either Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian or mixed; and the remaining 1% declined to provide a response.
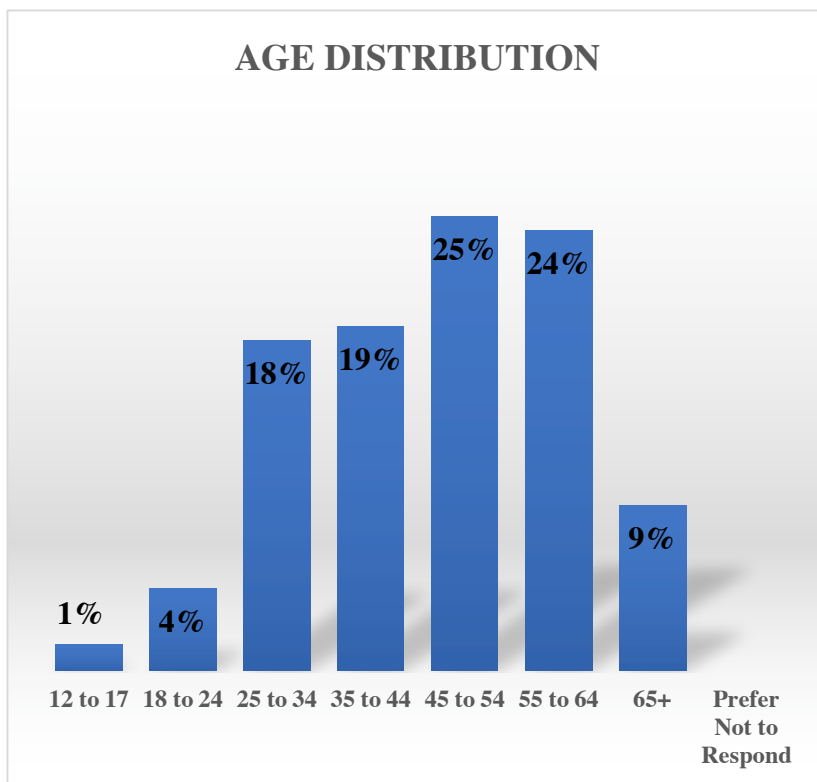
RACIAL ETHNICITY

Age
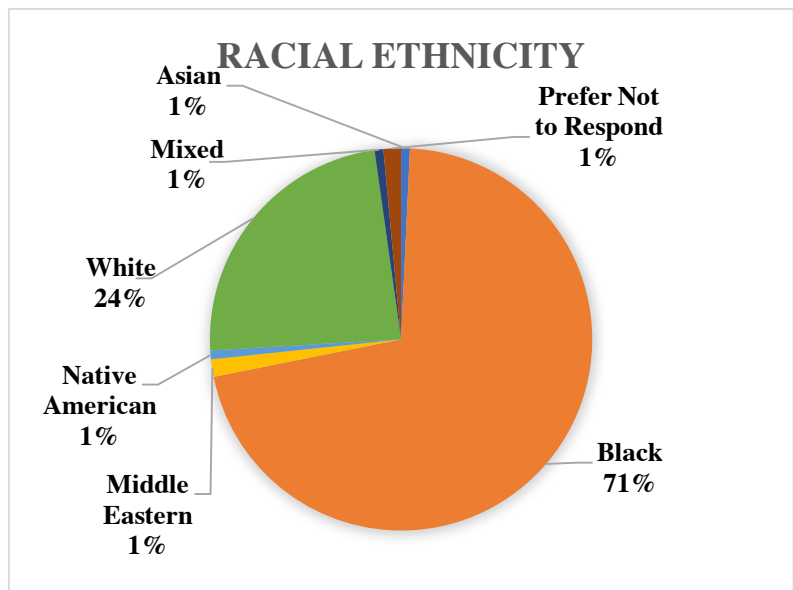
As noted in the chart, five of ten (49%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 to 64 years of age; and roughly one of ten (9%) identified as 65+ years of age.

Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly eight of ten (79%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 21%, the following was reported:

- o Three (2%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Four (3%) had three children enrolled;
- o Ten (7%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Eleven (8%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	Prefer Not to Respond
1%	4%	18%	19%	25%	24%	9%	

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of respondents identifying that school. Parents represented students from 27 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)		Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Adams – 1	▪ Nance – 1	▪ Busch – 1	▪ Collegiate – 1
▪ Dunbar – 2	▪ Pamoja – 1	▪ Carr Lane – 1	▪ McKinley – 2
▪ Gateway – 1	▪ Patrick Henry – 1	▪ Compton-Drew – 1	▪ Metro – 2
▪ Kennard – 1	▪ Peabody – 1	▪ Gateway – 1	▪ Roosevelt – 2
▪ Mallinckrodt – 1	▪ Shenandoah – 1	▪ McKinley – 1	▪ Vashon – 2
▪ Mann – 1	▪ Stix – 1	▪ Pamoja –1	
▪ Mason – 1	▪ Washington – 1	▪ Yeatman – 1	
▪ Meramec – 1			

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Between 85% to 95% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Rebeccah Bennett;
- ▪ Lorren Buck;
- ▪ Chelsey Carter;
- ▪ Jessica Perkins; and
- ▪ April Warren-Grice, Ph.D.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Vashon High School – Tuesday, March 3, 2020
Rebeccah Bennett

<div align="center">**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</div>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Struggling (5) ▪ Under-resourced (4) ▪ Underperforming (4) ▪ Historic / legacy (3) ▪ Dysfunctional / broken (3) ▪ Aspiring / making change (2) ▪ Growth (2) ▪ Disorganized administration / hard to navigate ▪ An oppressed educational system ▪ Lack of family services and mental health supports ▪ Good ▪ Mine and ours ▪ Disconnected ▪ Outdated ▪ Neighborhood schools ▪ Fixed mindset ▪ More ways to learn	▪ Pipeline to prison (2) ▪ Failing the children ▪ Unequal	▪ Impoverished / High Need (2) ▪ Active parents ▪ Better school board ▪ Family ▪ Non-diverse ▪ Underserved ▪ Proud

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ High quality leadership in school buildings and in the system as a whole ▪ Good teachers and staff ▪ Happy educators ▪ Better salaries ▪ Staff safety	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* ▪ Full services and supports for students and families. Ex. Jennings School District (laundry facilities and groceries for families) ▪ More resources ▪ Improved student safety
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ More equitable resources and outcomes. The huge differences in resources for schools within the system are reduced	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Engaged parents
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Better learning and instruction techniques ▪ Curriculum that reflects the students being served. Culturally relevant pedagogy ▪ Technology	*Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness* ▪ Growing partnerships between area universities and SLPS schools ▪ More exposure to careers and college, starting in middle school ▪ More partnerships with trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges to maximize students' career options

Question 2 Continued

Stronger Sense of Community & Accountability - More community accountability and investment - Village mentality - Neighbors going to school together - District honors its commitments and follows through on the promises that it makes ***Miscellaneous*** - Innovation - Healthy start times (children should not have to get on the bus at 5 am to get to schools) - Better board members - Strong community partnerships	***Building on Existing Successes*** - Athletic prowess at Vashon - Self-motivated, student driven environment at Collegiate School of Medicine & Bioscience - Parental engagement at Kennard - Passionate staff and community engagement at Yeatman and Mann - Social and emotional supports at Nahed Chapman

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Family & Home Accountability	- Support parents and families in addressing dysfunction within their homes. Students come to school with lots of challenges, many of which cannot be adequately addressed by the schools alone. - Strengthen partnerships with community organizations that support and resource families in need.
Priority 2: School Culture, Climate & Communication	- Have principals hold staff more fully accountable for creating the best learning environments for students. - Intensify efforts to engage parents and families in addressing disrespectful student behavior and faltering student performance.
Priority 3: Trauma-Informed Instruction & Support	- Train staff, teachers and students on trauma, its impacts, interventions and needed supports. - Ensure that teachers and staff have a better understanding of brain development.
Priority 4: Parent Advocacy, Engagement & Education	- Build stronger parent bases within schools. - Support parents in advocating for their children and in understanding the resources and services that are available to their children and families. - Offer parenting education. - Help parents more quickly and effectively move through the IEP process to get the resources that their children need.
Priority 5: Enhanced Curricula	Expand curricula to include not only traditional academics, but also emphasis on trade skill development and work skills at all levels.
Priority 6: Full-Time Support Staffing in All Schools	Hire full-time nurses, social workers, counselors at every school. The District must do a better job of addressing the human service needs of students and families.
Priority 7: Property Tax Equity / School Finance Reform	The current funding model for schools is racist and classist. Advocate for more equitable funding / school finance reforms.
Priority 8: Better Political & Education Leadership	- Cultivate more educational and political leaders that champion the needs of students and make them priorities. - Elect political leadership that does not de-fund schools through economic development initiatives that reduce the city's tax base. - Community members need to vote the old guard out.
Priority 9: Budget Transparency	Be more transparent in sharing with the community how the District's dollars are being spent.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 10: Staff Mental Health	▪ Provide more robust mental health supports for teachers and staff. Both groups are getting burned out and absorb trauma in their jobs. Many are also working two and three jobs to make ends meet.
Priority 11: Community Partnerships	▪ Augment the District's limited resources by partnering with community organizations that have strong relationships with children, families and schools. Many of these organizations can offer mental health services, cultural supports and academic enrichment that can improve student learning and performance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Performance	▪ This factor is not as straightforward as it seems. What does performance mean, especially for students with IEPs and English Language Learners? ▪ The focus should not only be on academic outcomes and grade level achievement, but also on growth. The District needs to adopt a growth mindset rather than a mastery mindset. ▪ **Dissenting Perspective:** A mastery mindset is what needs to be the standard. It is not okay to leave children behind. This is how the system got to be in the shape that it is currently in.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ The District needs to maintain fidelity to feeder patterns so that it does not destabilize strong schools. Vashon used to be at full capacity when it had feeder middle and elementary schools. The middle schools no longer exist and now Vashon has 500 fewer students than it used to have. ▪ Can vibrant magnet schools be relocated into neighborhood schools to gird them up? ▪ How can existing neighborhood schools be built up to be even more attractive to families?
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Development	▪ Developers have wreaked havoc on North St. Louis and cannot be trusted.
▪ Intersectionality	▪ All of the District's criteria have impacts on each other. These factors cannot be looked at in a vacuum given their overlap.
▪ Student Safety	▪ How will consolidating schools impact student safety, especially since students from different neighborhoods often experience conflict with one another?
▪ Travel Time / Transportation	▪ Students should not have to catch buses at super early times of day for long rides to school. The District needs to reinforce its commitment to neighborhood schools. This is what is best for children and for the neighborhood / village.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Obtain Proposals for Closing Buildings:** Before the District closes a school, it must have development proposals in hand for what will be done with its building so that the property does not lie vacant and become a neighborhood liability. Secure proposals for alternative uses for schools as early as possible.	▪ **Work with The City on Economic Development:** Proactively work with the city on community and economic development initiatives that build up school pipelines and reinforce feeder patterns.

Question 5 Continued

▪ **Repurpose Buildings:** Consider different ways to repurpose existing facilities, instead of closing them. Consider:
   ➔ Change school start times to appeal to older learners
   ➔ Offer parent education
	▪ **Consider Parents' & Families' Needs:** When making school closure and consolidation decisions, be sure to give parents and families ample consideration around:
	   ➔ Convenience
	   ➔ Transportation
	   ➔ Opportunities to familiarize themselves with the new schools that their children will be attending

▪ **Assess Impacts on Staffing & Hiring:** How will closure and consolidation impact staffing and hiring decisions?	▪ If the District does not do this, it will lose even more families as they consider other education options.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Vashon High School – Tuesday, March 3, 2020
Lorren Buck

Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Struggling (4) ▪ History (4) ▪ Compliance oriented ▪ Disappointing ▪ Once highly respected ▪ Top heavy ▪ Under attack ▪ Divided ▪ Understaffed ▪ Still viable / hopeful (2) ▪ Transformation ▪ Not first choice ▪ It doesn't have to be this way ▪ Fair ▪ Tech challenged ▪ Growth	▪ Failing our children (3) ▪ Inequitable access ▪ Academic improvement ▪ Excellence goals	▪ Parental involvement ▪ Anti-black ▪ Colorful

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ Flexibility for teachers to engage with students before and after school to provide academic support ▪ Committed and quality teachers ▪ Employee satisfaction ▪ Competitive salaries ▪ Rigorous professional development: culturally relevant pedagogy and teacher support ▪ Increased funding, budget transparency ▪ Fully staffed ▪ Accountability on all levels (students, staff, teachers, administrators, superintendent)	***Increased Student Support Services & Resources*** ▪ Easy system navigation (resourced and resourceful) ▪ Before and after school care ▪ Vast array of extracurricular activities ▪ Wrap around services
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Culture of tolerance championed by staff ▪ Equitable facilities	***Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships*** ▪ Parent engagement
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Student satisfaction ▪ Modern technology ▪ Small class sizes	***Student Performance / Educational Outcomes*** ▪ Student focus beyond data driven metrics ▪ High student attendance

Question 2 Continued

Stronger Community Connections & Engagement	Heightened Safety
▪ Community engagement	▪ Healthy food options and start time ▪ Emotional and physical safety in school and on bus ▪ More social workers less public safety ▪ Continuity: conscious discipline verses suspension

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Teacher & Staff Capacity, Development & Resourcing	▪ Offer competitive salaries ▪ Enhance professional development. ▪ Do a better job of retaining staff. ▪ Provide clear, consistent and transparent communications.
Priority 2: Increased Financing	▪ Reallocate resources – the district is too top heavy (perception that 30% of SLPS' budget is salaries for top administrators). The District needs a more accountable administration. ▪ Renegotiate desegregation contract to bring student back to the city who are currently in county districts. ▪ Work with city to propose a tax increase to raise money.
Priority 3: Build Students' Desire to Learn	▪ Make the culture/school climate emotionally and physically safe.
Priority 4: Innovative & Specialized Schools	▪ Move magnet schools/programs from South City to North City.
Priority 5: Enhanced Curricula	▪ Ensure that teachers learn and practice culturally relevant pedagogy.
Priority 6: Community Involvement	▪ Rally SLPS alumni support to maintain the legacy of schools that might be closed. ▪ Hire quality teachers and staff who are invested in the community.
Priority 7: Stronger Academic Preparation	▪ Meet students' individual needs.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Why close a school based on low academic achievement?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Repurpose buildings rather than close them. Engage in community partnerships as support. Sub-lease buildings. ▪ What happens to a neighborhood with existing vacant buildings that ends up with additional vacancies due to school closures? Vacant buildings pose a safety issue.
▪ Travel Time	▪ Establish a maximum radius for students to travel between home and school to limit the travel time from home to school.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** Conduct trainings/forums to prepare the community for closure.	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** What is being done with current school buildings that are unoccupied and previously closed?
▪ **Maximize Student Options:** Give students choices about which schools they will attend.	▪ **Maintain Vacant Buildings or Demolish Them:** The District should maintain responsibility for closed schools.
▪ **Aggressively Advertise Available School Properties:** Heavily publicize the availability of school properties so that they are less likely to become vacant and abandoned.	▪ **Do Not Close Schools:** Find other ways to improve the District.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Vashon Highschool – Tuesday, March 3rd (Please change this info for future events)
Chelsey Carter

Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcome Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Struggling (3) ▪ Lacking resources (2) ▪ Slowly Improving ▪ Unsupported ▪ What Happened? ▪ Outdated ▪ Lack of Accountability ▪ Unorganized ▪ Disabled	▪ Disappointing (3) ▪ Underperforming (2) ▪ Better Curriculum ▪ Purposefully failing ▪	▪ Poor ▪ Students ▪ Kids ▪ Black vs. White ▪ Staff ▪ Former Educator ▪ Sad

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Cost & Tuition ▪ If you want a quality school, then you will have to pay for it in St. Louis ▪ Privilege means that if you are more affluent, then you have better schools	*Quality of Schools* ▪ Low student to teacher ratio ▪ More social supports – more special education, social workers, and support for the demographics of each school ▪ High student test scores ▪ Meet educational goals ▪ Make sure schools aren't "All Black"— ensure diverse demographics
Equitable Distribution of Resources ▪ Ex: A school like Sumner needs more "Love" aka resources to perform as well as a school like Gateway ▪ Equity does not mean equal	*Students Excited About Learning & School* ▪ Engaging lessons and teachers ▪ Extracurricular activities ▪ School spirit ▪ Positive attitude of administration and teachers ▪ Holistic view of students as people, citizens, and students
Innovative Learning ▪ Allow teachers to be innovative and creative in their lesson plans and curriculum design ▪ Access to technology ▪ Access to updated books and supplies ▪ Less restrictions on teacher engagement. Let teachers be creative	*Find and Retain Excellent Teachers* ▪ Teachers that care and go the extra mile ▪ Teachers that understand that every student can't be taught the exact same way ▪ Creating a culture where teachers feel valued as stakeholders and experts in their field ▪ Competitive salaries and benefits
Parent Involvement ▪ High level of parent engagement ▪ High parent to staff ratio ▪ Parents as active stakeholders ▪ Parent involvement in PTO, sports, volunteering	

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Hiring and Retaining Good Teachers	▪ Provide competitive salary and benefits. ▪ Acknowledge that most teachers currently work two jobs and that there are many vacancies to date.
Priority 2: Revamp Elementary School & Overall Curriculum	▪ Ensure small class sizes. ▪ Get back to basics by emphasizing the fundamentals of reading, handwriting, grammar, and math. ▪ Place a reading specialist in every school. ▪ Provide reading Interventions for younger children.
Priority 3: Reevaluate Current System	▪ Complete a SWOT analysis to determine current status. ▪ Figure out where the money is currently going; how it's being spent and places to save money.
Priority 4: Care for the WHOLE Student	▪ Make sure that all students have housing, food, healthcare, and are sleeping.
Priority 5: Develop Partnerships with Local Business	▪ Get money and mentorship from local businesses that want to "adopt" a school and support students' success.
Priority 6: Get Politicians Involved	▪ Get local, state, and federal politicians involved in supporting SLPS and if they don't provide support, then kick them out of office.
Priority 7: Reconsider School Start Times	▪ School start times don't accommodate the schedules of students in the most need. If a student goes to sleep at 11pm, it's not realistic to expect them to be attentive and at school at 7am. ▪ Reconsider best learning times for students.
Priority 8: Effective Professional Development for Teachers and Staff	▪ Offer teacher training on instruction, equity/diversity, trauma, cultural competency. ▪ If teachers don't have adequate training, then they can't function to their highest potential in the classroom. ▪ Train elementary, middle, and high school teachers together so that there is more continuity between the grades as students matriculate through each school-level.
Priority 9: Hire Social Workers and Counselors	▪ Hire social workers and counselors that are able to work on trauma and behavioral issues. ▪ Reevaluate the current role of the school counselors who gets caught doing a lot of administrative work etc. ▪ These individuals should be available and on-call for teachers.
Priority 10: Assign Teachers/Staff to School Based on Need	▪ Assign more teachers/staff based on school need not school/community politics.
Priority 11: Hire More Black Male Teachers	▪ Actively pursue the hiring and recruitment of Black male teachers across all school-levels.
Priority 12: Bring Back the ARTS	▪ Make sure that all schools have music, choir, band, and fine arts classes. ▪ These offerings should not just be siloed at "certain" or "special" schools. ▪ Provide transportation so students can get to and from activities.
Priority 13: Involve the Entire Community	▪ The community that the school is in must be a part of the school's ecosystem. ▪ Recruit parent volunteers at school events. ▪ Use retired teachers and staff for advice, support, and expertise.
Priority 14: Revaluate $28 million Allotted for Transportation	▪ Reconsider how this money is being used. ▪ Is it being fairly distributed? ▪ Is it actually providing improved transportation?

