



Community Values Surveys

From October 23 - November 10, 2023, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) families, staff and students (grades 6-12) were asked to complete a survey around their educational values. The values are being used to inform the fiscal year 2025 (FY25) budgeting process as SPPS works to start, stop and sustain programs ahead of emergency COVID-19 funding ending.

The surveys asked questions around the purpose of school, how SPPS graduates would be described in the future and the ideal school environment.

The survey was created within the district's Research, Evaluation and Assessment Department. During question creation answers to the questions were lined up with focus areas from the SPPS Achieves plan.

For example, if a response to the question "What do you believe is the purpose of school?" was "To prepare students for college or university", then that answer would be coded to College and Career Readiness. The response "To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values" would be coded to Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction. Detailed coding for survey responses can be found below alongside the survey text.

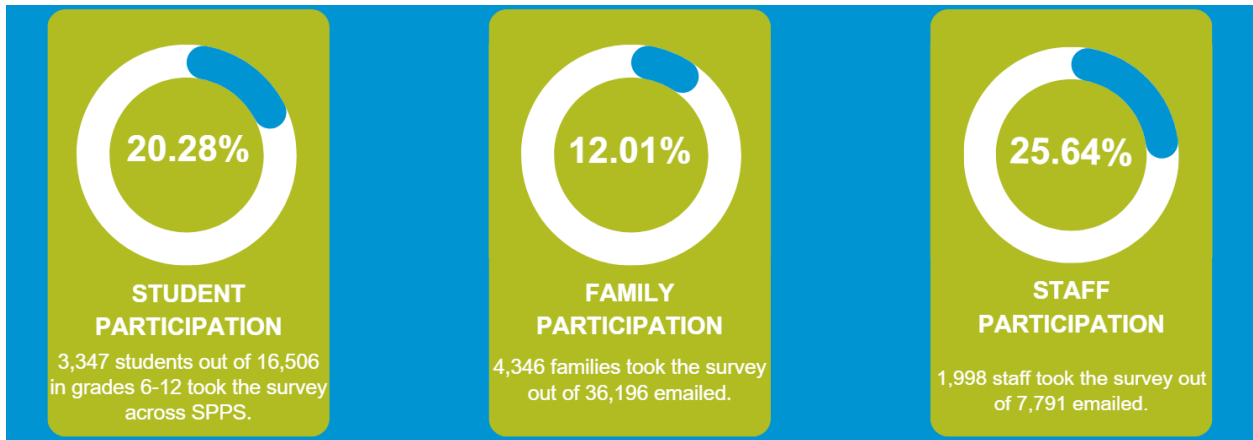
Survey Administration

Student surveys were pushed to their SPPS-provided iPads and emails via the Infinite Campus messaging system. Students also had the opportunity to scan a QR code and take the survey on their personal device - 197 students scanned the QR code. Students could take the survey in English, Spanish, Hmong, Karen or Somali.

Family surveys were pushed via email and text message in collaboration with the Communications department. Families also had the opportunity to scan a QR code and take the survey on their personal device - 207 families scanned the QR code. Families could take the survey in English, Spanish, Hmong, Karen or Somali. Additionally, 106 families took the survey through a phone bank initiative from November 8-9, 2023. The phone bank offered a chance for families to respond in Oromo, Amharic, Somali, Karen, Hmong, Spanish and English.

Staff surveys were pushed via The Bridge and SPPS Today emails as well as via text message.

The question "What do you believe is the purpose of school?" was adapted from the [Brookings Institute's "Collaborating to Transform and Improve Education Systems: A playbook for family-school engagement"](#).



Student Responses to the Survey

When asked how they wanted to describe themselves in the future, students focused heavily on positive words as well as words associated with college and career readiness. Students’ ideal school experiences also heavily leaned into positive school culture.

The most common word students wanted to use to describe themselves in the future was **“successful”** with 55.41% of students selecting it as one of their 3 options. The second most common word chosen was **“happy”** with 42.03% of students selecting it within their 3 options.

Other words with more than 20% of students selecting them were: independent (28.44%), smart (27.67%), confident (25.94%) and respected (21.21%).

When asked about the purpose of school, 37.66% of the students who took the survey selected “To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values”. The second most popular option for students was “to prepare students for college or university” with 25.54% selecting the response.


When asked about their ideal school environment, students favored responses involving positive school and district culture. Students also added that they wanted to feel safe in an ideal school environment. 40.72% of students responded “students have friends” when prompted to think about an ideal school experience. 38.83% of students wanted to have access to activities that interest them. 35.52% of students want to feel safe at school.

Students were provided with the opportunity to write their own responses to the questions. Similar themes arose in the open responses around students valuing creativity, financial literacy opportunities and student choice and voice.