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 15: Improve Curriculum	▪ Current curriculum is very white centered and must reflect a more culturally responsive approach to education. ▪ Current curriculum Is not appropriate for every child. ▪ Make the curriculum more highly engaging. ▪ New curricula need to consider non-traditional jobs for students with other talents. ▪ Consider what jobs are needed in the surrounding community and train students for those non-traditional (read: not just college) options for employment.
Priory 16: High Quality Leaders	▪ SLPS needs more welcoming and team focused leaders at the top.
Priority 17: Refocus on Job	▪ Create a realistic pipeline of opportunities for students to find real jobs that don't all require a college degree. ▪ Consider what jobs are needed in the surrounding community and train students for those non-traditional (read: not just college) options for employment. ▪ Offer more trade options to students. ▪ Consider partnerships with Ranken, Cortex, Etc.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
Existing Factor: Building Age & Condition Should Be a Factor	▪ Buildings cost a lot of money to maintain and fix, especially very old ones.
Existing Factor: Building Age & Condition Should NOT Be a Factor	▪ Building cost should not be a factor because Charter Schools are moving in to old SLPS buildings and rehabbing them. So why can't SLPS? ▪ Also, where does the newly saved money actually go after a school closes for this reason? ▪ Demolishing old buildings literally destroys historic buildings in these communities and is a catalyst of decline. ▪ What is SLPS's responsibility for the vacant building when it closes?
Existing Factor: Capacity Should NOT Be a Factor	▪ Students deserve smaller class sizes anyway. ▪ Even if capacity is low in the school, classes can still be overcrowded.
Existing Factor: Feeder Patterns Should NOT Be a Factor	▪ Feeder patterns should not be a factor because some zip codes no longer have feeder schools to even go to. So, this factor isn't a fair factor to consider.
Existing Factor: Performance Should NOT Be a Factor	▪ Performance is not a student's fault and students shouldn't be held accountable by closing the school.
Transportation Costs	▪ How much does it cost now to bus students to schools further from their homes?
Ramifications of School Closing on the Community	▪ School closings have deleterious effects on the greater community so an analysis should be conducted to determine impact.
Involve Local Businesses	▪ Involve local businesses in building management and rehab when SLPS can't do it any longer. ▪ Train students on remodeling as a trade and keep buildings to teach students. ▪ Get local business to adopt schools. ▪ People have been trying to do this for decades, but SLPS is hard to connect with and so SLPS needs to be more responsive to local businesses wanting to engage.

5. What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?

Actions Steps
1. Don't close schools because it destroys the fabric of the community.
2. Everything should be done to protect students. It's not the student' fault the system is broken.
3. Tell the community stakeholders where the money that is now being "saved" is going.
4. Put newly saved money back into the community where the school closed.
5. Fix the reasons why the school closed in the first place (capacity, performance, feeder patterns, building age/condition economic development, etc.).
6. Be transparent about the reasons surrounding school closure and about where money will now go.
7. Consider the community directly impacted by school closing.
8. Give community/parents suggestions on where to send their students.
9. Hand over failed school buildings to grassroots and community organizers.
10. Create more "community based'' schools (schools not funded by SLPS or state).
11. Consider a redevelopment plan for schools the District closes.
12. District Transparency- Will a new school open? Would a co-teaching model help support students better? Will there be new economic patterns when NGA comes?

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Vashon – Tuesday, March 3, 2020
Jessica Perkins

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Struggling (4) ▪ Needs restructuring / reorganization (4) ▪ Resource drain (2) ▪ Changing ▪ Responsive ▪ Excellent ▪ Broken ▪ Strong ▪ Historic ▪ Disorganized ▪ Declining enrollment ▪ Hopeless ▪ Depressing ▪ Unfair ▪ Lacks supports ▪ A mess ▪ Anti-tech	▪ Failed children (2) ▪ Needs improvement ▪ Inequitable ▪	▪ Community-driven ▪ Family-oriented ▪ Understaffed ▪ Unified ▪ Caring ▪ Respect diversity

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Graduates Prepared for Life After SLPS ▪ All students are being challenged, regardless of ability ▪ More than proficiency in math and reading ▪ Children are expected to achieve excellence, not mediocrity ▪ Students have a variety of classes (art, music, languages) to choose from ▪ Trade education is available to those who want to work in those areas ▪ Students have life skills (money management, tax preparation, FAFSA completion) ▪ Curriculum is aligned with students' future endeavors ▪ Better learning and instruction techniques	***Quality Afterschool (and Before School) Program*** ▪ Programs meets the needs of students with either remedial or enrichment work ▪ Hours are flexible for parents who work late
	Greater Parental Involvement ▪ Ensure students are following through at home ▪ Assist teachers in classroom and school overall ▪ Demonstrate to students the value of giving back ▪ Parents have appropriate skills by attending classes
	Equitable ▪ All students have the same opportunities and resources are distributed in an equitable manner.
All Staff Interacting with Students & Parents are Engaging ▪ Everyone in the building is invested in the child ▪ School has a caring and welcoming atmosphere ▪ Parents and teachers work together ▪ Team teaching is the norm and demonstrates to students the value of working together ▪ Everyone exhibits pride in their school and the District	***Current Technology*** ▪ Students need to be equipped for the future ▪ All students have a Chrome Book with the appropriate software for their level of learning ▪ Educators are proficient in software and understand the value of technology Smart boards are up-to-date and working

Question 2 Continued

Faculty & Staff	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources*
▪ All school staff receive competitive compensation and benefits ▪ Teachers are aware of and have access to professional development opportunities, which are financially supported by District ▪ Trained in trauma informed practices	▪ Social, emotional and mental needs of students and families are met in a respected and non-intrusive manner ▪ All people who interact with children should be trained in trauma informed practices

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Principal and Educator Quality and Support	▪ Increase compensation and benefits to ensure staff retention. ▪ Provide and reimburse educators for professional development. ▪ Hire more full time, certified and qualified principals, teachers, teacher's assistants and support staff (college counselors, social workers, nurses).
Priority 2: Enhanced Curricula	▪ Ensure all curriculum (by grade level and subject) is culturally relevant to improve student engagement. ▪ Provide education options for students who have no desire to attend college (i.e., trade training). ▪ Ensure students leave with life skills training (e.g., financial literacy). ▪ Expose MS and HS to a variety of career options and the requirements for those options. ▪ Expose students to other ethnicities and cultures; the work environment will require them to work with others and they need to be exposed early and frequently. ▪ "Track" students and make sure all are being challenged appropriately. ▪ Customize curriculum for each student (know their strengths and weaknesses). ▪ Focus on 21st century skills.
Priority 3: Enhanced Curricula (High School Specific)	▪ Expand electives, especially in languages, career options and trades. ▪ Expand ACT Prep and AP course options for all students. ▪ Ensure students have life skills training (i.e., financial literacy).
Priority 4: Parent & Family Involvement and Support	▪ Know who you are serving and if that population needs washer/dryers and a food bank at the school, then install them. ▪ Expand afterschool hours/programs for parents employed on second shift (Note: A school, not sure which one, provides care until 10 pm). ▪ Provide more parent education so parents understand how they can support students academically.
Priority 5: Facility Maintenance & Upkeep	▪ Invest in schools and ensure buildings are clean, safe and ADA compliant. ▪ Upgrade playground equipment and maintain on a regular basis.
Priority 5: Classroom Management	▪ Address poor student behavior quickly and consistently (not all students are treated the same). ▪ Implement smaller class sizes. ▪ Recognize mental health disabilities early and provide appropriate support to students, as well as teacher.
Priority 6: Community Partnerships	▪ Assess resources needed by each student and collectively for that school; then support school leadership in cultivating partner relationships and services. ▪ Is it feasible to partner with other districts and charter schools? May be SLPS can share resources with them.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 7: Transportation	▪ Assess current transportation efficiencies (too many partially filled buses). ▪ Eliminate the three-tier busing schedule.
Priority 8: Staff Mental Health	▪ Provide more robust mental health supports for teachers and staff. Both groups are getting burned out and absorb trauma in their jobs. Many are also working two and three jobs to make ends meet.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Don't just use student performance, but look at other assessments, such as STAR. ▪ What happens with schools having a high ELL or special education population?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age and Condition	▪ When possible, look at "fair" buildings and develop a renovation budget for them. ▪ Could a closed building be a District trade project? Students could renovate the building. Once completed, the building could be used for afterschool programs, GED classes, community meeting place, etc.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ Important, but special programs must be considered.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ True feeder patterns no longer exist with the District being based on choice. ▪ In right-sizing, the District really needs to look at re-creating feeder patterns, especially from elementary to middle school. This will also help to stabilize some neighborhoods because families may move to the area to limit bus travel. ▪ Look at opening a magnet school in the area to draw students back.
▪ Economic Impact	▪ Each school being considered for closure should have an EIS (economic impact study) conducted to determine how that closure could impact crime, human trafficking, property values, and taxes; also look at the number of vacant buildings already surrounding the school (a possible reason for closing).
▪ Student Safety	▪ Consider how merging MS or HS may lead to increased fighting. This doesn't mean schools shouldn't be merged, it just means students from different schools need to build relationships before school begins.
▪ School Specialty	▪ Consider school's special niche in the system… who is it serving and how? Is this unique to the District? If so, don't close, but renovate.
▪ Travel Time / Transportation	▪ MS and HS students should travel no more than 30 minutes/trip on a bus. At the elementary level, the District should attempt no more than 15 to 20 minutes or ensure neighborhood schools. ▪ Why can't Metro be used to transport students?
▪ School History & Legacy	▪ Find a way to respect the past while embracing how the neighborhood is impacted by a school closing.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

Prepare for Transition
▪ Start by having conversations early and often with school staff, families and students. Complete a timeline and ensure all involved have time to prepare.
▪ Ensure the smoothest transition possible by having pre-school visits with students and potential teachers and support staff.
Respect School Connections for Rising 9th, 11th and 12th
▪ If a HS is slated for closing, if possible let the juniors and seniors finish their time at the school; and don't send rising 9th graders to a HS slated for closure.
Preserve History
▪ Preserve the history and legacy of closed schools, preferably with a museum at the District office or at the History Museum.
Repurpose the Building
▪ Consider other ways to repurpose the building, especially if it is in "fair" condition. Solicit community partners, especially those who could provide services to the school.
▪ Form a think tank of parents and partners to think of afterschool/weekend programming at the closed school.
Allocate Resources Fairly & Equitably
▪ When closing a school, do not pool human and financial resources. Reassign those resources to the children going to the new school. The resources should follow the student. We don't want to see a child getting fewer resources.
▪ Show parents how resources of closed schools are being allocated.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Vashon High School – Tuesday, March 3, 2020
April Warren-Grice

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Struggling (4) ▪ Bureaucratic / large (3) ▪ Inadequate ▪ Plenty of opportunity ▪ Unsupportive ▪ Growth pains ▪ Dysfunctional ▪ Learning institution ▪ Untapped resources ▪ Gave me a chance! ▪ Disgrace ▪ Data driven ▪ Disorganized ▪ Inefficient ▪ Don't know	▪ Failure (2) ▪ Underperforming but improving ▪ Poor education ▪ Inequitable ▪ Good for the children ▪ Behind	▪ Diverse (2) ▪ Determined (2) ▪ Community connected (2) ▪ Behavior challenges ▪ Skilled ▪ Not appreciated ▪ Stable communities ▪ Grit ▪ Disturbed

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ Believes in students ▪ Teaches life and 21st century skills (ex: interest rates) ▪ Real world and relevant content ▪ They go the extra mile for students ▪ Teach from the heart and soul. Not just about salary ▪ Staff development is effective and up to date, relevant, and addresses current issues related to student needs ▪ Supportive staff ▪ Competitive salary ▪ Mental health support for staff and for students and families ▪ Fully staffed ▪ Certified teachers	*Miscellaneous* ▪ Administration is rated based on feedback ▪ Intentional long-term stability plan ▪ Facilities that work consistently ▪ Every decision is based on what's best for students ▪ Adequate funding for building maintenance and whatever it takes to keep schools going ▪ Marketing illustrates what's good in the schools
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in ALL schools ▪ All schools have equitable resources—nurses, counselors, social workers, mental health workers, programs ▪ Uniform school policies across district at all schools ▪ Data driven and sound	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Engaged parents ▪ Opportunity and partnerships for business exploration ▪ Parents supporting the schools and schools supporting the parents

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	*Stronger Sense of Community & Accountability*
▪ Student centered ▪ Students performing at grade level ▪ Help students with homework at home and school ▪ Curriculum that reflects the students being served. Culturally relevant pedagogy ▪ Technology ▪ Teach economic education and entrepreneurship ▪ Teach students the truth—Black history, about the effects of racism and how it works	▪ Community ▪ Neighborhood schools ▪ Voter participation – helping the community understand issues on the ballot and issues being decided on by the board
Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness	
▪ More trade opportunities ▪ Higher graduation rate and entrance into trade/college/next steps	

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Staffing and retaining quality educators	▪ Offer competitive salaries and equity in pay ▪ Provide teacher Support ▪ Diversity education for staff—cultural, historical, racially, etc. ▪ Use money from bussing to go to teacher pay. ▪ Weed out teachers who are not for our kids. ▪ Restore teacher authority. ▪ Provide support to meet students and families where they are. ▪ Celebrate teachers and have staff appreciation incentives.
Priority 2: Community Engagement	▪ Ensure ongoing community engagement for families, staff, and students. ▪ Give schools—students, staff, parents, and communities the opportunity to design schools that kids and adults want to be at and need. ▪ Expand community partners to supplement lack of funding, resources, and learning opportunities. ▪ Celebrate successes.
Priority 3: Equity	▪ Identify gaps between schools to redistribute resources and supports so all kids can be on an equal playing field. ▪ Expand programs and fully staff them so that they work. ▪ Increase adequate mental health staff—nurses, social workers, counselors, and etc. for students, staff, parents, and community. ▪ Offer more alternatives to suspension. ▪ Provide extra tutors that meet kids and families where they are. ▪ Replicate good programs across the district. ▪
Priority 4: Address Racism	▪ Address racism, racist beliefs, behaviors, policies, and practices—historical and current and it's influences.
Priority 5: Reachable and Responsive Superintendent	▪ Have the superintendent become more reachable and responsive.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Performance	▪ How is performance assessed for students with IEPs, English Language Learners, and those new to the district and at different schools? ▪ The focus should not only be on academic outcomes and grade level achievement, but also on growth.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ The District needs to maintain fidelity to feeder patterns so that it does not destabilize strong schools.
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Development	▪ Developers have wreaked havoc on North St. Louis and cannot be trusted.
▪ *Existing Factor:* Capacity	▪ Use an outside attendance audit to ensure enrollment and capacity accuracy. They current system is not reliable.
▪ Safety	▪ Where will students go if they close them? Bus routes and long rides make some students choose other options besides schools.
▪ Community Sustainability	▪ How are the schools tied to the sustainability of communities and the domino effect once a school is taken from the community? Families may only have access to the resources provided by the school, such as washers and dryers. Take away the resource and parental and community engagement goes even lower. ▪ Getting rid of the schools sends the message that "we want you to live here, but not go to school here." ▪ Parents also need quick access to their children.
▪ Historical Value	▪ See the bigger picture and the erasure of historically Black landmarks and communities.
▪ Cost	▪ How much will it cost to tear down and rebuild? What will it cost to bus students to different schools?

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Establish a Long-Term Plan:** Provide a long-term plan for the next 10 years and provide the resources for changes.	▪ **Be Transparent:** After the announcement has been made, meet with affected students, parents, communities, and all stakeholders to explain the rationale and to reassure that everything was done to try and keep buildings open. Provide a transparent list of all the efforts to keep buildings open.
▪ **Conduct an Environmental Scan:** Perform an environmental scan for repurposing buildings that can be used to benefit the community and not developers.	▪ **Give Plenty of Notice:** Provide advance notice before any school is closed to give families time to consider all avenues
▪ **Seek Community Support:** For the people in the community, continue to the back to school programs, dinners, Thanksgiving turkey handouts, dental and medical services etc.	▪ **Ensure A Transition Year:** Allow a transition year to get all steps and resources in place.

APPENDIX C:
METRO ACADEMIC & CLASSICAL
HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020

St. Louis Public Schools
Community Visioning Workshop Demographic Overview
Workshop #3 – Metro High School
Wednesday, March 4, 2020

On Wednesday, March 4, 2020, **110 people** attended the third of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **110 (68.1%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With nearly seven of ten attendees (68.1%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was SLPS employees at 48%, followed by parents at 28%.

While the survey didn't ask for a designation when someone answered "other," some respondents volunteered designations, such as interested resident, community member or SLPS alumni.
NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.
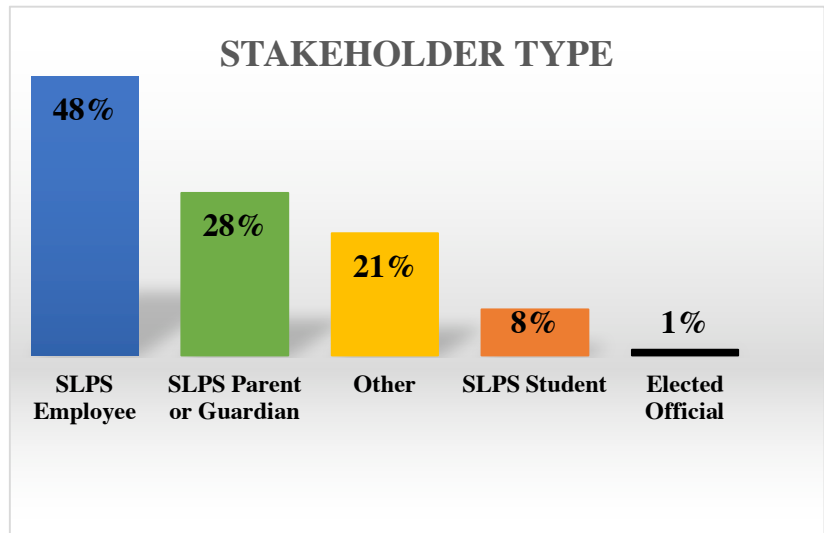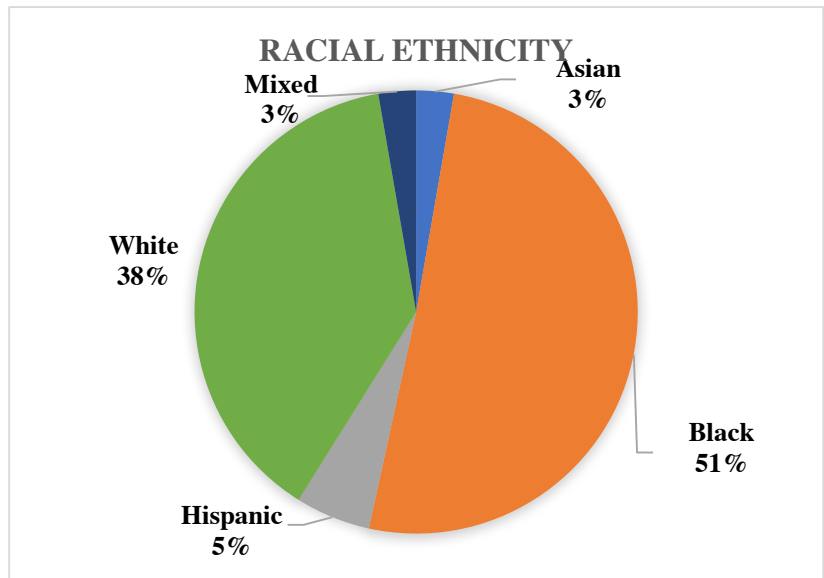
Gender

Nearly eight of ten (77%) respondents identified as female; and 23% identified as male.

Racial Ethnicity

Five of ten (51%) respondents identified as black; 38% identified as white; and 11% identified as either Hispanic, Middle Eastern, or Asian.

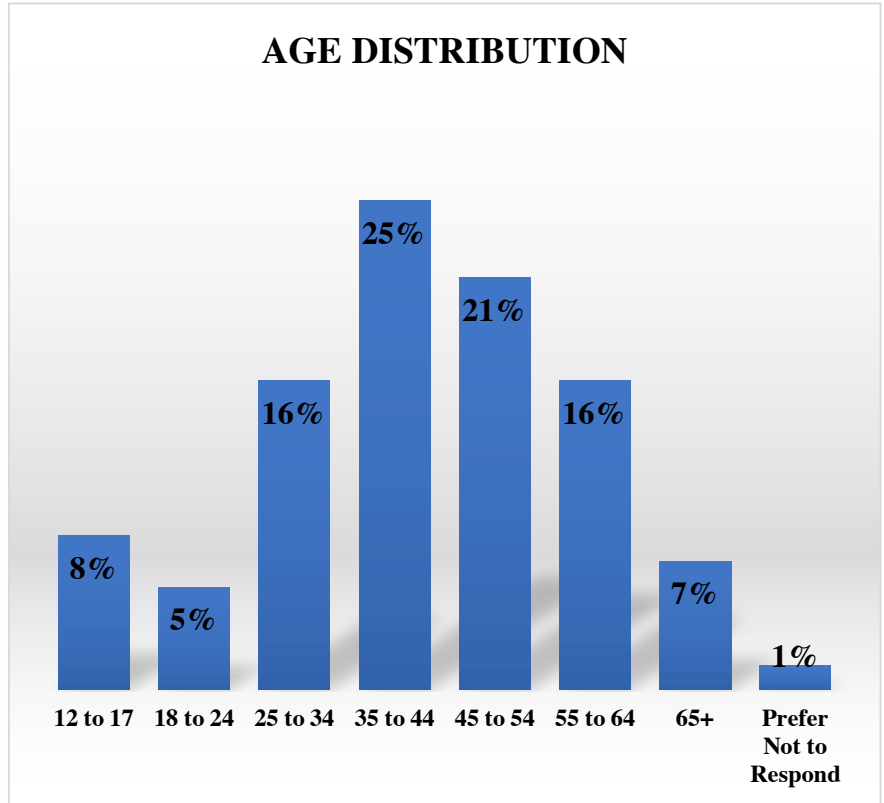
STAKEHOLDER TYPE

RACIAL ETHNICITY

Age

As noted in the chart, almost five of ten (46%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 to 64 years of age; and roughly one of ten (7%) identified as 65+ years of age.

Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly seven of ten (67%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 33%, the following was reported:

- o One (1%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Three (4%) had three children enrolled;
- o Eleven (15%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Ten (13%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Range	Percentage
12 to 17	8%
18 to 24	5%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	25%
45 to 54	21%
55 to 64	16%
65+	7%
Prefer Not to Respond	1%

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of respondents identifying that school. Parents represented students from 13 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)	Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Dewey – 1 ▪ Herzog – 1 ▪ Hodges – 2 ▪ Kennard – 1 ▪ Mallinckrodt – 3 ▪ Wilkinson– 2	▪ Busch – 1 ▪ Compton-Drew – 1 ▪ McKinley – 6	▪ Collegiate – 1 ▪ McKinley – 3 ▪ Metro – 11 ▪ Northwest – 1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Between 85% to 90% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Rebeccah Bennett;
- ▪ Lorren Buck;
- ▪ Natalie Parks, Ph.D.
- ▪ Jessica Perkins; and
- ▪ ēNiCōl Scates.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Metro High School – Tuesday, March 4, 2020
Rebeccah Bennett

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS

▪ Struggling (4)
  → Challenged
  → On life support
▪ Under-resourced / underfunded (3)
▪ Great potential / trying (3)
▪ History
▪ Not a first choice any more
▪ Achieving
▪ Awesome
▪ Messy / unorganized
▪ Not ready
▪ Lack of communication
▪ Navigating changing student needs
▪ Chaotic
	▪ Improving (2)
	▪ Disappointing
	▪ Behind
		▪ Diversity (4)
		▪ Over-populated (2)
		▪ Shrinking student population
		▪ Devoted
		▪ Ghetto
		▪ Highly educated professionals
		▪ Cultured

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ Highly educated and qualified teachers
▪ Culturally competent and trauma-informed teachers who understand their students' backgrounds, are aware of their needs and know how to respond
▪ Teachers and staff who set excellence as the standard, as the norm
▪ Competitive, performance based compensation for all staff
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Fully staffed student support services
	▪ More coordinated social services so that students get the care they need while in school
	  → Crisis care
	  → Medical support
	  → College counseling

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Testing bias is addressed and minimized ▪ Equitable school resourcing. All students and schools have resources that support excellence and achievement. Schools don't have to be magnet schools in order to get the resources that they need and deserve	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Great communication between parents and staff ▪ High family involvement. Parents participate in PTOs, at programs, in school decision-making and generally are made to feel like a part of the school family ▪ More trained, family / community specialists to support parents and families ▪ Family involvement is contracted ▪ Family involvement is NOT contracted, but is encouraged and supported

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	Student Performance / Educational Outcomes
• Extracurricular activities from elementary through high school • Non-conventional learning and teaching practices • More customized instruction to meet the different learning needs of student • Students who strive to achieve excellence • Growth mindset in classrooms and schools. Students and teachers push past challenges and exhibit greater resilience • Smaller student / teacher ratios, following DESE standards. Classroom staffing at the minimum and not at the maximum • One-to-one technology ratio. Every student has access to computer and internet technology • Emphasis on life skills beyond reading, writing and arithmetic	• High student performance • Equitable outcomes – students' backgrounds do not determine their performance and graduation Every year, every student improves in ELA and math
Stronger Community Connections & Engagement • Sincere buy-in from community • More champions for the District	**Heightened Safety** • Safe environment for students → No bullying → Minimized fighting and arguing → Better communication between and among parties

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Teacher & Staff Capacity, Development & Resourcing	• Eliminate staff vacancies. • Provide high quality professional development and training to all staff. • Ensure staff have mentors, coaches and growth accountability partners. • Invest in high quality curricula and equipment that enhance instruction and learning.
Priority 2: Increased Financing	• Assess how dollars are currently spent to determine if improvements can be made that make more resources available where they are most needed. • Pursue additional funding from corporate partnerships. • Solicit more grants.
Priority 3: Smaller Class Sizes	• Reduce class sizes. Learning happens better in smaller classes. Stronger relationships with students are built • Have more qualified teachers in every classroom – maybe two teachers per classroom.
Priority 4: Family Support Services	• Have adequate staff (social workers, counselors etc.) to help address the underlying challenges that students are experiencing at home, including economic instability, mental health challenges. • Pursue community partnerships to augment the District's resources. Every school needs at least 3 partnerships with community agencies that can support student and family well-being.
Priority 5: Parent / Family Engagement	• Find better ways to connect with and engage parents and families. All parents do not know what they need to know or have the resources to easily come to their children's schools.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 6: Build Students' Desire to Learn	- Create learning environments that motivate students and build pride. - Teach culturally relevant curricula.
Priority 7: Innovative & Specialized Schools	- Research what school districts that have comparable demographics are doing to advance educational excellence. Learn from these places and export best and promising practices. - Ask students what they need and want. They are excellent sources of bright ideas. - Establish more specialized schools that focus on areas of development and careers that students are really interested in and that society needs. Do this at both the middle and high school levels.
Priority 8: Enhanced Curricula	- Teach culturally relevant curricula. → Expand electives to include: → Home economics → Trades – shop, automotive technology → Entrepreneurship / business
Priority 9: Community Involvement	- Get schools more invested and involved in their surrounding neighborhoods and communities - Bring back community schools - Engage with and/or develop alumni associations to provide student and school support - Partner with higher education institutions (colleges, technical schools) and career development organizations (LaunchCode, NPower) to better prepare students for life after graduation - Work more closely with the police to address safety and truancy issues
Priority 10: Stronger Academic Preparation	Deepen collaborations among teachers, volunteers and specialists to strengthen students' preparation for the next level of academic rigor. Many students get to middle and high school not yet ready to learn on grade level.
Priority 11: Improved Sports Programs	- Expand sports programs to meet students' interests. - Obtain more and better equipment for schools' sports programs.
Priority 12: Budget Transparency	If the District closes schools to generate the resources needed for full-scale transformation, it must deliver on its promises and show the public what it has done with the money it generated. Schools should be staffed at full capacity, including teachers, nurses, counselors and social workers. Bus runs should be consolidated.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	Feeder patterns should not be a significant determinant in school closure decisions given the high enrollment in magnet schools. Students are already having to be transported out of their neighborhoods to get to these schools.
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Economic Development	- The majority of development is not taking place in under-resourced communities. This means that these neighborhoods are even more vulnerable to divestment, now by SLPS. Communities like Fairgrounds Park and Halls Ferry Circle are going to be even more disadvantaged. - The NGA project will have significant impact on the area around Jefferson and Cass.

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Performance	▪ What does academic performance mean for transient students who do not have the essentials that they need to learn and are frequently displaced? Will schools that work with these students be disproportionately penalized?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Put multiple uses into large, older schools. Invite, for a fee, other programs to occupy the buildings along with the schools. These could include community and neighborhood services, after school programs, medical services etc. These buildings could be turned into full-service community hubs. ▪ Do not engage in deferred maintenance. Make schools more energy efficient to reduce the costs of maintaining old buildings in the long run.
▪ **Existing Factor:** All Factors	▪ Be sure to assess trends over time for performance, enrollment, investment, building conditions etc.
▪ Staff and Student Placements	▪ Where will teachers go? ▪ What happens to administrative staff? ▪ Where will students go?
▪ Truancy	▪ What's the rate of truancy in the city? The District should intensify its focus on enrolling students who are not currently in any school to help increase its student population and to better serve the needs of these children.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** Have open and honest communication with students and families, staff and neighbors in a timely manner. Closures affect homes, property values, crime etc. Prepare parents for change.	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Consider taking a school building that is closed and turning it into temporary housing for homeless students in SLPS and their families. This would help advance family and instructional stability.
▪ **Maximize Student Options:** Give parents and students multiple options to increase the chances that the students will stay in the district and get the best educational fit. Be strategic about student placements and reduce class sizes ▪ **Aggressively Advertise Available School Properties:** Market closing schools to prospective buyers not just in the region, but nationally.	▪ **Maintain Vacant Buildings or Demolish Them:** Scullin was closed right after the District invested in building infrastructure. The building was then left to rot. Maintain buildings that are being closed until they have new owners / users. Demolish schools that have been vacant for a long time. These are eyesores and safety hazards. They bring the neighborhood down and deter future community investment.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Metro Academic & Classical High School – Wednesday, March 4, 2020
Lorren Buck

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Outdated ▪ Lacking (2) ▪ Underfunded (2) ▪ Growth-minded ▪ Struggling ▪ Child-centered ▪ Accountability ▪ Fragmented ▪ Divided resources/opportunities ▪ Empty	▪ Mix of struggle and success (2) ▪ Behind	▪ Understaffed (2) ▪ Community ▪ Diverse ▪ Character ▪ Poor

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ Proactive leadership ▪ Competitive salary/wages ▪ Commitment to vision through follow-through ▪ Thought leaders ▪ Culturally competent staff ▪ Exceptional communication between school leaders and staff ▪ Transparency of process, standards and vision ▪ Holding leaders accountable to the success and transformation of the system	*Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences* ▪ Student focused ▪ Academically challenging ▪ Curriculum meeting standards Wide variety of approaches (teaching to multiple intelligences, STEM focus)
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Equitable resources across the district *Stronger Community Connections & Engagement* ▪ Stabilized home, school, community connections	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Parent education, inviting family in the education process

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Teacher & Staff Capacity, Development & Resourcing	- Keep children at the center of decision-making. - Recruit dedicated staff: - SLPS needs more motivated teachers who are socially and academically informed. - Support teachers in the classroom who are unable to connect with challenging students. - Reduce and/or eliminate CFAs so that teachers can focus more on educating of students. - There is a bureaucracy of paperwork around testing metrics. - Assess the relevance/success of professional development and trauma informed practices. - Make decision-makers more visible in school buildings, holding them accountable. Not doing this is a cultural misstep. - Reduce stress on teachers in order to increase their satisfaction. - Teachers feel over worked and are experiencing burnout. - The threat of schools closing creates anxiety. - Teachers are underpaid, not under passionate. - Toxic work environments perpetuate low morale. - Academic outcomes suffer. - This is breaking the spirits of teachers. - Improve policies, i.e. suspensions, to support students. - Turnover of students exists as a result of suspension/expulsion.
Priority 2: Increased Financing	- Increase funding for staff. - Ensure equity of supplies across the district. - Identify and reduce waste. Increase resources through partnerships. - Remove obstacles which impede partnerships. The amount of red tape is a deterrent. - Reduce transportation cost and reallocate it to staff.
Priority 3: Access and Privilege	- Focus on equity, not equality. - Reduce the travel time from home to school.
Priority 4: Family Support Services	Eradicate barriers to student success in the classroom by addressing social, emotional and academic adversities.
Priority 5: Parent / Family Engagement	- Build and strengthen relationships between the district and community by partnering with families. - Find innovative ways of increasing parent engagement. Improve culture in buildings to draw families back to the district. Practice cultural competency.
Priority 6: Build Students' Desire to Learn	- Provide technology, specifically computers, for every student. - Adopt later start time for middle and high schools.
Priority 7: Innovative & Specialized Schools	- Build bridges through focused partnerships with trade and industry leaders. - Themed schools should reflect social concerns. Current resentment exists with Northwest Academy of Law as communities have a distrust of law enforcement and community violence. - Reduce number of choice schools so that all students have access to a quality education.
Priority 8: Communication	- Improve communication and disseminate information to parents so they can be more proactive in partnering with district. - Host forums so community concerns can be heard and addressed. - Implement a suggestion box for students and staff to ensure that their voices are heard.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 9: Community Involvement	▪ Create partnerships which address systemic societal concerns. ▪ Engage the mayor and city officials. ▪ Seek diverse representation on school board.
Priority 10: Stronger Academic Preparation	▪ Accountability – under performance should not be held against parents or students.
Priority 11: Improved Sports Programs	▪ Choices are few around athletics and extra-curricular activities.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Choice schools supersede feeder patterns. Communities schools cease to exist.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Performance criteria should not be a concern. Leaders need to be held accountable for failing to support and educate students.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Architecture and historical value of buildings should be considered.
▪ Threat to Community	▪ Consider the damage to a community when a school closes. It furthers blights a neighborhood. What happens to the spirit of a community when schools are inoperable – a disruption of community culture. ▪ Assess the locations of current schools and the viability of neighborhoods. The 27th ward is absent of schools. ▪ Consider public response and perception of the district when schools close. ▪ Reduction of enrollment may likely occur when a school closes. Parents may see charter schools as more viable options. ▪ Neighborhoods are fractured. Students don't know their neighbors because they don't attend school with them.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** The District needs to be consistent in its communication to eliminate disorganization. Community listening sessions should be held in the buildings which are under threat of closing. There needs to be a communication plan that includes timelines. A transparent process for families, staff and community is needed. Marketing tools aren't used to engage young parents. Improve methods of disseminating information across the district (Twitter). Update school web pages.	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Develop a plan. What will happen to the building?
▪ **Maximize Student Options:** Which/how many school options will be accessible to parents and families. Will the reduction of schools increase transportation barriers? Provide equity of access to all students rather than focusing on choice/high performing schools.	▪ There is no positive impact when neighborhood schools don't exist.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Metro High School – Wednesday March 4, 2020
Natalie Parks

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Inefficient (2) ▪ Potential (2) ▪ Moving Forward (2) ▪ Inconsistent ▪ Challenged ▪ Under-resourced ▪ Pride ▪ History ▪ Lack of vision ▪ Struggling ▪ Transformation	▪ Inequitable (4) ▪ Designed for our kids to fail	▪ Diversity (2) ▪ Racist ▪ Underappreciated ▪ Resilient ▪ Poor leadership ▪ Low expectations for black and brown children ▪ Uninspired ▪ Under-experienced ▪ Divided ▪ Culture of bullying

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources*
▪ Collaboration rather than competition both across and within schools ▪ Mentorship programs for all staff across schools ▪ Staff are supported by the administration ▪ Staff have all the resources necessary to be successful ▪ Staff ideas are supported and heard by the administration ▪ All teachers are certified ▪ Teachers focus on mastery of skills, are prepared, expand metacognition, incorporate different learning styles and differentiate instruction, are racially conscious, and are content experts ▪ Leadership is visionary ▪ Administrators have a history of teaching in the classroom	▪ Mentorship for students – older students provide mentorship for younger students ▪ Schools are fully resourced – with all needed staff, books, materials, etc. ▪ Curriculum is forward thinking in that it focuses on preparing students for the future – for their career or college ▪ Class sizes meet state guidelines or are smaller ▪ Mental wellness is a prioritized
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships*
▪ Teachers are diverse and represent the student population ▪ Curricula are diverse and represents students ▪ Services are equitable ▪ Everyone is culturally responsive ▪ Curricula represent the students that are served – is relevant to the students	▪ Parents support the schools ▪ Schools consider parent schedules and proactively schedule events when it is more likely they can attend (e.g., not during work hours)

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	*Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness*
▪ Curricula and instruction are child-centered ▪ Instruction is innovative – students provided times to lead instruction, work in groups, complete collective projects ▪ Kids show they want to learn; work on projects during free time	▪ Curricula focus on preparing students for post-high school ▪ Soft skills are cultivated ▪ Fewer benchmark, state, and district assessments. Instead, a focus on problem solving and metacognition
Stronger Sense of Community & Accountability	*Community Partnerships*
▪ Consistency from staff and administrators about expectations for one another and students ▪ Everyone is safe – teachers and students are comfortable coming to school ▪ Mental wellness is supported ▪ There is no tolerance for anyone that makes another feel unwelcome or unsafe at school ▪ Success is defined as all succeeding, not just most ▪ Data driven standards for academic achievement are in place	▪ Business partnerships are formed ▪ Community partners work with schools ▪ Volunteers are supported and encouraged
Miscellaneous ▪ Buildings are fully functional	

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Student Services & Building Resources	▪ Look at the entire district and determine the needs for each school/location. Distribute equitably based on need ▪ Establish a realistic bell schedule – students should not have to start school at 7am or wake at 4am. All schools should start at the same time (all high schools at one time, middle schools at same time, elementary schools at same time). ▪ The District establishes a process for identifying innovative ideas that are working in one school, considers all stakeholders in the idea and then rolls out across all schools – establishes communication across all and ensures innovation is spread across all. ▪ Ensure schools are properly resourced so charter schools cannot continue to open. ▪ Invest in early education and ensure teachers are qualified. ▪ Staff high schools with academic advisors that don't have any other responsibility other than providing resources to students to be successful post high school. ▪ Ensure class sizes remain small – do not make decisions that will negatively effect those succeeding in small classes just to save money. ▪ Increase afterschool and extracurricular programs.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 2: District Equity & Culture Responsiveness	▪ Teachers need to be educated in cultural responsiveness. ▪ Teachers need to be aware of their cultural biases and actively work against them to provide equitable education. ▪ Teachers need to be more diverse and represent the student population. ▪ Teachers and administration need to have the same high expectations for students regardless of their race, background, neighborhood, etc. ▪ Schools need to offer the same services, no matter their geographic location. ▪ Recommendations for program participation should be offered to qualified students regardless of background. There should not be identifiable differences in demographics for recommendations and referrals to enhancement programs. ▪ Validate different cultures. ▪ Evaluate school uniforms and ensure that policies are equitable. Currently, some are allowed to be out of uniform due to religious beliefs. Policy is not implemented consistently. ▪ Ensure education is the same at all schools so parents don't feel they need to choose which school to send their child.
Priority 3: Ensure Safety of Everyone	▪ The definition of safety needs to be reformed; safety does not mean metal detectors. ▪ Every student and teacher should feel safe both physically and mentally. ▪ Provide wrap around services to address trauma. ▪ Set high character expectations. ▪ Focus on building rather than punitive measures to address concerns. ▪ Hold staff and students accountable for creating unsafe spaces. ▪ Undo the policing of children. ▪ Break the school to prison pipeline.
Priority 4: Build community partnerships	▪ Build partnerships with businesses in the area. ▪ Build relationships with alumni who can provide services and support. ▪ Build partnerships with professionals who can offer additional services to students. ▪ Build relationships with police department to build bridges and positive relationships between students and police.
Priority 5: Ensure curriculum is built for today's students	▪ Evaluate current curriculum to ensure all students are represented. ▪ Ensure curriculum is relatable for all students. ▪ Ensure a high standard of performance for all students served. ▪ Children cannot read. The focus should be on how to improve instruction and how to advance all children first.
Priority 6: Transportation & Budget Reform	▪ Look at the current transportation market and renegotiate rates. ▪ Consider bringing busing in house instead of privatization. ▪ Consider if it would be cheaper to bring other services in house. ▪ If schools were equitable, students would not be bused across town. Put money into improving schools so transportation not needed.
Priority 7: Training of Staff	▪ Provide more robust professional development for administrators that focuses on building a culture within a school. ▪ Provide more leadership training for school administrators. ▪ Provide more training for staff on equity and being culturally responsive. ▪ Focus on teacher recruitment more and determine how to build value for potential teachers. ▪ Hold all staff and administrators accountable by having clear measures and targets that align with the vision and goals of the district.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ The way capacity is determined is outdated. This needs to be updated to ensure students have space for community learning, flexible learning spaces and group projects. ▪ Are we certain we have the resources (or will have the resources) to support the projected capacity numbers – enough chairs, working bathrooms, flexible seating space, outside areas for recess, school activities?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns & City-Wide Development	▪ City development must be considered. Some participants agree that the plan should be forward thinking and prepare for the future of the city, not just as it looks now. ▪ Will you balance where schools are shut down so they are not all shut down within the same area? ▪ The crossing or combination of certain neighborhoods will increase safety concerns. There are rival gangs that are now divided by schools, but combining them would create huge problems. How will we keep kids safe if we do this?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age/Condition	▪ Old buildings can be redesigned to better fit the needs of today's students. They are redeveloping schools into lofts, why not redevelop them into better schools? ▪ Why not replace schools instead of just closing them? Refurbish the schools; don't do away with them.
▪ Guarantees	▪ If schools are consolidated, what is the guarantee things will be different, and more importantly, better? Is there a guarantee for excellence?
▪ Transportation	▪ Will having fewer schools solve the transportation issue? Children will still be transported across the city. How does this solve the problem? If you fix the inequalities across schools, you fix the transportation issue.
▪ Impact on Students	▪ What is the impact on students who attend schools that close? What message are we sending them – that their school is not good enough? ▪ Where will everyone go? Will students <u>and</u> teachers be provided a choice of where to attend/teach or will they just be assigned?
▪ Preparation	▪ How much notice will be given? Will decisions be made after teachers have signed their contracts for the year and have no choice of where to go? This will decrease their investment in the school and decrease teaching effectiveness.
▪ Budget	▪ Where will the saved money go? What is the plan for how to redistribute money if schools are closed?
▪ Parent Participation	▪ Closing neighborhood schools and making schools further away will further isolate parents. ▪ It will be more difficult to travel across town to participate as a parent.
▪ Learning from the Past	▪ What were the pitfalls and successes of the other 17 school closures? What have we learned from this and how will we prevent these things from happening again?

5. What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?

▪ **Improve Schools That Remain Open:** Have a positive replacement in place prior to closing any schools. Make sure that the closing of the schools actually results in the open schools being better and having all of the resources they need. ▪ Make sure the product and opportunity we are giving students is actually better.	▪ **Have A Clear Vision:** Make sure there is a clear vision and it is communicated to everyone so community members know what they are moving towards and that the changes are an upgrade.
▪ **Be Proactive When Consolidating Across Racial Lines:** Consider the impact of consolidating across racial lines; be proactive in training and planning for what might happen if two schools that were historically predominately one race and another race are brought together. Children may encounter discrimination as a result. ▪ Incorporate anti-racist training early and consistently across all schools to counteract this.	▪ **Develop A Strategic Plan:** Develop a strategic plan regarding the school closures and communicate it effectively.
▪ **Increase Compensation & Benefits:** Increase compensation and resources for staff to make the closures positive for them as well.	▪ **Connect Schools with Community:** Attach schools to other resources in the community. For example, build a school next to a library and community center so students have safe places to go and activities to do after school, but the school is not burdened with additional costs
▪ **Be Accountable & Communicative:** Put the plan in writing and be transparent with it. Ensure the leaders follow through with their word and promises. ▪ Remain open and continue effective communication throughout the process. ▪ Allow the plan to be a living document that can be updated and revised as necessary.	▪ **Fully Staff Schools:** Ensure schools are fully staffed with nurses, social workers, librarians, teachers, etc.
	▪ **Present Transformation Options:** Determine options for different models – present choices for what could happen and allow the community to vote or give input. Allow community members to see that they could potentially get one thing, but at the cost of another and decide what is most important to them. o For example, there could be 3 potential plans of action, each with some pros and cons. The stakeholders get to review this and provide input.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Metro – Wednesday, March 4, 2020
Jessica Perkins

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
- Struggling (3) - Lacks resources (2) - Inequitable (2) - Inefficient (2) - Lost tradition - Historic - Underfunded - Challenged - Poor resource allocation - Financially poor - Many options - Divisive	- Dismantle district - Excellence	- Diversity - Overworked

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
- Highly qualified and certified master teachers (experts in their fields)
- Teachers are dedicated and committed to each student in their classes; they can differentiate abilities and engage students effectively
- Culturally competent and trauma-informed teachers and teachers' assistants who understand their students' backgrounds, are aware of their needs and know how to respond
- Teachers and staff who set excellence as the standard, as the norm
- Competitive, performance based compensation and benefits for all staff
- Expanded skill set through compensated professional development

Increased Student Support Services & Resources
- Fully staffed student support services (full time college counselors (MS and HS only), social workers and nurses) at all schools
- More coordinated social services so that students get the care they need while in school
  - Crisis care
  - Medical support

Student Performance / Educational Outcomes
- High student performance; everyone is encouraged to stretch and grow
- Provides a variety of student opportunities (mentors, tutors, field trips, enrichment and remedial classes)
- Promotes and delivers equitable outcomes – students' backgrounds do not determine their performance and graduation

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences
- Extracurricular activities from elementary through high school
- More customized instruction to meet the different learning needs of student
- Culturally appropriate, diverse and relevant curriculum
- Students who strive to achieve excellence
- Growth mindset in classrooms and schools. Students and teachers push past challenges and exhibit greater resilience
- One-to-one technology ratio. Every student has access to computer and internet technology
- Emphasis on life skills beyond reading, writing and arithmetic

Question 2 Continued

Positive and Stimulating School Climate	*The Village Supports Students*
▪ All students are encouraged and supported to do their best ▪ All staff interacting with students have been trained in trauma informed care ▪ Character education is practiced and recognized in all schools, regardless of level *Stable Leadership and Enrollment Growth* ▪ Stable building leadership with cohesive and stable staff ▪ Increasing desire to attend the school reflected in expanded enrollment	▪ Great communication between parents and staff ▪ Parents participate in PTOs, at programs, in school decision-making and generally are made to feel like a part of the school family ▪ More trained, family / community specialists to support parents and families ▪ Inclusive of all interested in serving the District ▪ Sincere buy-in from community ▪ More champions for the District ▪ Schools are showcased as neighborhood pillars with all stakeholders engaged ▪ Community partners help staff and parents to continue the District's vision and mission ▪ Partners with major universities for teacher education, as well as college credit for students
Miscellaneous ▪ District exists within a strong tax base ▪ World class facilities with multi-building campuses at high schools ▪ Each school has an apparent identity and adheres to its specialization with appropriate curriculum	

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: System Size and Facilities	▪ Right size or streamline the District so it meets the needs of current students and can grow exponentially, when needed. ▪ Build new facilities that prepare St. Louis for the future. ▪ High schools should have multi-building campuses with MS and elementary schools in close proximity. ▪ All students have the same high quality facilities. ▪ Utilize and/or repurpose closed buildings. ▪ Reinstate feeder patterns to stabilize neighborhoods.
Priority 2: Workforce Quality and Diversity	▪ Improve existing principal and teacher education by partnering with universities and colleges. ▪ Retain high quality principals and release those who aren't performing. A high-quality leader is more important than a school of high quality educators. ▪ Principals and teachers must work as one team, not as multiple teams going in different directions. ▪ Develop a pipeline for future vacancies. ▪ Increase compensation and benefits to a competitive level. ▪ Allow teachers to evaluate principals and HS students to evaluate teachers. ▪ Recruit more African American teachers, so students begin to see someone that looks like them.
Priority 3: Improve School Options	▪ Create learning environments that motivate students and build school pride. ▪ Teach culturally relevant curricula. ▪ Improve school offerings – in-class and afterschool. ▪ Promote new school offerings to attract and retain students.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 4: More Engaging Classroom Experience	▪ Increase curriculum rigor and ensure all students are challenged, regardless of their capabilities. ▪ Engage students with more interactive, experiential teaching (both in class and in community). ▪ Purchase Chrome book for all students with appropriate software and ensure teachers are fully trained to use software.
Priority 5: Family Support Services	▪ Ensure each school has a full-time social worker and nurse, and adequate staff to help address the underlying challenges that students are experiencing at home, including economic instability, mental health challenges. ▪ Pursue community partnerships to augment the District's resources. Every school needs at least 3 partnerships with community agencies that can support student and family well-being. ▪ Partner with STEM businesses to understand their needs, solicit mentors and provide internships. ▪ Help principals with partnership development.
Priority 6: Practice Equity	▪ One size doesn't fit all.
Priority 7: Improved Internal and External Communications	▪ Inform families about District accomplishments and challenges. ▪ Transparency is important from the District to school; some educators feel connected to their school, but not the District. ▪ The goal is to build better relationships throughout the District and that begins with transparent communications, as a means to build trust.
Priority 8: Budget Transparency	▪ If the District closes schools to generate the resources needed for full-scale transformation, it must deliver on its promises and show the public what it has done with the money it generated. ▪ Assess closure/consolidation costs and benefits and inform all stakeholders – staff, families, tax payers, etc. ▪ Resources of closed schools must follow the students rather than being pooled and re-allocated,
Priority 9: Isolated Planning	▪ Stop planning in isolation. The District should look at itself with an eye towards economic development, improving neighborhood conditions… ▪ Change the existing service delivery model of education. Realize that the District is preparing students for college and careers. It's time to engage employers, colleges and trade associations about what is required for our students to succeed in life. ▪ Be innovative and radical.
Priority 10: Policy Advocacy	▪ Engage state and local elected officials to advocate for policy changes in funding allocations, early childhood education programs, property tax reform or reallocation.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ Enrollment of PK should be considered in capacity because these children will hopefully attend an elementary school.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Feeder patterns no longer exist in SLPS' system of choice. Our ability to choose has eliminated feeder patterns and the District should really consider returning to neighborhood feeder patterns.

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Performance	▪ Some consideration needs to be given to how ELL and transient students influence overall academic achievement. Additionally, academic achievement is influenced by teacher quality and curriculum. A school in a low income, blighted area is likely to have fewer high quality teachers.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Building condition should be considered, but include this with potential economic development, as well as the school's surroundings.
▪ Location of Charter Schools	▪ If a public school closes and a charter school is located close by, SLPS may lose students to the charter.
▪ Transportation Time and Costs	▪ Re-establishing feeder patterns from elementary to middle school could possibly lower transportation costs, as well as a student's travel time.
▪ Long-Term District Vision	▪ From a facility standpoint, the District really needs to think about what it wants to look like in the next 15 to 20 years. Our high schools should have a campus like look to prepare students for college.
▪ Equitable Closures and Economic Development	▪ Due to external forces (disinvestment in North City), it is likely more schools will be closed in an already blighted area. The District should consider how renovating or building a new school could really spur residential occupancy. Ask the City, what areas of North City show the greatest possibility for resurgence. Then, consider how a school renovation or new building could support residential development.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

Provide Timely Communication: Communicate with families, students and staff early and often. Ensure they understand why the closure is occurring, how the decision was made and what to expect when (timeline). Explain the selection process and how schools were prioritized.
Introduce Students and Families to New School: Host a welcome event for incoming students; conduct any needed assessments before school starts. If possible; use multiple communications vehicles to contact families. Have team building exercises in each grade to help students bond before school begins.
Staff Up for Transition: If a school is projected to receive more than 25 new students, provide additional staff to assist with administrative functions, as wells as, conversations with the family and one-on-one care for the new student.
Repurpose Vacant Buildings: Is there a way that SLPS could partner with a developer who is willing to invest in property? SLPS should attempt to market any closed building that is in fair condition, especially before it becomes too dilapidated to renovate.
Maintain Vacant Buildings or Demolish Them: Look at ways to maintain property because if not, it becomes an eyesore for an already blighted area.
Assess Economic Impact of School Closings: Work with the City of St. Louis to determine how a closed school could impact the neighborhood economics, especially in light of housing vacancies, lower property taxes and potential development near the school.
Respect the School's History: Find a way to officially say good-bye to the building (especially if it is a neighborhood school for some children) and ensure that special moments and building's history are preserved somewhere in the District or an SLPS section at the History Museum.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Metro High School – Wednesday, March 4, 2020
eNiCoL

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Broken (4) ▪ Struggling ▪ Good gifted programs ▪ Developing ▪ Lots of potential ▪ Challenged ▪ Good but needs help	▪ Lost accreditation ▪ Low quality education ▪ Behind (2) ▪ Decent education	▪ Low-paid teachers/staff ▪ Large student body ▪ Diverse magnet schools

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ Highly educated and qualified teachers
▪ Culturally competent and trauma-informed teachers who understand their students' backgrounds, are aware of their needs and know how to respond
▪ Competitive, performance based compensation for all staff
▪ Fully-staffed at **every** school (Nurses, Counselors, Paraprofessionals)
▪ Teachers with adequate funding for class supplies
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Fully staffed student support services
	▪ More coordinated social services so that students get the care they need while in school
	  ➜ Crisis care
	  ➜ Medical support
	  ➜ College counseling

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ More inclusive (leadership, faculty, board) ▪ Diversity, equity, inclusion education built into the curriculum	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ N/A
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Art rooms & Libraries with updated resources ▪ Healthier start times (8:30AM) ▪ Stronger Chemistry and other science curricula ▪ Adoption of best practices system-wide vs. better practice being only at "certain schools"	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes* ▪ Less priority on standardized testing (e.g. Case Study: Finland) ▪ Increased focus on curriculum = no need for standardized testing
Stronger Community Connections & Engagement ▪ Greater investment in surrounding community (e.g. Jennings School District)	*Heightened Safety* N/A

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Address Systemic Oppression	▪ Include racial equity lens when making these decisions (not doing so produces more of all these same problems). ▪ Change the way we discuss racism/systemic oppression with our students. ▪ Remove leaders who resist a more racially equitable curriculum and school system overall. ▪ Add Gender Neutral Bathrooms for students and faculty in all schools. ▪ Provide mandatory, ongoing, trauma-informed training/education and ensure that faculty/staff are educated on LGBTQIA+ needs, protection/safety.
Priority 2: Upgrade Learning Resources	▪ Purchase new desks that fit all body types. ▪ Improve internet networking system (with additional students on the network, it slows down performance - making it harder to get through lessons/class work). ▪ Add more smart boards.
Priority 3: Make Teaching More Desirable	▪ Change the narrative around being a teacher as "the fall back/default option" when another career path doesn't work out. ▪ Allow students more exposure to teaching opportunities. ▪ Increase teacher & staff salaries and benefits. ▪ Provide better performance incentives for teachers
Priority 4: Decrease Expenses	▪ Stop hiring private busing companies (e.g. Hazelwood owns their own buses so they don't have this expense). ▪ Explore Kindle/eBook, Khan Academy as teaching resources vs. printing paper packets for all students or textbooks.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Performance could be more of an issue with adults than with students. ▪ Many schools are run like juvenile detention centers making it hard to learn. ▪ Lack of resources is not students fault and does not reflect a lack of desire to learn (or parents' fault). ▪ We need to look at faculty attendance as a factor of student performance.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Conditions	▪ Better assess the cost of constructing new buildings to making upgrades in old and be transparent about the assessment. ▪ Construct new building in neighborhoods that old schools were closed in. ▪ Better assess current needs before adding more students to schools (e.g. Metro High students don't have enough lunch seats - have to sit in halls, on floor and in teachers' rooms for lunch). ▪ Re: Class Size - We need to determine capacity based on **learning opportunities vs. fire code standards.** ▪ Consider the cultural history of certain schools and the impact they have on their surrounding communities.

Continue Question 4

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Development	▪ Re: NGA - We need to consider what type of redlining will impact the schools and surrounding neighborhood(s).
▪ **Added Factor:** Impact of Charter Schools	▪ Consider partnering more with charter schools vs. cannibalizing each other. ▪ Partnering can decrease or eliminate the negative impact of busing (ex. shorter bus rides, fewer stops).

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Make Schools Accessible to All Neighborhoods/Families:** Ensure open schools aren't heavily concentrated in one area (e.g. central and South City with easy access, but predominantly black North City students are uprooted with long bus rides and no educational hub(s) in their community).	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Consider taking a school building that is closed and turning it into temporary housing for homeless students in SLPS and their families. This would help advance family and instructional stability.
	   o Don't let them turn into lofts - especially those that current community members cannot afford.
	   o Tech Industry and transplants are being catered to while poorer families are being pushed out

▪ **Engage Students Over Summer:** Host team-building, group building sessions over the summer to allow students to get to know one another (e.g. of bad experience - Wellston and Normandy colliding - "*we should have learned from that.*")	▪ **Increase Parent/Family Engagement:** Partner with parents to draft plans for alternative schooling. Also, consult and engage with community members where schools are closing in - like actually meet people IN the communities

APPENDIX D:
CARNAHAN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE WORKSHOP
SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

St. Louis Public Schools
Community Visioning Workshop Demographic Overview
Workshop #4 – Carnahan High School
Saturday, March 7, 2020

On Saturday, March 7, 2020, **90 people** attended the fourth of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **68 (76%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With nearly eight of ten attendees (76%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was SLPS employees at 50%, followed by "other" at 32%.

While the survey didn't ask for a designation when someone answered "other," some respondents volunteered designations, such as interested resident, community member or SLPS alumni.

No respondents identified as a student or an elected official.

NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.

STAKEHOLDER TYPE

SLPS Employee	50%	
Other	32%	
SLPS Parent or Guardian	28%	
SLPS Student		
Elected Official		

Gender

Nearly eight of ten (78%) respondents identified as female; 21% identified as male; and 1% did not affiliate with a gender.

Racial Ethnicity

Five of ten (54%) respondents identified as white; 37% identified as black; 5% identified as either Hispanic or Asian; and 4% declined to answer.

RACIAL ETHNICITY

- Asian 3%
- Prefer Not to Respond 4%
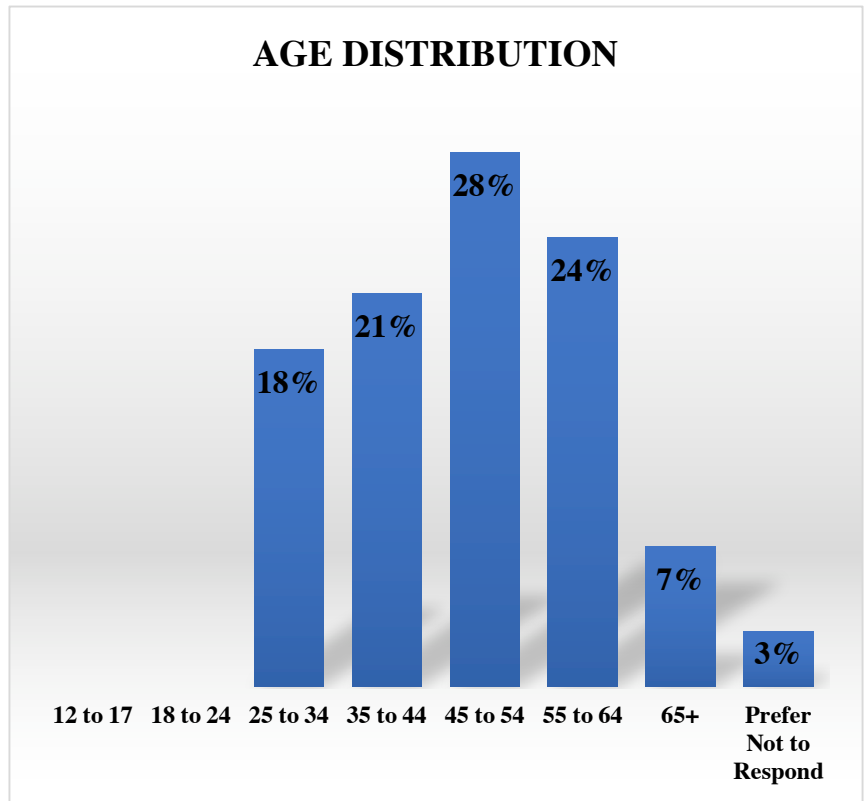- Black 37%
- Hispanic 2%
- White 54%

Age
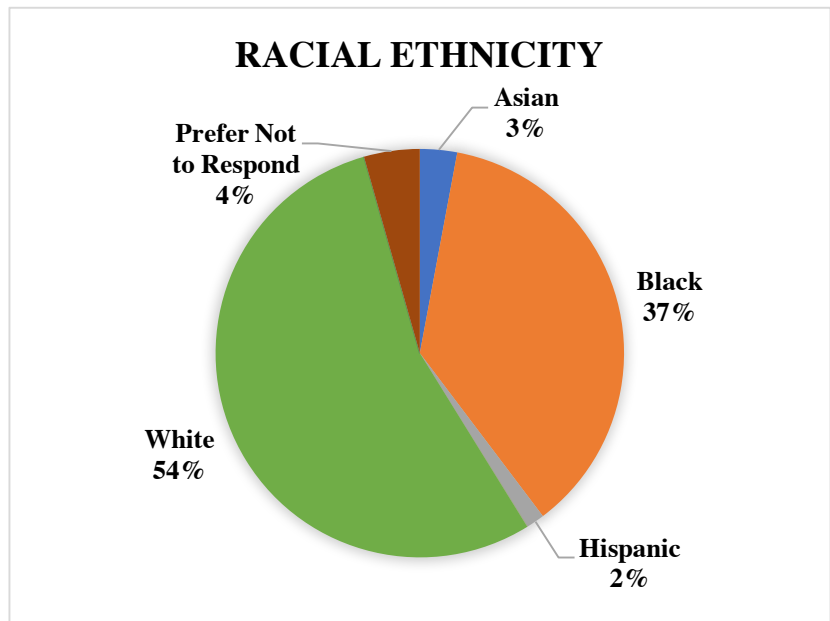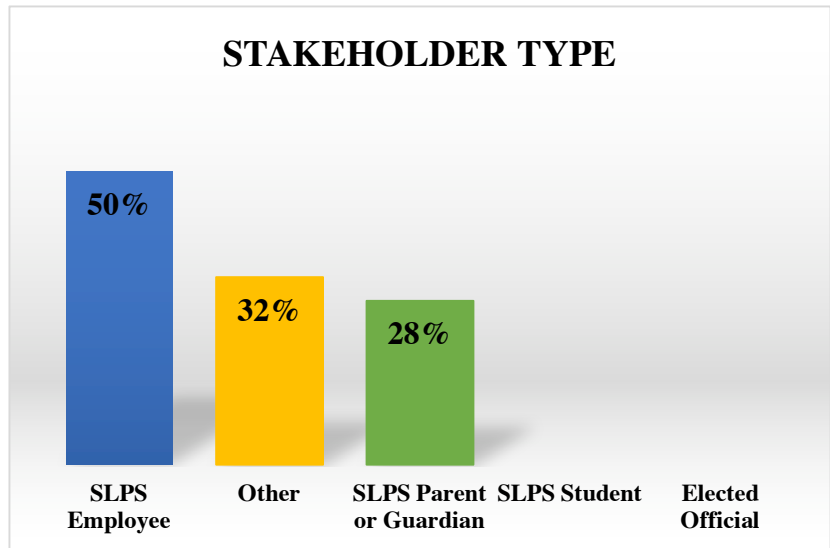
As noted in the chart, five of ten (52%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 to 64 years of age; and roughly one of ten (7%) identified as 65+ years of age. There were no respondents less than 25 years of age.

Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly seven of ten (68%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 32%, the following was reported:
- o One (1%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Three (4%) had three children enrolled;
- o Eight (12%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Ten (15%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	Prefer Not to Respond
		18%	21%	28%	24%	7%	3%

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of respondents identifying that school. Parents/guardians represented students from 22 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)		Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Adams – 2	▪ Hickey – 1	▪ Busch – 2	▪ Carnahan – 2
▪ Buder – 1	▪ Kennard – 2	▪ Compton-Drew – 1	▪ Collegiate – 1
▪ Clay – 1	▪ Mallinckrodt – 1	▪ McKinley – 1	▪ McKinley – 1
▪ Froebel – 1	▪ Mann – 1		▪ Metro – 6
▪ Gateway – 1	▪ Pamoja – 1		▪ Soldan –1
▪ Henry – 1	▪ Wilkinson– 3		▪ Sumner – 1
			▪ Vashon –1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Between 85% to 90% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Rebeccah Bennett;
- ▪ Lorren Buck; and
- ▪ Jessica Perkins.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Carnahan High School – Saturday, March 7, 2020
Rebeccah Bennett

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS

▪ Unsupported (5)
  ➔ Misperceived
  ➔ Judged
  ➔ Misunderstood
  ➔ Underdog
▪ Struggling / challenged (5)
▪ Inequitable / disparate (2)
▪ Great potential / hopeful (2)
▪ Evolving
▪ Systemic victim
▪ Disorganized
▪ Uncertainty
▪ Somewhat negligent
▪ Large school system
▪ Inefficient
▪ Limited resources
▪ Lots of strengths and weaknesses
▪ Reactive
▪ Inconsistent
▪ Fragmented
	▪ Failing (5)
	  ➔ Out of order
	  ➔ Disappointing
	▪ Lower reading levels
	▪ Impactful
	▪ Improving
		▪ Diverse
		▪ Lacks parental involvement
		▪ Unprofessional
		▪ Resourceful
		▪ Inadequate staffing:
		  ➔ Nurses
		  ➔ Social workers
		  ➔ Qualified special education personnel

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ Educators are valued. They have:
  ➔ Increased compensation and benefits
  ➔ More classroom input
  ➔ Greater flexibility in their decision-making i.e. hands are not tied by rigid structures
▪ Happy learning environment. Staff members know that they matter and are able to pursue what is in their and their students' best interests
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Student support functions are fully staffed, which frees educators up to teach
	▪ Schools are responsive to trauma – historical, contemporary, systemic, community, personal etc. Staff understand and are equipped to respond to students' needs
	▪ Psychological and mental health supports are available
	▪ After school programs and activities are in place

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Deepened commitment to educational equity ➔ Disparities between highest and lowest performing schools and between magnet schools and neighborhood schools are reduced	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Parents participate in decision-making around how schools are operated

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	Student Performance / Educational Outcomes

▪ Learning and enrichment opportunities are available to all students
▪ Developmentally appropriate curriculum
▪ Students have more choices in the classes that they take
▪ All students are more easily able to access magnet schools, not just those who are "gifted"
▪ Special education students are able to access the resources that they need
▪ More social and emotional learning programs
▪ Technology for all students, including access to I-pads and the internet at home and at school
▪ Happy learning environment. Students feel valued and have fun learning
	▪ High student achievement
	▪ The school to prison pipeline is dismantled via:
	  ➔ More progressive discipline policies. More alternatives for behavior management
	  ➔ More access to student and family supports

Leadership	**Miscellaneous**
▪ Strong leaders at the district and in schools ▪ Principals have their voices heard ▪ Leaders analyze data trends and are data driven ▪ Forward looking and creative leaders ▪ The District and its schools adopt a shared leadership model. One or two individuals do not make decisions by themselves. Leadership is cultivated among staff teams	▪ Fully funded ▪ District better leverages its strengths. Some of the highest performing programs are in the smallest buildings which limits their expansion. This makes no sense

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Increased Reading Proficiency	▪ Work to ensure that all students are reading on grade level. ▪ Invest in evidence-based reading programs.
Priority 2: Reduced Emphasis on Testing	▪ Focus more on authentic learning and less on testing. Too much time and energy is spent teaching to the test.

Priority 3: Workforce	▪ Prioritize the District's workforce:
	  ➔ Increase pay
	  ➔ Recruit diverse teachers. Students who see educators that look like them feel safer and perform better
	  ➔ Hire and evaluate educators based not only on their teaching abilities, but also on how well they relate to students
	▪ Increase support for staff working with students who have IEPs. They can't meet all student needs and must be provided with support services to help students.

Priority 4: Community Support	▪ Better address anti-public institution sentiment. Help people understand the value of public education and their importance to the system.
Priority 5: Systems Coordination	▪ Pursue more coordination and collaboration across systems that support student and family well-being. The education system intersects with other systems – the political system, economic system, housing system, health care system, justice system.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 6: Parental Involvement	▪ Be more creative in engaging parents. Parents are critical to students' success. The District must help make their lives easier to get more of them in the door. Offer more family supports. ▪ Better communicate with parents, especially regarding opportunities for program involvement, participation in decision-making and advocacy. Parents can be powerful champions for the District.
Priority 7: Vision Alignment	▪ Ensure that District and school leaders are aligned with the District's vision and priorities and have the capacity and competence to execute them. ▪ Seek educators' buy-in to support the District's new direction.
Priority 8: Professional Development	▪ Provide cultural competency training and culturally relevant pedagogy training to all instructional staff.
Priority 9: District Funding & Policy Advocacy	▪ Strengthen advocacy efforts around District funding. Intensify community organizing and mobilization to obtain increased support for students, schools and the District. ▪ Continue educating and informing families and the community about the role that policy plays in District funding and support. Missouri's funding of public education is repressive. ▪ Solicit more funding to meet students' needs.
Priority 10: Community Engagement	▪ Involve all the different sectors of the community in efforts to support the District and its students.
Priority 11: Improved Sports Programs	▪ Get more staff i.e. coaches and assistance to work in school sports programs.
Priority 12: Innovation	▪ Research models of transformation that work. ▪ Reach out to the Special School District to learn about what it is doing to advance effective programs and practices.
Priority 13: Technology	▪ Partner with technologists and technology organizations to expand the District's programs. Work with these organizations on expanding opportunities for involvement in coding programs, framing and networking; and gaming systems.
Priority 14: Arts Programs	▪ Deepen focus on cultural education. ▪ Get more artists involved in schools and working with students.
Priority 15: Student Engagement	▪ Give students more of a say in developing the District's direction. Involve them in change efforts. They are the end user.
Priority 16: Maintain Successes	▪ Protect the District's existing successes. Keep magnet, non-magnet, choice and extracurricular programs that are successful open and fully operation. These are points of attraction for many students and families.
Priority 16: A System of Choice	▪ Make SLPS more competitive and attractive in the region's education landscape. Do this by: ➜ Raising salaries ➜ Advancing equity ➜ Engaging in successful transformation

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factors – General Critique:**	▪ None of the existing criteria center the value of school programs, existing infrastructure investments, the needs of students and families, and the presence and effectiveness of enrichment programs in their considerations. These are the things that students and families value MOST. They must be given adequate consideration so that the District does not continue to lose families to other systems.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ To what extent do these still exist given how many students ride the buses daily to school?
▪ Transportation / Travel Logistics	▪ What impacts will closures and consolidations have on already stretched student travel times? ▪ To minimize adverse impacts, pursue transportation partnerships with charter schools and even parochial schools.
▪ Community & Equity	▪ Chief among the District's considerations must be whether or not its closure and consolidation decisions exacerbate disparities. Students and families that are already vulnerable should not be further disadvantaged by the District's decisions. ▪ Ensure that students with physical impairments can access the entire learning environment.
▪ Building Repurposing	▪ Use closed buildings to meet affordable housing needs. ▪ Keep schools open, but pursue mixed-use opportunities. Schools can stay on the first floors while other, complementary uses are housed on other floors (for a fee).

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** Provide advanced notice and frequent communication to staff, students and families. This will help to lessen the trauma of closures.	▪ **Increase Student & Family Support Services:** Provide counselors and liaisons to staff, teachers and families to help lessen closure trauma and to prepare these stakeholder groups for what is next. Also, with greater building utilization and capacity, be sure to have more support staff rather than the bare minimum. It is likely that these larger schools will need more than one nurse, counselor and social worker each.
▪ **Engage Parents:** Survey parents about their needs for schools, before making closure decisions. Find out what matters most to them so that closures do not result in further losses of families for the District.	▪ **Repurpose Closed Schools:** Closed schools become ghost habitats that further destabilize neighborhoods. Be creative about building reuses to meet community needs.
▪ **Provide Budget Accountability & Transparency:** Ensure that the funding generated from closures and consolidations is actually used on transformation efforts rather than on operations that do not improve student outcomes.	▪ **Maintain Cohesion & Community:** Work hard to maintain cohesion and community among school community members, even in the midst of change and movement. Do this through staffing decisions and communications activities. Make sure that staff and faculty move with students to help maintain relationships, cohesion, morale and performance.
▪ **Engage the Community:** Visit neighborhood associations to inform them about school closures and to solicit their support in attracting and securing alternate uses for empty school buildings. Keep them informed of the District's progress in building closures and consolidations and in real estate sales / activities.	

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Carnahan High School – Saturday, March 7, 2020
Lorren Buck

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Needs resources (3) ▪ Inconsistent (2) ▪ Struggling (2) ▪ Essential ▪ Needs overhaul ▪ Top heavy ▪ Great schools ▪ Unacknowledged excellence ▪ Changing ▪ Organized ▪ Needs serious help ▪ Growing (growth) ▪ Historical ▪ Overwhelmed ▪ Threatened ▪ Not cohesive ▪ Challenged	▪ Improved ▪ education	▪ Underserved (2) ▪ Poor / in need (2) ▪ Disciplinary problems (2) ▪ Unhappy teachers ▪ Resilient ▪ Students ▪ Hard working ▪ Understaffed ▪

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ Consistency and follow-through on system policies and standards o Structured o Visionary leaders o Accountability ▪ Opportunity for professional growth ▪ Coordinated efforts to promote teamwork and staff cohesion o Shared vision among leaders ▪ Excellent teachers ▪ Sufficiently staffed (over staffed) ▪ Competitive salaries (well paid) ▪ Teaching autonomy for educators	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* ▪ Trauma informed and trauma funded. Money available and accessible to address trauma informed care ▪ Social needs and concerns met for students living in poverty ▪ Defined feeder patterns from elementary to middle to high school ▪ Well resourced o librarians
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Equity among and inclusion within schools	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Increased paternal support that fosters engagement i.e. Dads of Great Students

Question 2 Continued

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes*

▪ Teaching the whole child (students centered)
   o Art integration
   o A willingness to meet students where they are
▪ Vast number of electives and extracurricular activities
   o Sports
   o Youth government programs
   o Garden educator
   o Swimming pools (students who desire to enlist in the military must be able to swim. Students aren't meeting this requirement because of a lack of access to pools)
   o Financial literacy
▪ Joyful, playful school culture
	▪ Diverse curriculum
	   o 21st century skills (job curriculum)
	   o Life skills (adulting)
	▪ High achievement

Stronger Community Connections & Engagement	*Heightened Safety*
▪ Trade school partnerships ▪ Community minded	▪ Emotionally and physically healthy ▪ Clean environment ▪ Well maintained buildings ▪ Welcoming and positive environment

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*

Priority 1: Teacher & Staff Capacity, Development & Resourcing	▪ Consolidate and right size the district.
	   o The district is too top heavy. Reexamine the salaries of administrators in central office.
	▪ Leverage resources and implement district-wide structure (not all schools have ample resources).
	▪ Improve retention and conduct succession planning.
	▪ Deploy under-utilized teachers (Metro has rotating teachers who don't have classrooms. Those teachers can be moved to under-resourced buildings)
	▪ Obtain full staff capacity i.e. reading specialists, counselors, therapist etc.
	   o Partner with city entities to fill the gaps.
	   o Improve hiring practices.
	▪ Increase teacher support:
	   o Professional development
	   o Social, emotional and cultural intelligence
	   o Curriculum development
	   o Compensation

Priority 2: Increased Financing	▪ Acquire school sponsorship from local businesses (adopt a school). ▪ Reallocate funding within the district. ▪ Sell, restore and/or repurpose unused buildings. o Dedicate used/underused buildings to social support services (Rittner Academy or Better Family Life model). ▪ Investigate the value of the district owning its own buses.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 3: Communications and System Navigation	▪ Respond in a timely manner to parental concerns. Improve communications between the district and families (efficiency). ▪ Align vision with updated demographic data. Who are we serving? How are we meeting the needs of students and families? ▪ Increase enrollment through aggressive and strategic marketing. ▪ Set goals at each level of the district and assess progress (structured and communicated). ▪ Employ different/updated methods of communication (social media pages: twitter, fb, etc.). ▪ Use language that all families can access and understand.

Priority 4: Build Students' Desire to Learn	▪ Integrate unorthodox ways of enhancing learning (think outside the box).
	▪ Embrace a variety of teaching and learning practices to advance student achievement.
	▪ Grow participation in the teaching field with current student body (highlight careers in educations).
	▪ Improve student engagement:
	   ○ Peer to peer tutoring
	   ○ Service and volunteer days that fosters community involvement

Priority 5: Innovative & Specialized Schools	▪ Promote environmentally conscious schools.
	▪ Prioritize student health:
	   ○ Healthy food choice/options for breakfast and lunch
	   ○ Updated and age appropriate playgrounds

Priority 6: Enhanced Curricula	▪ Incorporate more technology in pedagogy. ▪ Gain staff and student input in policy making and curriculum implementation. ▪ Analyze curriculum to ensure aspects of global citizenship (updated and relevant pedagogy).
Priority 7: Community Involvement	▪ Hold local and state officials and leaders accountable for their education policies. ▪ Organize a lobby day around state education funding. Educate families on state issues (political education and engagement). Get district/teacher/union buy-in.
Priority 8: Budget Fairness & Transparency	▪ Address and resolve the inequity in resources and dollars within schools. Some schools have less or more resources.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Is the district assessing the number of students projected to transfer to a charter school if it closes schools?
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Economic Development	▪ What areas in the city are slated for economic development? Is the district in conversation with the city?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Academic achievement should not be a factor. How will the district address the stress of displacement on students and communities? Separation anxiety may also exist and the impacts may prove traumatic to students and families.

Question 4 Continued

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Building condition should not be a factor. "Buildings can be fixed. Communities cannot." There are some areas where schools do not exist. Distribution of buildings throughout the city is important to ensure that all of the closed schools are not clumped into certain areas.
▪ Value of neighborhood school to the community	▪ Consideration should be given to the historical value/significance of a building. How will the property value of homes/communities be effected if/when a school closes?

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** Have transparent communication with students and families, staff and neighbors. Teachers are experiencing anxiety around whether or not they will have a job. The District should pay for storage units of teachers who need to store their supplies. Implement phone banks so that parents and teachers won't experience challenges in navigating the system and obtaining information. Engage with social media outlets.	▪ **Messaging:** Articulate the benefits and acknowledge the harm from school closures. Package the message. How does this benefit families? Home visits should be conducted to every home that will be impacted by school closure.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Carnahan – Saturday, March 7, 2020
Jessica Perkins

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

System Descriptors	Outcomes Descriptors	People Descriptors
▪ Struggling (2) ▪ Improving (2) ▪ Challenging (2) ▪ Progressive ▪ Unbalanced ▪ Inefficient ▪ Under-resourced ▪ Hopeful ▪ Unique ▪ Too large ▪ Innovative ▪ Transportation challenges ▪ Tech-phobic	▪ Moving forward ▪ Pockets of greatness ▪ Inequitable	▪ Needy children ▪ Beautiful students ▪ Talented ▪ Hardworking educators ▪ Future leaders ▪ Determined ▪ Dedicated teachers ▪ My Community

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Resource Rich ▪ Financial and human resources (social workers, counselors, teaching assistants, etc.) support the District, its staff and its students ▪ Each school has a host of partners who are willing and ready to collaborate to address the District's needs, especially for mentors, tutors, internships and scholarship opportunities	*Welcoming Environment & Leadership (Culture)* ▪ Everyone (leadership, teachers, students and families) sets high expectations for themselves and are held accountable ▪ First person of contact is knowledgeable, helpful and kind ▪ Leadership is authentic, supportive and has a genuine interest in everyone's success ▪ Leadership is open to change and respects professionals (local autonomy for principals and teachers)
Greater Parental Involvement ▪ Serve as a resource or knowledge base ▪ Raise money for special events, projects and field trips ▪ Ensure students are following through at home	
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Students are prepared to pursue the future regardless of interest in college or vocational careers ▪ Curricula are aligned with students' future endeavors ▪ Better learning and instruction techniques ▪ Schools have 21st Century technology ▪ Purposeful assessments are conducted (no over testing) ▪ Healthy start times for all school levels	*Enhanced College & Career Preparation & Readiness* ▪ Growing partnerships between area universities and SLPS schools ▪ More exposure to careers and college, starting in middle school ▪ More partnerships with trade schools, community colleges and four-year colleges to maximize students' career options

Question 2 Continued

Faculty & Staff	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
▪ All school staff receive competitive compensation and benefits ▪ Teachers are aware of and have access to professional development opportunities, which are financial supported by District ▪ Trained in trauma informed practices	▪ Social, emotional and mental needs of students and families are met in a respected and non-intrusive manner All people who interact with children should be trained in trauma informed practices

Facility Maintenance and Appearance
▪ Schools (and surrounding area) are welcoming and clean (esp. bathrooms)
▪ Adequate heating and cooling
▪ ADA compliant
▪ No peeling paint
	Data-Driven to Ensure Efficiency and Effectiveness
	▪ Data is used to drive decision-making
	   o Appropriate programs for teaching in urban school districts
	   o Use of trauma-informed practices
	   o Healthy start times for all age groups
	   o Buses filled to capacity or use smaller vans
	▪ Data is used to select appropriate programs to augment learning

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ More equitable resources and outcomes. The huge differences in resources for schools within the system are reduced	**Miscellaneous** ▪ Respect for community and neighborhood history ▪ Acknowledge District's role in educational history