Family Responses to the Survey

Families heavily focused on effective and culturally responsive instruction in their responses. Families also placed a large emphasis on safe schools and college and career readiness.

The most common phrase families wanted to use to describe graduates of SPPS was **“critical thinker”** with 54.37% of families selecting it as one of their 3 options. **“Confident”** and



“**problem solver**” were selected by just over one-third of respondents at 36.29% and 34.59% respectively. Only two other choices, “college-ready” and “independent” were selected by over 20% of parents at 24.45% and 21.21% of respondents choosing them respectively.

34.81% of family respondents believe the purpose of school is “to help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values”. This was the response selected the most.

Over half of family respondents wanted students to feel safe at school in their ideal school experience with 51.19% of respondents choosing “I feel safe at school” as their top response to “choose up to 3 statements you would like to hear your child/children say to you about their schooling experience”. Additionally, 43.25% of respondents selected “I am ready and prepared for my next steps in the world”, showing a family angle towards college and career readiness.

When asked how they wanted communication about the budget to proceed going forward, email was the overwhelming favored mode of communication. A designated webpage on the SPPS website and text messages were also chosen with frequency, but not in the same capacity as emails.

Staff Responses to the Survey

Staff prioritized effective and culturally responsive instruction in their survey responses. There were also strong nods to safe schools and positive school and district culture in responses as well. These ideas are most represented in staff members’ views of the purpose of school and the ideal school experience.

The most common phrase staff wanted to use to describe graduates of SPPS was “**critical thinker**” with 59.72% of staff selecting it as one of their 3 options. The second most common phrase chosen was “**problem solver**” with 45.51% of staff members selecting it within their 3 options. Other words/phrases with more than 20% of staff selecting them were: confident (32.32%), independent (24.72%) and involved citizen (24.66%).

A plurality of staff members selected “to help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values” as the purpose of school with 38.66% of staff members selecting it. Their second most popular choice was “to prepare students to be responsible citizens” with 34.25% of staff members selecting it.

The most common ideal school experience was that “students are ready and prepared for their next steps in the world” with 63.67% of staff members choosing it among their 3 responses. Additionally, “students feel safe” and “students have a sense of belonging” were both chosen by over half of the respondents at 58.79% and 51.37% respectively.

When asked how they wanted communication about the budget to proceed going forward, email was the overwhelming favored mode of communication. A designated webpage on the SPPS website and presentations during school meetings were also chosen with frequency, but not in the same capacity as emails.



Appendix A: Student Survey

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) wants to know what you value in your learning.

SPPS will use the information gathered from this student survey to inform investments for the next school year. You are receiving this survey as an SPPS student.

This survey is optional. You may choose not to participate or skip any questions. Responses will be anonymous, and your email will not be collected. The survey should take less than 7 minutes. Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses.

What grade are you in?


- 6th
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th
- Other

I believe the purpose of school is:

- To prepare students for college or university. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students with the skills needed for the workforce. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students to be responsible citizens. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To provide students with a cultural lens to view the world. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Other

When you grow up, how do you want to see yourself? Pick up to 3 words or phrases.

- Smart (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Independent (College and Career Readiness)
- Confident (Positive School and District Culture)
- Happy (Positive School and District Culture)
- Involved Citizen (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Successful (College and Career Readiness)
- Respected (Positive School and District Culture)
- Powerful (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/College and Career Readiness)
- College-Ready (College and Career Readiness)

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- Career-Ready (College and Career Readiness)
 - Critical Thinker (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
 - Leader (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
 - Justice-Centered (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
 - Problem-Solver (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
 - Other

What is your ideal school experience? Pick up to 3 options.

- School is enjoyable. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students have access to activities that interest them. (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- Students can study what they want to study (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- Students feel safe. (Safe Schools)
- Students have a sense of belonging (Positive School and District Culture/Equity)
- Students feel confident. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students' family heritages are welcome and represented. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/Equity)
- Students have friends. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students are ready and prepared for their next steps in the world. (College and Career Readiness/Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation)
- Students have an adult they can talk to. (Positive School + District Culture)
- Other

What else would you like the district to know about your educational values? Open-Ended



Appendix B: Family Survey

As we prepare for the 2024-25 school year, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is conducting a survey to gather feedback on educational values that can be used to inform investments for fiscal year 2025.

SPPS wants to hear from our families, students, staff and other community members about their opinions related to educational values. You are receiving this survey as a family member of an SPPS student.

This survey is optional. You may choose not to participate or skip any questions. Responses will be anonymous, and your email will not be collected. The survey should take less than 10 minutes. Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses regarding your values.

I am the parent/guardian of one or more children attending Saint Paul Public Schools.