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 1: Principal and Educator Quality and Support	▪ Ensure principals are of the best quality. (Note: A poor leader impacts the entire school, regardless of the teaching quality.) ▪ Engage professionals in other industries and relax the certification requirement for teachers and also look at competency (a retired engineer could teach basic math without certification). ▪ Identify future principals and create a leadership pipeline. ▪ Conduct 360° evaluations: MS and HS students should be able to evaluate their teachers. ▪ Parents (and partners) should be able to assess schools and their leadership. ▪ Pay for pedagogical, subject matter and trauma informed professional development. ▪ Increase compensation and benefit offering to ensure staff retention.
Priority 2: Enhanced Curricula	▪ Expand curricula to include not only traditional academics, but also significant emphasis on trade skill development and work skills at all levels. ▪ Ensure students are appropriately paced. ▪ Ensure students leave with life skills training (e.g., financial literacy). ▪ Improve curricula for special education and ELL students. ▪ When purchasing new curricula, purchase all parts to make sure it can be fully implemented. ▪ Provide additional out-of-school opportunities (field trips) so that students can see the application of their learning.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 3: Parent & Family Support	▪ Develop strong PTOs in all schools. (Note: Strong may not mean financial means, but the ability and desire to participate.) ▪ Support parents in advocating for their children and in understanding the resources and services that are available to their children and families. ▪ Develop a Parents Resource Center (could partner with SLCC); make sure parents know what is expected of them and provide the tools necessary. (Note: East St. Louis has a Parent University)
Priority 4: Partnership Awareness and Efficacy	▪ Most parents don't realize how many partners the District actually has; this should be communicated. ▪ Support schools (especially, those in North City) in developing "partnerships that work and matter." ▪ Help individual schools to develop a volunteer management and recognition programs. (Note: People want to volunteer, but are rarely given specific and meaningful jobs and they are rarely thanked for their service.)
Priority 5: External and Internal Communications	▪ Improve transparency at both the school and District level (i.e., Robo calls should have been used to promote CV sessions). ▪ Ensure staff and parents have the tech knowledge to communicate with each other. ▪ Improve transparency within the school and District environments.
Priority 6: Transportation	▪ Assess current transportation efficiencies (too many partially filled buses). ▪ Eliminate the three-tier busing schedule. ▪ Use data to support healthier start times and implement. This may also eliminate the need for a three-tier busing schedule. ▪ Look at possibility of owning rather than contracting busing (less expensive?).
Priority 7: Full-Time Support Staffing in All Schools	▪ Hire full-time nurses, social workers, counselors at every school. The District must do a better job of addressing the human service needs of students and families.
Priority 8: Assessments	▪ Reduce the number of assessments and ensure testing is needed and deliberate. Find other ways to assess learning and understanding. ▪ At state level, advocate for less standardized testing. (Note: this isn't the only way to establish achievement.)
Priority 9: Trauma-Informed Instruction & Support	▪ Understand and respect the living conditions and arrangements of students. ▪ Train staff, teachers and students on trauma, its impacts, interventions and needed supports.
Priority 10: Staff Mental Health	▪ Provide more robust mental health supports for teachers and staff. Both groups are getting burned out and absorb trauma in their jobs. Many are also working two and three jobs to make ends meet.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Don't just use student performance, but look at other assessments, such as STAR. ▪ What happens with schools that have a high ELL or special education population?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age and Condition	▪ When possible, look at "fair" buildings and develop a renovation budget for them,

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ True feeder patterns no longer exist with the District being based on choice, ▪ In right-sizing, the District really needs to look at re-creating feeder patterns, especially from elementary to middle school. This will also help to stabilize some neighborhoods because families may move to the area to limit bus travel.
▪ Community Partnerships	▪ If a school has a strong PTO and partnerships, refrain from closing it. Determine what is needed to improve all other outcomes.
▪ Student Safety	▪ Consider how merging MS or HS may lead to increased fighting. This doesn't mean schools shouldn't be merged, it just means students from different schools need to build relationships before school begins.
▪ School Specialty	▪ Curriculum uniqueness needs to be considered. Is it serving a particular student (i.e., large concentration of ELL students)?
▪ Travel Time / Transportation	▪ MS and HS students should travel no more than 30 minutes/trip on a bus. At the elementary level, the District should attempt no more than 15 to 20 minutes or ensure neighborhood schools.
▪ Location of Charter Schools	▪ A charter school can easily draw students away, especially if the public school isn't delivering results.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

Prepare for Transition
- Start by having conversations early and often with school staff, families and students. Ensure that all involved fully understand the process and have a specific person to speak to about their concerns. Be transparent with the specific costs and benefits of closure during the conversation.
- Conduct a new student orientation (pay teachers for their time) with team building activities.
- Conduct a community/neighborhood fair where parents, families and staff can learn about the resources available to them. This may not be school based, but it be for several schools within a certain radius.

Create a New Sense of Community
- To build a sense of community, host field trip (Magic House, City Museum or Zoo) to a neutral area where students, parents and faculty can begin to connect with each other.
- If it is a MS or HS closing, look at ways to create team events (chess, art contest, sporting events), so that students can have a reason to work together.
- Conduct a new student orientation, possibly a full day or even two days, where students become acquainted with the staff and routine. Pay teachers for working at student orientation.
- Conduct a community/neighborhood fair where parents, families and staff can learn about the resources available to them. This may not be school based, but it should be for several schools within a certain radius.

Repurpose the Building
- Before closing a school, really think about another community use for the building, such that it becomes a magnet for the community.
- Consider other ways to repurpose the building, especially if it is in "fair" condition.

APPENDIX E:
SOLDAN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

St. Louis Public Schools
Community Visioning Workshop Demographic Overview
Workshop #5 – Soldan High School
## Wednesday, March 11, 2020

On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, **67 people** attended the fifth of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **39 (58%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With nearly six of ten attendees (58%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was SLPS parents or guardians at 44%, followed by SLPS employees at 36%. About three of ten (33%) respondents identified themselves in the "other" category. At this event, no respondent identified themselves as a student or elected official.
NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.

STAKEHOLDER TYPE

44% — SLPS Parent or Guardian	
36% — SLPS Employee	
33% — Other	
— SLPS Student	
— Elected Official	
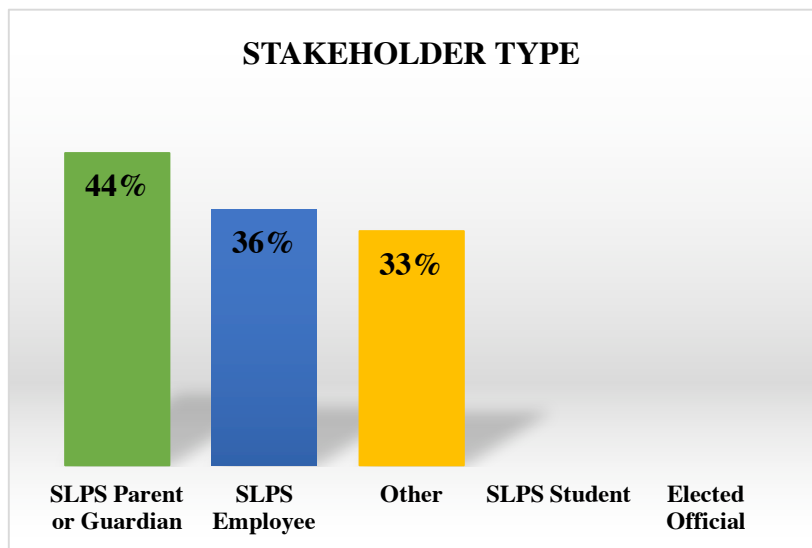
Gender

More than seven of ten (72%) respondents identified as female; and 28% identified as male.

Racial Ethnicity

Nearly six of ten (59%) respondents identified as black; 36% identified as white; and 5% identified as Hispanic or Native American. At this event, no respondent identified themselves in any other ethnic categories – Asian, Middle Eastern, or mixed.

RACIAL ETHNICITY

- White 36%
- Black 59%
- Native American 3%
- Hispanic 2%

Age
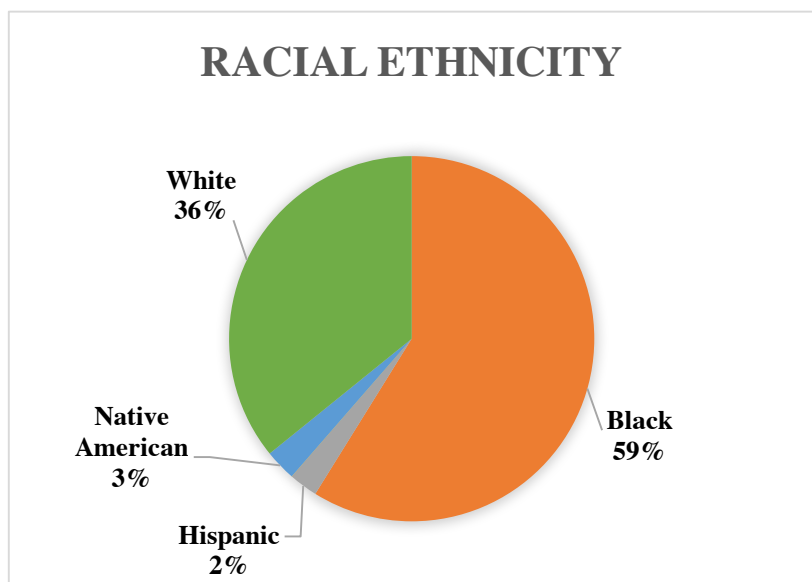
As noted in the chart, nearly four of ten (36%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 to 64 years of age; and roughly one of ten (8%) identified as 65+ years of age. There were no respondents less than 25 years of age.
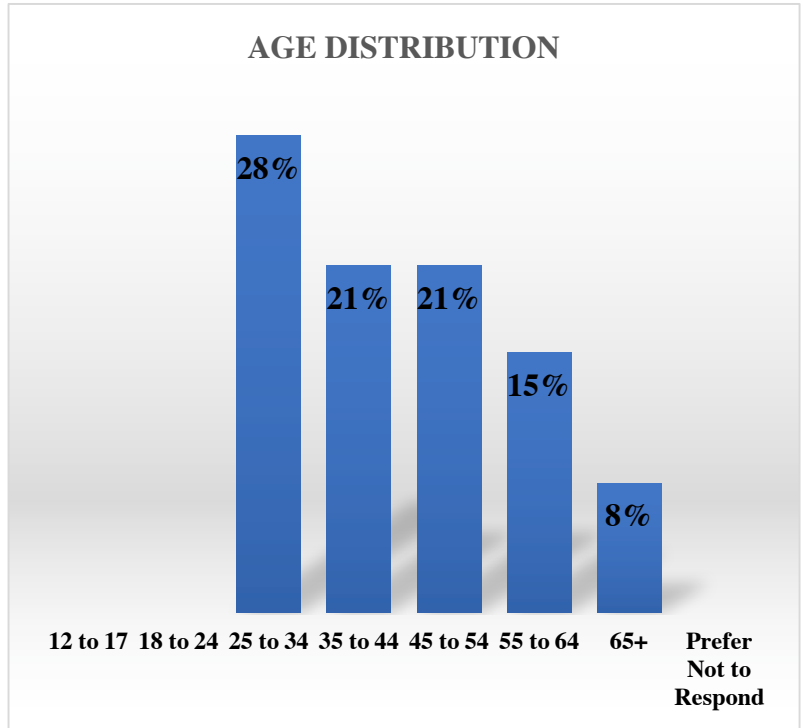
Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly seven of ten (68%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 32%, the following was reported:

- o One (3%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Two (5%) had three children enrolled;
- o Five (13%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Eight (21%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

		28%	21%	21%	15%	8%	
12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	Prefer Not to Respond

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of respondents identifying that school. Parents/guardians represented students from 13 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)	Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Clay – 1 ▪ Dewey – 1 ▪ Froebel – 1 ▪ Kennard – 2 ▪ Mann – 2 ▪ Mallinckrodt – 2 ▪ Shaw –2	▪ McKinley – 5 ▪ Yeatman – 1	▪ Carnahan – 1 ▪ Metro – 3 ▪ Soldan – 1 ▪ Roosevelt – 1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Between 85% to 90% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Rebeccah Bennett;
- ▪ Natalie Parks, Ph.D.; and
- ▪ eNicol Scates.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Soldan High School – Wednesday, March 11, 2020
Rebeccah Bennett

Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS

▪ Broken / dysfunctional (3)
  ➜ Shambles / disarray
  ➜ Fractured
▪ Two-tiered (magnet vs neighborhood) (2)
▪ Under-resourced
▪ Underrated
▪ Out of touch
▪ In flux
▪ On the verge of returning to glory days with elected board being back in control
▪ Bureaucracy
▪ Inefficient
▪ Poor communication
▪ Misses opportunities
▪ Stuck
	▪ Inequitable (3)
	  ➜ Disparate instruction
	  ➜ Disparate grading practices
	▪ Striving for excellence and equity
		▪ Unrealized potential
		▪ Lack of mindfulness
		▪ Uncaring

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ Empowered teachers and staff
  ➜ Have the power to do more than triage issues
  ➜ Provide differentiated instruction and support
  ➜ Center students learning needs
▪ Teachers know their subjects and how to teach very well, whatever populations they serve
▪ Principals who are able to make school staffing and climate decisions efficiently, taking into account the needs of their students and communities
▪ More staff, all schools are at full staff capacity
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Student and family support services are provided by full-time staff at every school, including nurses, social workers, counselors, and family / community specialists

Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ 21st Century curricula ▪ Standardized curricula across all disciplines with some flexibility to meet student and school needs ▪ Curricula are well rounded and include life skills, home economics, band, the arts… These classes help to give schools their identity and appeal to students' interests ▪ Children learn and express themselves without distractions like cell phones ▪ STEAM, instead of STEM. More emphasis on the arts ▪ Access to the latest technology	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Families want to be involved in their children's learning and schools
	Student Performance / Educational Outcomes ▪ Students want to be at school ▪ No dead ends – all education pathways lead to opportunity, support and preparation for the next level of learning and development, no matter what school students attend

Question 2 Continued

Safety	*Miscellaneous*
▪ Procedures are in place to deal with any safety issues that arise: 　➔ Buildings are secure 　➔ Students experience intellectual safety. "I am different. I learn differently. I feel okay to be this way." 　➔ Discipline issues are handled in a restorative and not retributive or shame-based way. Emotional safety is centered	▪ Schools are integrated into the life of the wider community

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Budget Transparency & Accountability	▪ Communicate how the District is spending its resources. Share this information publicly.
Priority 2: Advance Equity	▪ Address the disparities between magnet schools and neighborhood schools. There is currently a lack of equity in resource allocations, which adversely affects neighborhood schools.
Priority 3: Collaboration Across the Education Landscape	▪ SLPS and charter schools better coordinate and collaborate. They are both part of the city's education system.
Priority 4: Increased Bottom-Up Accountability	▪ Accountability plans are developed and led by teachers and others who directly engage students on a daily basis.
Priority 5: Build on What Works	▪ Look at what is working in the District's existing schools and export this across the system, where applicable. Share effective practices among and between schools.
Priority 6: Student Management	▪ Put a coherent cell phone policy in place and enforce it. This will help to address counter-productive behaviors and distractions to learning. 　➔ ***Dissenting Perspective:*** Cell phones also serve an instructional purpose, especially in the absence of adequate technology. Also, the issue is less about policy enforcement and more about securing student buy-in. ▪ Increase students' focus on learning rather than socialization. "Our children are out of control and are not focused."
Priority 7: Student Engagement	▪ Talk to all students, especially those who are not successful, about what it takes to create successful schools.
Priority 8: Teacher Satisfaction & Development	▪ Address and resolve disparities in teacher compensation and benefits. Currently, staff are not adequately compensated, appreciated, supported, trained and resourced. ▪ Stop having SLPS be the training ground for other neighboring districts. ▪ Require that teachers have expertise and credentialing in their subject areas / disciplines. Ensure that they receive adequate professional development.
Priority 9: Best Transformation Practices	▪ Research effective systems transformation efforts in comparable districts. Explore best and promising transformation practices at SLPS. ▪ Honestly evaluate school and District initiatives that promise transformation. So many of these programs are strong only while they are led by passionate people, but when the people leave, the programs go away or fail.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 10: Community Engagement & Partnerships	- Deepen school connections and partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods and communities. - Leverage community support and resources more effectively to help advance schools' missions and student success. - Make schools places that attract residents to build and stay.
Priority 11: Technological Literacy	- Ensure technological literacy for all students, especially since digital skills have increasingly become work and life skills. However, recognize that technology is a support, not a panacea. ➔ ***Dissenting Perspective:*** Technology is NOT where to spend precious resources. It changes rapidly and should not be a crutch to the intellectual mastery of content and its applications
Priority 12: Libraries & Multi-Media Centers	- Teach students how to do research and interface with technology. - Advance media literacy so that students know what information to trust. - Make sure that technology is present and works.
Priority 13: Instructional Practices	- Increase emphasis on experiential, innovative and problem-based learning. Much of this got lost due to funding cuts. ➔ "The worst place to learn is in the classroom." - Ensure that students have more direct access and exposure to learning resources. These facilitate greater conceptual understanding of content.
Priority 14: Staff and Student Retention W/N Schools	Address turnover issues. Turnover compromises relationships and causes transformation initiatives to fail.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factors – City-Wide Development**	- Development in the city's Northside is not slated for the same scale and level of investment as the city's Central Corridor. Using this criterion will reinforce structural inequities and disadvantage Northside communities. - Legacies of redlining, housing segregation and school desegregation have resulted in the dismantling of SLPS. - Use demographic projections to help determine investments. - Engage with the Vacancy Collaborative to get a sense of the innovative developments that are underway beyond SLDC's conventional practices. - The District needs to have different policy and practice conversations with the city, state and businesses about development activities.
▪ **Existing Factors – Performance**	Do not shut down schools because they did not perform, especially when systemic inequalities and resource bias have contributed to performance. Do not blame students and schools for municipal / corporate divestment.
▪ **Existing Factors – Capacity**	- Capacity does not take into account community relationships. - The unequal investments in magnet schools versus neighborhood schools have driven capacity problems. - The District must talk about school usage, not just school capacity.
▪ School Usage	How are schools being used? This matters more than capacity. The District has more flexibility and can be more creative in its transformation efforts when it focuses on usage and not just capacity.
▪ General Critique: Apply A Racial Equity Lens	Apply a racial equity lens to all existing criteria.

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ Home Ownership	▪ No additional explanation provided.

5. What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?

▪ **Have A Clear Vision:** Develop an authentic, well-thought out, positive vision for the District's transformation. Be clear about what the District is really trying to achieve and how closing schools helps the city. Frame for the community, "This is where we are going. Come with us."	▪ **Repurpose Old Buildings:** Consider smart shrinkage for old, large school buildings. Develop plans for repurposing.
▪ **Engage Communities:** Hold more conversations with neighborhood and community groups and interests about impending SLPS changes. Community members need to have more voice in the process.	▪ **Maintain Vacant Schools:** Implement measures to secure and maintain vacant schools that are not repurposed. Set aside funding so that these schools can be reused and do not become blighted and magnets for problems.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Soldan High School – March 11, 2020
Natalie Parks

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Has potential (4) ▪ Under-resourced (3) ▪ Struggling (2) ▪ ▪ Challenged ▪ Choice ▪ Traditional ▪ All over the place ▪ In crisis ▪ Needed ▪ Depressing ▪ Frustrating ▪ Needs major marketing & promotion ▪ Rushed vision ▪ Antiquated ▪ Home	▪ Underperforming ▪ Lagging	▪ Diverse ▪ Discouraged teachers & students ▪ Needs new leadership ▪ Resilient

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ High quality & certified teachers ▪ Culturally responsive staff ▪ Buildings are fully staffed ▪ Competitive pay for staff ▪ Motivated and excited teachers & staff ▪ Professional development that translates into practice in classrooms (e.g., trauma informed instruction)	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* ▪ Culturally responsive curriculum ▪ Small staff to student ratios ▪ Small student to support staff ratios
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ Equitable funding across schools and students	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ High parent involvement
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Clean, warm, friendly, and inviting environment for all ▪ Students excited about learning ▪ Student focused learning & instruction ▪ Innovative and forward thinking ▪ Students receive differentiated instruction based on their individual needs ▪ Classroom style allows for flexible seating ▪ Curriculum is developmentally appropriate for students ▪ Students are fully invested in their educational / career path	*Leadership* ▪ The system is well managed with clear processes ▪ Leadership and management are knowledgeable ▪ Administrators are qualified ▪ Leadership is accountable to the community ▪ Leadership will try new things and allow teachers to try new things as they problem solve ▪ Leaders wait for community support prior to making decisions that impact the community ▪ Leaders are optimistic and hopeful ▪ Student-centered budgeting as opposed to number-centered budgeting (leaders make decisions based on needs of human students)

Question 2 Continued

Stronger Community Connections & Engagement	Heightened Safety
▪ Communicate and connect with community as a whole	▪ Students don't have to get on buses at 5:15 in the morning or ride to school for 75 or more minutes

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Increase Learning Opportunities and Educational Advancement of Students	▪ Create and adopt curricula that make students globally competitive. ▪ Offer trade and work-study programs focused on careers such as nursing, accounting, etc. ▪ Recruit better teachers. ▪ Invest in counseling, sports, AP classes, afterschool activities, art, music, gym, computer classes, reading tutors, and state-of-the-art facilities to make SLPS more competitive and provide students' educational access. ▪ Fill staff vacancies. ▪ Provide small learning environments (smaller class sizes). ▪ Change start times for schools (7am is too early).
Priority 2: Increase and Maximize Community Partnerships	▪ Be open to community partners who want to help with funding. ▪ Actively seek out community partners that can provide funding, services, and resource supports. ▪ Provide classes for parents and other community members – focus on building up the entire community – classes should include home economics, budgeting/personal finance, etc. ▪ Get alumni more actively involved. ▪ Improve connections within the immediate community and amongst community members whether they have kids or not. ▪ Reinstitute community education.
Priority 3: Change the Negative Narrative of SLPS	▪ Campaign for the district to highlight the positives. ▪ Promote the excellence that exists like you would a sports team. ▪ Talk more about the positive things at SLPS. ▪ Promote the district more effectively; charter schools promote their schools, but SLPS doesn't promote theirs. ▪ Promote neighborhood schools like they do magnet and choice schools.
Priority 4: Change Leadership & Problem Solve Proactively	▪ Obtain new leadership. ▪ Create a student / administrative advisory board so that students' voices are heard and actually listen to the students. ▪ Make the budget transparent and allow for community input into decisions regarding how money is spent. ▪ When problems are identified, respond immediately. ▪ Listen first and then create the vision; don't create the vision and then try to problem solve the difficulties. ▪ Eliminate adult egos.
Priority 5: Increase Available Funding	▪ Pay teachers more. ▪ Invest in neighborhood schools like they do magnet and choice schools. ▪ Fix the budget.
Priority 6: Ensure Equity for All	▪ Identify and remove policy barriers (legislation) to equitable education. ▪ Rethink classification of students as gifted, magnet school appropriate… ▪ Ensure all schools are accessible to individuals with disabilities (some buildings are not handicapped accessible and thus students cannot participate in all of their classes).

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 7: Consider Neighborhoods of Closed Schools	- Stop closing schools in high crime neighborhoods. - Retrofit buildings to accommodate students with an eye for growth. - Think outside of the box about what can be done to keep schools open: - Co-location schools where businesses and social service agencies rent part of the space - Keep the building under SLPS, but rent it out to businesses so that it can be reclaimed when enrollment increases - Provide community services out of the closed schools to continue use of the building. - Use schools to help address the homeless student population.
Priority 8: Maximize End of Desegregation	Focus on moving these students back into the district.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
Existing Factor: Feeder Patterns	- Consider busing the students in the south, where schools are overflowing, to the north, where schools are under capacity. - SLPS model is flawed. Charter schools are increasing while SLPS enrollment is decreasing – why? The message that is sent that SLPS is closing schools every year drives people to charter schools. - At what point does introducing choice further cause segregation rather than solve the problem? - The elimination of feeder schools destroys community connections – this needs to be considered.
Existing Factor: City-Wide Economic Development	- Community members have no control over the community and the city-wide development. - Don't build new buildings on the South Side only; consider all locations in the city and build in all areas.
Existing Factor: Academic Performance	- Stop looking at the kids as numbers. - Administration is focused on deficit thinking – they are looking for what teachers are doing wrong. - Magnet schools are not helping the problem. - Charter schools are popping up everywhere.
Existing Factor: Building Age & Condition	- What is the cost of new buildings versus renovation of current buildings? - The architecture of old buildings is great. New buildings are often uninspiring; keep the old architecture - There is a lot of pride in the history of schools. This needs to be considered as well – community impact for closing schools that have alumni with a lot of pride.

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Capacity	▪ Use this measure as a catalyst for betterment rather than for closing. ▪ Consider that in neighborhoods where there are few living / housing options, schools will be under capacity; however, closing them will further drive down property values and increase and perpetuate the problems in that area. ▪ If buildings are at capacity, as it is now determined, the classrooms are actually overflowing. ▪ Feeling that this criterion is not true. Shenandoah is at high capacity, but slated to close – why is this? ▪ How is capacity defined? Are they accounting for new classrooms with flexible seating? For example, McKinley is said to be under capacity, but there are not enough chairs for all of the students and there is not enough space in the cafeteria for the students to sit and eat lunch. ▪ Administrators do not walk through buildings to see how they are being used. Capacity needs to be more than just numbers.
▪ **New Factor:** Busing Patterns & Costs	▪ Costs of busing will increase with more schools closed; children will have further to go if their neighborhood schools are closed. ▪ Should have a budget specifically for maintenance of buildings.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on neighborhoods and communities?**

▪ **Communicate Openly and Honestly:**
   o Have another set of meetings (same number as the community visioning meetings) to address the concerns that have been highlighted during these meetings and tell community members why their suggestions cannot be implemented.
   o Be transparent about the decision-making process and provide reasons as to why suggestions won't work.
   o Allow a time for community to address the superintendent directly.
   o Show up for the community.
   o Hold meetings like this twice each year to determine how things are going and allow for community involvement.
   o Provide the results of these meetings so community members can see the transparency and that their voices were captured accurately. (3)
   o Allow the schools and staff to be a part of the planning process.
   o Start listening.
	▪ **Prioritize How to Keep Schools Open Rather than Closing Them:**
	   o Use schools innovatively and creatively.
	   o Consider the crime rates of closed schools and unused buildings; for example, Cleveland school was closed and crime skyrocketed.
	   o Invest in underserved schools rather than closing them – increase their funding, resources, services, and maintenance.
	   o Consider the impact of closing schools on the neighborhood – property values will decrease, crime will increase, problems will be further perpetuated.
	   o Have a realistic plan for closed schools.
	   o Consider the impact on students who attend schools that will be closed – what message does this send to them? What trauma will they incur? What value statements are we sending them by doing this?
	   o Don't close Sumner; invest in it.

Question 5 Continued

▪ **Increase Accountability:**
    o Ensure that contractors who are paid to do work on buildings actually do that work.
    o Have a plan in general for the district; what are you going to do to make the schools left open the best schools possible – what will you do to make sure you have the best staff, coaches, resources, afterschool programs, etc. are the BEST possible?
    o Stop engaging in institutional airbrushing where you make everything look good on the surface to hide the problems underneath,
	▪ **Ensure Equity:**
	    o Stop comparing schools that have different populations.

▪ **Increase Community Involvement:**
    o Link with the community and address the problems holistically.
    o Be more neighborhood and community friendly as a district. Think about and build relationships with the community and get involved in community events	

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Soldan High School – Wednesday, March 11, 2020
eNiCoL

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Underfunded (2) ▪ Challenged ▪ Free ▪ Dinosaur ▪ Exciting ▪ Hope	▪ Poor education for kids ▪ Graduation rate	▪ Teacher needs more help from parents ▪ More income ▪ Yelling

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ Highly educated and qualified teachers
▪ Culturally competent and trauma-informed teachers who understand their students' backgrounds, are aware of their needs and know how to respond
▪ Competitive, performance based compensation for all staff
▪ Fully-staffed at **every** school (art teachers, nurses, counselors, paraprofessionals)
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Children should feel valued
	▪ Fully staffed student support services
	▪ More coordinated social services so that students get the care they need while in school
	  ➔ Crisis care
	  ➔ Medical support
	  ➔ College counseling

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ More inclusive (leadership, faculty, board) ▪ Diversity, equity, inclusion education built into the curriculum ▪ Combat the wealth gap	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* ▪ Parental engagement and increase support groups ▪ Parents need to be more involved with students' education
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Art rooms & libraries with updated resources ▪ Healthier start times (8:30AM) ▪ Stronger chemistry and other science curriculum ▪ Adoption of best practices system-wide vs. better practices being only at "certain schools" ▪ More off-site experiences - "Students only get exposure to other areas during their bus rides to/from school" ➔ Even exposure to off-site opportunities across all schools ▪ **Where's recess?!** Time to play ▪ Age mixing ▪ STEM everywhere, every school	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes* ▪ More discipline ▪ Restorative justice district (Ex: San Diego School District)
Stronger Community Connections & Engagement ▪ Stronger connection with the State to demand parent involvement	*Heightened Safety* ▪ Safe place for learning

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Parent Engagement	▪ Demand that parents are more responsible by establishing stronger partnerships with the state. 　　○ *Student attendance & performance linked to government funding (**note:** Members of this group had the assumption that all students struggling are from families who receive state funding.)* ▪ Be more welcoming to parents by providing equitable opportunities for parents to be present/engaged at the schools. 　　○ *e.g. Consider time of day, language barriers, child care, etc.*
Priority 2: Upgrade Educational Resources and Policies	▪ **"Educate for the future"** by updating the curriculum to include coding and programming at every school. 　　○ *Educate for 2030 not just 2020* ▪ **Stop criticizing students** for them liking Instagram and other apps; TEACH THEM how to build the apps instead - **MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE!** ▪ Provide laptops/tablets for every student. ▪ Each school should have updated textbooks, not just some schools. ▪ Allow students in H.S. (+possibly mid.) to select their own courses. 　　○ *Lack of choice impacts behavior, desire to learn/engage* ▪ Change the grading system across the district: 　　○ *Eliminate the "D" (e.g. Metro High School)* 　　○ *Don't set students up for failure by allowing them to pass at 65% percent at some schools but then other schools state passing is 70%* 　　○ *Align with the college grading system to better prepare students* ▪ Stop leaning on MAP Testing to design curriculum. ▪ Bring back trade schools vs. solely "classical education."
Priority 3: Increase Quality of Teachers	▪ Vet current teachers: "Are they the right teachers for the students of today?" ▪ Hire educators not "babysitters." ▪ Hire more counselors for academic advising.
Priority 4: Community Partners and Funding	▪ Look to outside community partners for funding opportunities - don't rely on tax dollars ▪ Establish community partnerships so students have wider selection of internships and jobs. ▪ Work with local tech companies like LaunchCode (coding, data analysis, design), Square (Finance + Tech), Microsoft (tech products and programming/design), etc. for getting laptops, enhanced engineering/programming curriculum, and also financial literacy resources for students and families. ▪ Be more transparent about the budget and where resources are currently being distributed.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ There are too many issues with current grading system for this to be a fair indicator for which schools should close. ▪ There's been unequal distribution of student and teacher resources. ▪ The grading system, curriculum, and class size are not the same at all schools.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Conditions	▪ "They need to consider what will actually be attractive to the surrounding community." ▪ Closed schools hurt communities further.
▪ **Added Factor:** Teacher Retention	▪ Consider what teacher rates have been like at each school year-over-year. ▪ Teachers have been more likely to leave certain schools than others for better salaries and more support in the county.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Make Schools Accessible to All Neighborhoods/Families:** Build another high school on the west side (north of Delmar).	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Put vacant buildings to alternative uses, but not as lofts or senior homes - only something that can benefit the entire community

▪ **Adopt A Phased Approach:** Implement cross-school, cross-community teambuilding/gathering - similar to the community visioning sessions, but for new parents and existing parents, new students and existing students, new teachers and existing teachers, etc. to start working together before the schools officially close. Then, develop an individual plan for each student (involve parents) because students need to be guided to programs of interest, ones that are similar to what they were involved in at their previous schools. Survey students about their priorities and experiences (e.g. Metro does this bi-weekly).
    o Don't start closures until after next school year.
	▪ **Ensure Small Class Sizes: 20**
	    o Allow for a good student - to - teacher ratio.
	    o Ensure that consolidation doesn't result in lower quality learning environments.

APPENDIX F:
ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOP
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020

St. Louis Public Schools
Community Visioning Workshop Demographic Overview
Workshop #6 – Roosevelt High School
## Thursday, March 12, 2020

On Thursday, March 12, 2020, **70 people** attended the last of six St. Louis Public Schools' community workshops. Of those attending the workshop, **43 (61%)** completed the demographic survey and provided information about their stakeholder type, gender, racial ethnicity, age and the schools attended by their children.

DEMOGRPAHIC INFORMATION

Stakeholder Type

With nearly six of ten attendees (61%) completing the demographic survey, the largest stakeholder group attending this event was individuals indirectly associated with the District – 51% of whom identified themselves in the "other" category. While the survey didn't ask for a designation when someone answered "other," some respondents volunteered designations, such as interested resident, community member or SLPS alumni.

The next largest group (30%) was comprised of SLPS parents or guardians and SLPS employees. Two-percent of attendees identified themselves as students.
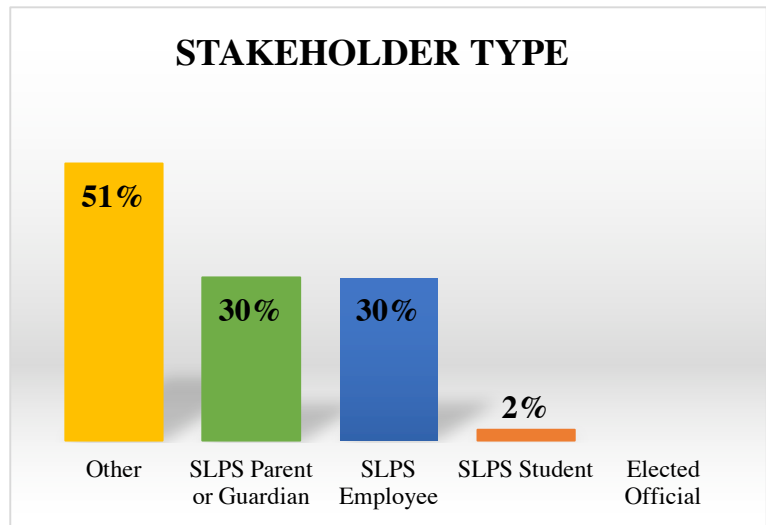
NOTE: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one stakeholder type.

Gender

Nearly seven of ten (65%) respondents identified as female; 33% identified as male; and 2% did not affiliate with a gender.
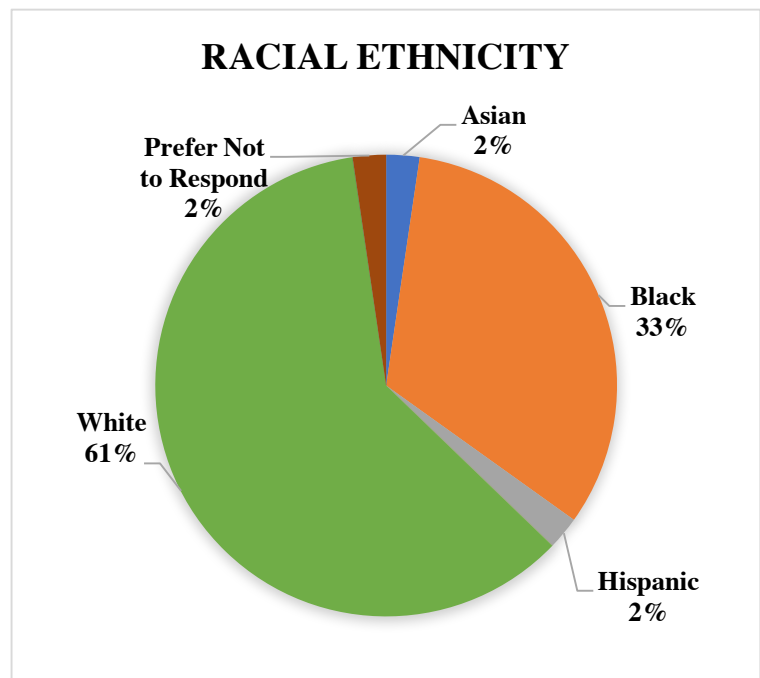
Racial Ethnicity

Six of ten (61%) respondents identified as white; 33% identified as black; and 5% identified as Asian or Hispanic. At this event, no respondent identified themselves in any other ethnic categories –Middle Eastern, Native America or mixed.

STAKEHOLDER TYPE

RACIAL ETHNICITY

Age

As noted in the chart, slightly more than three of ten (33%) respondents identified themselves as being between 45 to 64 years of age; and roughly one of ten (7%) identified as 65+ years of age. There were no respondents less than 25 years of age.
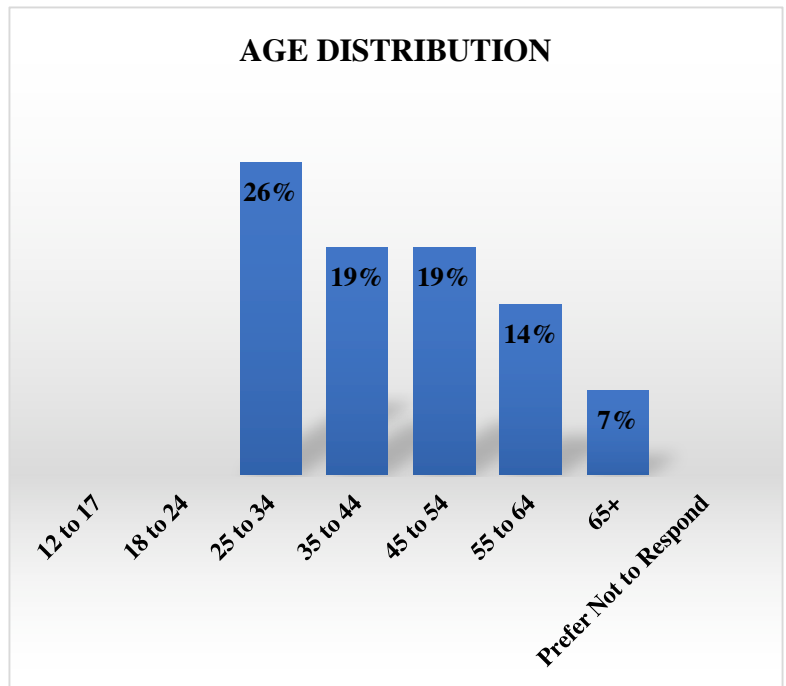
Children in SLPS Schools

Nearly seven of ten (65.5%) stated they did not have children enrolled in the District. Of the remaining 34.5%, the following was reported:

- o One (2%) had four or more children enrolled;
- o Four (9%) had three children enrolled;
- o Four (9%) had two children enrolled; and
- o Six (14%) had one child enrolled.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Parents or guardians identified the following schools attended by their children. The number indicates the number of respondents identifying that school. Parents represented students from 14 schools.

Elementary Schools (includes PK-2)	Middle Schools	High Schools
▪ Ames – 1 ▪ Columbia – 1 ▪ Hickey – 1 ▪ Humboldt – 2 ▪ Mallinckrodt – 3 ▪ Meramec –2 ▪ Stix – 2 ▪ Wilkinson – 2	▪ McKinley – 5 ▪ Yeatman – 1	▪ Carnahan – 1 ▪ Metro – 3 ▪ Soldan – 1 ▪ Roosevelt – 1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Between 70% to 75% of workshop attendees participated in one of five small group discussions, which were facilitated by the following Emerging Wisdom facilitators:

- ▪ Lorren Buck;
- ▪ Brittini Gray;
- ▪ Jessica Perkins; and
- ▪ eNicol Scates.

The following reports detail participants' responses during the small group discussions.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Roosevelt High School – Thursday, March 12, 2020
Lorren Buck

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
- Has potential (3) - Needs work / help (2) - Surviving - Unorganized - Recovering - Disjointed - Necessary - Neighborhood - Underrated - Discipline	- Underperforming - Problems - Disappointing	- Caring - Selfish - Irresponsible - Sad - Overwhelmed

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff - Excellent teaching - Robust professional development - Support for teachers and teaching resources - Classes on effective, communication, mediation and de-escalation - Supplemental staff for each school to help teachers	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* - Students have social supports so they are prepared to learn (i.e. food, housing) - Network of services (medical, psychological, nutritional, social)
Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Holistic vision of education to serve students - Love for students - Consistency of education across the system - Serious look at discipline/policies - Bully free - School pride, heritage and ownership (St Louis culture identifies closely with high school matriculation)	*Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships* - Creative solutions for parents who don't have flexibility to visit during school hours - Systems are evaluated by parents and students - Parents are treated as stakeholders (partner with parents) - Parental involvement and accountability
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences - Inspiring architecture: "doesn't look like a warehouse" i.e. Clyde C. Miller, Metro - Increased technology, text books and resources (district has a decline in reading scores) - Out-of-box curriculum, scalable solutions - Separation of classrooms for behavior management / developmental supports	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes* - Educate for college prep so that students won't enter with remedial classes – European systems of trade - Students are educated around all career/college options (dual enrollment, college credit, home economics, woodshop)
Stronger Community Connections & Engagement - Community involvement in decision making: proactive engagement vs. last minute - Schools as community centers offering services - Open process for approving charter schools	

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?