- Yes
- No

I have a child/children in:

- Early Childhood Family Education
- Pre-K/Early Childhood
- PreK-5
- 6th -8th grade
- 9th -12th grade
- Transition (Focus Beyond, Journeys, Gateway to College)
- Specialized setting (e.g. hospital)

I believe the purpose of school is:

- To prepare students for college or university. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students with the skills needed for the workforce. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students to be responsible citizens. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To provide students with a cultural lens to view the world. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Other

How do you want to describe an SPPS graduate? Pick up to 3 words or phrases.

- Smart (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Independent (College and Career Readiness)
- Confident (Positive School and District Culture)
- Happy (Positive School and District Culture)
- Involved Citizen (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)

- Successful (College and Career Readiness)
- Respected (Positive School and District Culture)
- Powerful (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/College and Career Readiness)
- College-Ready (College and Career Readiness)
- Career-Ready (College and Career Readiness)
- Critical Thinker (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Leader (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Justice-Centered (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Problem-Solver (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Other

Choose up to 3 statements you would like to hear your child/children say to you about their schooling experience.

- I like school. (Positive School and District Culture)
- I am involved in activities that interest me. (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- I can learn about things I'm interested in learning about. (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- I feel safe at school (Safe Schools)
- I feel like I belong at my school. (Positive School and District Culture/Equity)
- I am confident that I am able to get good grades (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- My family identity is welcomed and represented at my school (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/Equity)
- I have friends. (Positive School and District Culture)
- I am ready and prepared for my next steps in the world. (College and Career Readiness / Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation)
- I have an adult I can talk to about whatever is on my mind. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Other

How would you like to receive communication and updates regarding the FY25 budget?

- Email
- Phone Calls
- Specific webpage on spps.org
- Presentations at PTO/PTA meetings
- Information distributed during parent-teacher conferences
- Text message alerts
- Other

What information would you like provided about the SPPS budgeting process? Open-Ended



Appendix C: Staff Survey

As we prepare for the 2024-25 school year, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is conducting a survey to gather feedback on educational values that can be used to inform investments for fiscal year 2025.

SPPS wants to hear from our families, students, staff and other community members about their opinions related to educational values. You are receiving this survey as a staff member of SPPS.

This survey is optional. You may choose not to participate or skip any questions. Responses will be anonymous, and your email will not be collected. The survey should take less than 10 minutes. Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses regarding your values.

In which setting do you work?

- School building(s)
- Non-school setting

Are you licensed or non-licensed?

- Licensed
- Non-licensed

I believe the purpose of school is:

- To prepare students for college or university. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students with the skills needed for the workforce. (College and Career Readiness)
- To prepare students to be responsible citizens. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To help students gain self-knowledge, find their personal sense of purpose, and better understand their values. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- To provide students with a cultural lens to view the world. (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Other

I believe education is effective when... Select up to your top 3 options.

- Students are proficient on statewide/national tests. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Students achieve at or above grade level. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Students are developing a plan for the future. (College and Career Readiness)
- Students develop friendships and social skills. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities aligned to their interests. (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- Students learn about cultural/racial identities. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Students enjoy school. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students feel safe. (Safe Schools)
- Students' socioemotional needs are supported. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Other

How do you want to describe an SPPS graduate? Pick up to 3 words or phrases.

- Smart (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Independent (College and Career Readiness)
- Confident (Positive School and District Culture)
- Happy (Positive School and District Culture)
- Involved Citizen (Equity/Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Successful (College and Career Readiness)
- Respected (Positive School and District Culture)
- Powerful (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/College and Career Readiness)
- College-Ready (College and Career Readiness)
- Career-Ready (College and Career Readiness)
- Critical Thinker (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Leader (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Justice-Centered (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Problem-Solver (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction)
- Other

How do you want students to experience SPPS? Choose up to 3 options.

- School is enjoyable. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students have access to activities that interest them. (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- Students can study what they want to study (Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation/Equity)
- Students feel safe. (Safe Schools)
- Students have a sense of belonging (Positive School and District Culture/Equity)
- Students feel confident. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students' family heritages are welcome and represented. (Effective and Culturally Responsive Instruction/Equity)
- Students have friends. (Positive School and District Culture)
- Students are ready and prepared for their next steps in the world. (College and Career Readiness/Program Evaluation and Resource Allocation)
- Students have an adult they can talk to. (Positive School + District Culture)
- Other

How would you like to receive communication and updates regarding the FY25 budget?

- Emails
- Phone Calls
- Designated webpage on spps.org
- Presentations during professional development days
- Informational distributions during all-staff school meetings
- Text message alerts
- Other

What information would you like provided about the SPPS budgeting process? Open-ended