,

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Teacher & Staff Capacity, Development & Resourcing	▪ Provide relevant professional development and helpful technology (ex. Google classrooms). ▪ Show value and respect for teaching staff. Ensure a quality work environment, competitive wages, and opportunities for leadership. ▪ Offer adequate resources and sufficient prep time. Emphasize teaching vs. data collection. ▪ Advance accountability on hiring practices. Nepotism exists to give unfair advantages. There is a lack of continuum ▪ Stop comparing SLPS and county districts. ▪ Focus on relationship building among all workers, students and families.
Priority 2: Increased Financing	▪ Audit current processes regarding resources and money. ▪ Better utilize buildings by repurposing them for community centers, activities, job placement, night classes yoga etc. No building should be empty and repurposing could generate additional funding for the district. ▪ Pursue creative funding. Secure more financing through efforts like "adopt a school," and "principal for a day" with corporate leaders/neighborhood businesses (schools retain autonomy). These efforts can help revitalize relationships between schools and their surrounding neighborhoods.
Priority 3: Smaller Class Sizes	▪ Implement smaller class sizes. These are better for learning and relationship building.
Priority 4: Family Support Services	▪ Integrate services with Big Brother& Big Sisters. ▪ Advance a more equitable distribution of resources during non-school hours.
Priority 5: Parent / Family Engagement	▪ Find systematic ways to listening to parents – to be responsive to their concerns (i.e. bullying by teachers and administrators), exit interviews for families that leave district, logs for complaints etc.
Priority 6: Innovative & Specialized Schools	▪ Consider adopting the business plan of charter schools since they have found success in increasing their student numbers.
Priority 7: Enhanced Curricula	▪ Utilize an app for communication, academic performance and homework.
Priority 8: Community Involvement	▪ Engage community champions who can help advocate for more resources for SLPS instead of for charter school. ▪ Promote and market excellence to recruit staff and students. ▪ Seek community input on major district changes and on issues of corruption.
Priority 9: Stronger Academic Preparation	▪ Adopt holistic, student-centered academic approaches that prepare students for success. ▪ Tests should be used to improve students' performance/teaching, not to check a box. ▪ Use data collection for growth instead of for punitive practices. ▪ Lessen emphasis on testing (students experience test anxiety). Learning should be the priority.
Priority 10: Budget Transparency	▪ The District needs to hold its outside contractors accountable for the work done. ▪ Manage resources effectively i.e. do not putting new AC units in building which are on the list to close. ▪ Provide equal investments in schools, not just in some schools.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Choice schools eliminate feeder patterns (contradictory information). ▪ Choices are sabotaged when students are screened for school admissions. Choices don't exist.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ The District needs smaller class sizes (15-20 students per class vs. 30 per class). ▪ Will transportation costs increase when students are bussed further from their homes throughout the district?
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Inequity exists in the system. ▪ Performance should not be a consideration. Blame is placed on students and teachers. ▪ There needs to be more focus on student growth and progress rather than test scores.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Sublease to local businesses.
▪ **Existing Factor:** All Factors	▪ Do all factors need to be low for schools to be considered for closure?
▪ Parent, Community Input/recommendations	▪ Stronger communities
▪ History, heritage of school/neighborhood	▪ The District needs a clear, thought out identity.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely Communication:** Develop a sense of trust with the community. Damaged relationships exist because of a lack of communication. The community feels manipulated.	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Sublease district buildings. Schools should not be closing.
▪ **Maximize Student Options:** Support students in their rights to civil protest. Ensure good neighborhood options for students.	▪ **Maintain Vacant Buildings or Demolish Them:** If buildings are vacated without a new occupant, the District should maintain them
▪ **Aggressively Advertise Available School Properties:** Seek buyers for vacated school buildings.	▪ **Miscellaneous:** SLPS should have a say in charters opening. When charter schools buy SLPS buildings, they should be required to honor existing name" i.e. Sumner.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Roosevelt School – Thursday, March 12, 2020
Brittini Gray

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Convenient ▪ Strong History ▪ Crippled ▪ Stimulating ▪ Blinded ▪ Dependent	▪ Falling short	▪ Un-empowered ▪ Nice/decent ▪ Different

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff ▪ High faculty and staff satisfaction ▪ Higher expectations for student success and performance, academically, socially, and in all developmental areas of life ▪ Competitive compensation for staff	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources* ▪ Fully staffed student support services with high quality and staff morale
General Descriptors ▪ Safe ▪ Self-Sufficient ▪ Powerful ▪ Trustworthy ▪ Organized	*Parent and Community Engagement* ▪ Higher rates of parental involvement ▪ Safe communities and neighborhoods
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences ▪ Up-to-date technology ▪ Physically comfortable, visually stimulating environments ▪ A well-funded district that underwrites greater experiences, especially field experiences	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes* ▪ Excellent student outcomes ▪ Increase of electives and extracurricular activities to give students more options ▪ High student satisfaction ▪ Higher graduation rates and test scores

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Students and Teachers	▪ Eliminate staff vacancies. Ensure all staff are qualified and quality. ▪ Promote safer school environments without an increase of SROs. ▪ Provide teacher compensation that is at least equal to county schools. ▪ Put social and emotional supports in place for students and teachers, from 1st year teachers to veterans.
Priority 2: Address Barriers Impacting District Success	▪ Address charter school issues. ▪ Seek greater involvement from community stakeholders, especially businesses located in target neighborhoods.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 3: Better Facilities	▪ Consolidate schools, but ensure that they lead to greater diversity of student populations. ▪ Sale excess stuff from closing buildings and reinvest these funds to improve and build new spaces and facilities.
Priority 4: Communication	▪ Ensure better communication from the district as a way to increase parent involvement across the district. ▪ Communication will also build greater trust between the employees and the district.
Priority 5: Resources	▪ Make sure that all schools are adequately and properly resourced- supplies, books, technology, playgrounds, etc. ▪ Adopt healthy start times and pickups for buses. ▪ All schools need to be excellent schools. This requires leveling out resources to schools.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** City-Wide Economic Development	▪ Development is only happening in certain areas, so what happens with the schools in blighted communities? ▪ Northside gentrification did not benefit the community schools, but instead starves existing schools through the creation of private and charter schools. ▪ Community schools need greater protection and deeper collaboration. ▪ The state needs to do a better job regulating charters.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Feeder patterns are directly connected to development. See the comments above.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ Academic performance is important to consider for mergers. Don't blend multiple low performing schools. How can the bar be raised with mixed performing students learning together? ▪ Teachers need to be culturally competent to engage diverse student populations, especially those from low income backgrounds. All staff need to be trauma informed to ensure the success of students. ▪ Physical environment and safety are factors for performance. ▪ Have fewer duties for principals so they can engage with parents more deeply, beyond discipline.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Does the current condition of schools vary by location? How far do students need to travel from their homes to get to a good building? ▪ Does transportation cost increase or decrease with consolidation as it relates to building conditions? Strategic consolidation needs to happen with attention to this concern. ▪ Pick centralized locations to stay open to reduce the amount of travel time.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ Schools need better buy-in from stakeholders, students, families, staff and faculty for student attendance.
▪ Missing Factors	▪ Dirty politics ▪ Partnerships with businesses

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Provide Timely and Redundant Communication:** Increase the amount of communication to families and communities. Diversify communications, especially integrating social media. This also requires a high level of transparency so everyone knows what is happening.	▪ **Repurpose Vacant Buildings:** Consider taking a school building that is closed and turning it into temporary housing for homeless students in SLPS and their families. This would help advance family and instructional stability.
▪ **Maximize Student and Staff Options:** Announce closings prior to the end of school year. Provide tours and "meet and greets" for relocated families. Schools are equipped with greater resources that will be available to students who previously did not have such resources. Staff get to choose relocation/assignment. ▪ **Smooth Transition:** Offer counseling, guidance and care (social and emotional) for staff and students who will be moving.	▪ **Maintain Vacant Buildings or Demolish Them:** What is the cost of maintenance of vacant buildings vs. tearing them down? If they are torn down, repurpose the land. If the buildings stay open, repurpose them into small business incubators or other options that will stabilize and rejuvenate communities.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Roosevelt – Thursday, March 12, 2020
Jessica Perkins

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Underfunded ▪ Lacking ▪ Fragmented ▪ Bureaucratic ▪ Transition ▪ Unequal resources ▪ Inequitable ▪ Under-rated ▪ Mischaracterized ▪ "Obfuscatory" ▪ Beautiful buildings ▪ Hidden gem	▪ Improving ▪ Disparities ▪ Potential ▪ Better academics	▪ Public Victim ▪ Community ▪ Unsupportive

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff	*Student Performance / Educational Outcomes*
▪ Highly qualified and certified master teachers (experts in their fields) ▪ Teachers dedicated and committed to each student in their classes. They can differentiate abilities and engage students effectively ▪ Appropriate and qualified staff in other areas (Note: swimming and shop couldn't be taught at one school because there was no one qualified to teach) ▪ Competitive compensation and benefit packages (include family support with some flexibility, wellness and mental health programs)	▪ High student performance; everyone is encouraged to stretch and grow ▪ Individual student growth, especially in language arts and math, occurs every year ▪ Promotes and delivers equitable outcomes. Students' backgrounds do not determine their performance and graduation
Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences	*Increased Student Support Services & Resources*

▪ The best academic program
▪ Robust arts education program (i.e., band, theater, etc.)
▪ Strong afterschool programs (sports, arts, remedial, enrichment)
▪ More customized instruction to meet the different learning needs of student
▪ Well-stocked library with a knowledgeable, full-time librarian (trained in technology)
▪ One-to-one technology ratio. Every student has access to computer and internet technology
▪ Emphasis on life skills beyond reading, writing and arithmetic
	▪ Fully staffed student support services
	▪ Lower counselor to student ratio, especially HS
	▪ More coordinated social services so that students get the care they need while in school
	   ➜ Crisis care
	   ➜ Medical support
	   ➜ College counseling

Question 2 Continued

Engaged Community to Support District and Every School	*Miscellaneous*
o Businesses, non-profits and other entities are invested in the District's success o Partners provide opportunities for additional learning (i.e., robust arts program, internships, etc.) o Each school is seen as a community resource or asset o Strong parental involvement with each school having a viable and operational PTO o Elected officials are invested in and advocate for the District. They understand how school closures negatively impact neighborhoods	▪ Adequate funding to support all District, staff and student needs (must be equitable) ▪ Healthy start times based on best practices and evidence-based research ▪ Community is engaged before decision is made (Note: It seemed as though participant wanted more engagement before the District made final school closure selection) ▪ Unified (really this is equitable) – students aren't "tracked"; can't tell what students require more resources ▪ School choice continues (not by zip code but by student interest) ▪ Doesn't have empty buildings that become neighborhood eye sores and advance demise

3. **To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?**

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*

Priority 1: Quality and Quantity of Faculty and Staff	▪ Prioritize the District's workforce:
	  o Improve compensation and benefits offerings
	  o Treat educators like professionals and provide autonomy for classroom decision-making
	  o Provide mental health and wellness care to teachers
	  o Allow some personal flexibility for teachers (don't penalize teachers when they are late (Note: Excludes habitual problems)
	▪ Hire qualified substitutes that understand and value the District
	▪ Hire and train TAs to support teachers, especially in classes where some students require additional attention (academic and/or behavioral).
	▪ Hire and evaluate educators based not only on their teaching abilities, but also on how well they relate to students.

Priority 2: Curriculum	▪ There is "no one size, fits all" curriculum and SLPS should acknowledge that by selecting the best curriculum for students. ▪ Consider learning styles and capabilities when selecting curricula. ▪ All school grades should focus on STEAM. Don't forget the arts. ▪ Technology should be used throughout the learning process, but balance it with other learning modalities. Seek grants to enhance technology. ▪ Ensure that teachers are prepared to use technology in the classroom. ▪ Improve library resources and ensure a full-time librarian is adept at using technology for research.
Priority 3: Partnerships	▪ Partner with major colleges and universities for teachers' assistants. ▪ Strengthen partnerships with businesses, developers and non-profits (Note: Most didn't realize the # of partners SLPS is working with). ▪ Assist schools with partnership development (assessment, cultivation and retention).
Priority 4: Resources and Support for Teachers and Students	▪ Equitably distribute resources (fitness equipment, computers, etc.) to students, regardless of school's location. ▪ Schools should have a FT nurse, social worker, counselor and therapist. ▪ Support teachers needing mental health and wellness assistance.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

Question 3 Continued

Priorities	Changes Within the Priority
Priority 5: Parental Engagement and Involvement	▪ Create new PTOs or strengthen existing PTOs at all schools. ▪ Provide support for parents – life skills training, parent education, child development, etc. ▪ How can parents and teachers work together as a team? It seems as though parents aren't welcome in schools.
Priority 6: Facilities	▪ Decrease the number of buildings to decrease building maintenance expense. ▪ Ensure HVAC is working well; and schools are lead and asbestos free. ▪ Improve ADA, where needed. ▪ Modernize cafeterias and provide appropriate culinary equipment, so students can learn cooking as skill or profession. ▪ Increase green space and social gathering areas (interior and exterior).
Priority 7: Measuring Achievement	▪ Testing isn't the only way to measure achievement. The District should use other modalities. ▪ Stop teaching to the test and over testing students to report achievement and performance. Test appropriately. ▪ Each school should have a performance plan for every student (not just students requiring an IEP).
Priority 8: Increase Equity and Diversity in Schools	▪ SLPS should integrate students attending gifted and magnet schools into the overall school population because it seems like these schools are the ones receiving the most District, community and parental support.

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

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Capacity	▪ Capacity should be included because of declining population and older buildings. ▪ Capacity must be reviewed with other factors (i.e., school location, such as North City, not only influences enrollment, but academic performance).
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ School performance should not be included because some schools have higher academic performance because their students are selected. ▪ Performance is not a student's fault, in most cases; performance is probably why the school has low enrollment and if performance were improved, possibly enrollment would increase.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Patterns	▪ Feeder patterns no longer exist in SLPS' system of choice. SLPS needs to redefine the concept of neighborhood schools and feeder patterns.
▪ **Existing Factor:** Building Age & Condition	▪ Building age and condition should be considered and SLPS should also look at the school's ability to meet the full needs (academic, social, emotional, interests, etc.) of students.
▪ Transportation Time and Costs	▪ Re-establishing feeder patterns from elementary to middle school could possibly lower transportation costs, as well as a student's travel time. ▪ If JROTC/VPA were closed and students were reassigned to Roosevelt, students living close to JROTC/VPA could actually walk home. JROTC/VPA is at capacity and is not really located in a neighborhood.
▪ Community Connections	▪ If the school has a strong community presence, it should not be closed because relationships are difficult to build and nurture; i.e., the Roosevelt Community Council is very invested in the school.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

Provide Timely and Accurate Communication: Apologize to the under-resourced schools and acknowledge how the allocation of resources has impacted them. Communicate with families, students and staff early and often. Ensure they understand why the closure is occurring, how the decision was made and what to expect when (timeline). Explain the selection process and how schools were prioritized.
Share Space with Others: Create an incubator space for start-ups in under capacity buildings. Entrepreneurs would be in one section of the building and students would be in another. This is an opportunity for students to learn about entrepreneurship and how to be successful. Entrepreneurs would pay minimal rent and this could help to offset the expenses of maintaining a school.
Work with Developers: Incentivize developers to find other uses, such as housing, for the closed schools. Encourage the City of St. Louis to address homelessness through renovating buildings as low-income apartments.
Combine Magnet Programs: Where possible, combine magnet schools with neighborhood schools. Example: Relocate the JROTC and VPA students to Roosevelt (much larger school than JROTC/VPA) and have students take common classes together.
Provide Multiple Options for Student: Allow families to choose the receiving school they desire. No one likes to be told what to do. The options provided must be comparable and consider the student/family's needs. Once the student/family decision is made, ensure transition is easy and accommodates the student/family's needs.
Introduce Students and Families to New School: Host a welcome event for incoming students and provide transportation for the family and sibling childcare, if needed. Connect students to extracurricular activities based on interests (i.e., Girl Scouts program).
Look at Fun Ways to Connect Students to New School: With new students, the school is different (i.e., have all students create a new school mascot). New students should not feel like visitors.

St. Louis Public School District
Community Visioning Workshop
Roosevelt High School – Thursday, March 12, 2020
eNiCoL

<u>**Small Group Discussion Flip Chart Notes**</u>

1. **When you think of the St. Louis Public Schools system as it is today, what one or two words would you use to describe it?**

SYSTEM DESCRIPTORS	OUTCOMES DESCRIPTORS	PEOPLE DESCRIPTORS
▪ Decimated but resilient ▪ Tied to the past ▪ Underfunded ▪ Challenging ▪ Necessary ▪ Rich History	▪ inconsistent success	▪ Diverse ▪ Undervalued

2. **When you imagine a system of excellent schools, what comes to mind?**

Faculty & Staff
▪ District leaders are frequently visiting schools and interacting with students, teachers, parents
    o Leaders from all departments - HR, finance, etc.
▪ Nurturing/caring environment for teachers
	Increased Student Support Services & Resources
	▪ Support all learning styles/needs
	    o When this step is missed, it results in more behavioral problems

Greater Emphasis on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ▪ All schools for all children feel like "Somebody cared that I came here today." ▪ Facilities, academics, creative and athletic resources and opportunities shouldn't be drastically different between schools ▪ Everyone (students, parents, teachers, neighbors, etc.) should feel like they are included and valued stakeholders ▪ Schools resemble the general population, providing better exposure to difference (abilities, economic levels, ethnicities, etc.) ***Enhanced Student Learning & Experiences*** ▪ Small class sizes	***Intentional Parent Engagement & Partnerships*** ▪ Parental engagement and increased participation in support groups ▪ Parents need to be more involved with students' education ▪ More than just the loudest/most privileged voices are heard

3. To achieve the system that you described, what must be the District's top priorities and changes?

Priorities	*Changes Within the Priority*
Priority 1: Establish & Implement Inclusive Processes	▪ All stakeholders are invited to the decision-making table. ▪ Go beyond academic assessments and address the trauma that both students and teachers endure. ▪ Mandate restorative justice education/discipline training for teachers, principals, staff. ○ Stop criminalizing students (e.g. school > Prison pipeline). ▪ Empower community members to come up with solutions (e.g. Mann and Shenandoah). ▪ "Stop chasing the elusive white parent, and I'm speaking as a white parent." Stop structuring school access and resource distribution around white parents/families and trying to attract them to the city. ▪ Stop building the system around the funding and build the system around the needs of the community. ▪ Change the narrative that attending or teaching at a "neighborhood school" is a negative or is less valuable than working at a magnet or charter school.
Priority 2: Upgrade Educational Resources and Policies	▪ Upgrade the curriculum with more electives and bringing back options like Home Economics. ▪ Explore non-traditional settings/schools. ▪ Bring in new educational philosophies. ▪ Conduct a comprehensive reevaluation of programs and assess the divide between magnet and "neighborhood schools." ▪ Establish a formula of commitment for pre-k (50% of families leave after pre-k).
Priority 3: Increase Quality of Teachers	▪ Offer competitive salaries. ▪ Increase recruitment and retention efforts.

Priority 4: Community, Partners and Funding	▪ Establish dedicated partnerships with groups like WePower, Deaconess Foundation, and Empower Missouri.
	▪ Seek outside funding from partners.
	    ○ Be mindful of investors' intentions. Ensure they align with the renewed SLPS mission/vision.
	▪ Prioritize re-imagining the power of the community.
	    ○ Re-purposing should be about building up the community in a way that the current community members identify as areas of need/opportunity.
	    ○ Don't build for "outsiders" build for current families/members
	▪ Community stakeholders need to shift priorities by "seeing investing in education for all students/families as a strategic economic investment."

Priority 5: Transparency	▪ Be transparent about what's happening to our funding and resource distribution. ▪ Promote transparency with funding re-allocation.

Note: Priorities are NOT presented in order of importance.

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

Factor	*Possible Rationale*
▪ **Existing Factor:** Academic Performance	▪ *"I don't understand why academic performance is a factor when the resources haven't been equal or equitable."*

Question 4 Continued

Factor	Possible Rationale
▪ **Existing Factor:** Feeder Pattern	▪ Feeder patterns don't exist anymore. There will be a greater divide between North and South St. Louis.
▪ **Existing Factor:** ALL Factors	▪ Re-evaluate ALL factors because Adams established these a decade ago when he first became superintendent.
▪ **Added Factor:** Teacher Retention	▪ Consider teacher morale. Other districts begin to look more attractive.
▪ **Added Factor:** Timing and Distance	▪ Consider postponing and try implementing these community ideas from the visioning sessions. ▪ What is the impact of distance/school proximity on parents being able to engage?
▪ **Added Factor:** Property Value	▪ Closing schools lowers property values, creating even more of an economic disparity in communities that are already harder hit by systemic oppression.
▪ **Added Factor:** Opening Additional Revenue Stream to Cut Costs	▪ Consider keeping schools open, but lease school spaces (ex. lower level or unused wing) to small businesses, organizations, and incubators. o Students can gain access to learning more about business practices, internships and part-time jobs.

5. **What might be done to lessen the impacts of closures on District stakeholders and communities?**

▪ **Help Parents Be Heard:** People with privilege or the loudest voices use their privilege to help other parents/families be heard and share resources.	▪ **Continue Community Visioning Groups:** Beyond this situation, we should have community sessions facilitated regardless of there being an issue.
▪ **Provide Transition Supports:** Implement a program to incorporate new families into the school/neighborhood. Have more cohesive ways to advertise opportunities to new students/families that existing parents already know about.	▪ **Advance Transparency:** Ensure greater transparency regarding district funding and distribution of resources after school closures. Ex. What will happen with the resources that the closed schools had? o Share info with all stakeholders - in an equitable manner.