

# Meeting Notes – Peer Districts

*Below is a summary of what was shared/discussed during each meeting agenda item.*

## 1. Welcome & Administrative Items

- The project team welcomed attendees, provided an overview of printed handouts, and walked through the updated steering committee and project timeline, and what to expect in upcoming meetings.
- A summary of card sort results was shared, and the team noted that a digital version of the card sort activity is now live and will remain open for the next month.

## 2. Peer District Strategy Case Studies

- The project team shared high-level snapshots of selected peer districts, noting outcomes. These peer district case studies are intended to inform discussion and spark ideas—not serve as prescriptive guides or definitive evaluations.
- Selected Districts were grouped into five categories, each reflecting a different approach to challenges familiar to MPS' context.
  - **Transportation Policy**
    - Minneapolis: Transit Passes for HS students:
      - Students lose yellow bus access in high school.
      - Outcomes include improved attendance and equity access with Metro Transit partnership.
    - Cleveland: Side by side comparison of their transportation criteria vs MPS
  - **Prioritizing Neighborhood Schools**
    - Cincinnati: (Community Learning Centers):
      - Full-district CLC transformation; entire district transitioned to CLCs with wraparound services major outcomes in graduation/enrollment.
    - Indianapolis: (Rebuilding Stronger Plan):
      - School closures and reconfiguration with mixed early results.
      - Mixed reception: enrollment dip in middle schools could be attributed to rollout.
  - **Reversing Declining Enrollment**
    - St Paul: (Enrollment Marketing Initiative):
      - Targeted outreach via consultant led to enrollment uptick.
    - Oakland: (Transitional Kindergarten Expansion):
      - State-supported funding drives demand and site expansion of early childhood education.

- **Portfolio Rightsizing**

- Denver: Closures with reinvestment; bond support and academic gains.
- Kansas City: (Reuse of Closed Schools):
  - Equity driven. adaptive and community reuse strategy for vacated schools.
  - District retains equity review over repurposing of buildings.

- **Aging Facilities**

- Baltimore: (21st Century Schools Program):
  - Rebuild-first strategy, strong engagement, and equity prioritization.
  - New buildings opened before closures, partnerships across agencies. Modernized schools yielded improved outcomes.
- Washington DC: (Modernization with PACE Act):
  - \$6B+ investment; data-driven prioritization and enrollment growth.

### **3. Web Tool Preview**

- The team previewed a new interactive web-based tool designed to support decision-making. The tool allows users to adjust weights (e.g., Enrollment, Utilization, FCI) to see how schools group into different strategy pathways.
- It includes filters by school type, and equity lenses, helping users explore targeted scenarios as well as toggle between strategy groupings and view geographic maps and summary tables.
- The tool is intended to help test assumptions and visualize the impact of different prioritization scenarios and will be used for prioritization and scenario exploration

### **5. July Lookahead**

- The project team previewed the next meeting's focus, which will center on prioritization and scenario exploration.
  - July meeting dates will shift due to the July 4th holiday
  - Meetings will be held during the second and third weeks of July, instead of the first and second weeks.
- Updated calendar invites will be sent to reflect this change.
- July and August meetings will be held virtually.
- In September, broader community engagement is planned in place of regular steering committee meetings. Updates on format and specifics will be provided in following months.

### **6. Q&A**

#### **1. Transportation (Minneapolis + Cleveland)**

- a. **Do students who meet only 1 of the 3 criteria for Minneapolis transit passes qualify?** Yes, meeting any one of the criteria qualifies a student for a transit pass.
- b. **Does MPS provide transport for students attending private schools?** Yes, transportation is provided to some, but this includes reimbursement and service, per state law.
- c. **Does MPS get state funds to cover private school transportation?** Yes, but further clarification from district finance leadership is pending.
- d. **Is there data on average cost per student for transportation in Cleveland vs. MPS?** Not currently available; cost-per-rider would be a more useful metric.

## 2. Prioritizing Neighborhood Schools (Cincinnati + Indianapolis)

- a. **Did Cincinnati close schools as part of its CLC transition?** Not known
- b. **If MPS were to implement a CLC or community school model, would it apply to all schools or just some?** Approaches presented are not prescriptive; if applied, strategy could include a subset of schools or focus on key features of the model.
- c. **Why did enrollment drop in Indianapolis after their rollout?** chaotic rollout may have led to confusion making families opt for alternatives. Still early in the process, so long term outcome may change.
- d. **Could the IPS model have worked better if phased?** Possibly, fewer changes at once might have helped families and staff adapt.

## 3. Reversing Declining Enrollment (St Paul & Oakland)

- a. **Did St. Paul close schools before launching their marketing pilot?** Yes, but it's unclear if those closures were connected to the six target schools in the pilot.
- b. **Were the five schools with increased enrollment in St. Paul part of the six targeted schools?** Yes, they were five of the six schools that received marketing support.
- c. **Could MPS encourage employee enrollment with perks like extra leave or volunteer time?** Idea was received positively and likened to Cincinnati's focus on workforce benefits.
- d. **If the WI Supreme Court rules against Act 10, would residency requirements return?**
- e. **Can we guarantee PreK/TK students stay through elementary grades?** Current lottery-based models limit guarantees, which may contribute to attrition.
- f. **Could volunteer-based enrollment marketing (e.g., door-to-door) be more effective than digital?** Possibly, especially in neighborhoods with limited digital access; some schools have done this successfully through staff and family engagement.

## 4. Portfolio Rightsizing (Denver & Kansas City)

- a. **Who decides how repurposed KCPS school buildings are used?** In Kansas City, the district sells buildings and evaluates proposals based on community

priorities; MPS currently must offer buildings to other educational users and is limited by the state statute.

## 5. Aging Facilities (Baltimore + DC)

- a. **Did BCPS wait until the new schools were built before closing the old ones?** Yes, closures were phased, and students moved into newly renovated or newly built schools.
- b. **Was it one-to-one or were multiple schools closed into one new building?** It was not 1:1; new schools often received students from multiple closed schools.

## 6. General / Other Questions

- a. **Why weren't magnet schools included as a focus area of the presentation?** Neighborhood schools were prioritized based on prior input; not enough time to explore all topics in depth.
- b. **Does the LFRMP team interact with the state legislature?** No, the team doesn't engage directly with state legislators.
- c. **Should this planning + LRFMP team be speaking directly with local/state elected officials like the Mayor?** The team acknowledged this and noted they had invited city staff (who attended); future coordination with political leadership is recommended as plans advance.

## 7. Other Issues Raised

- a. **Miami Dade County:** A Steering Committee member brought up Miami Dade County as a possible precedent to look at based on the following (the below are their personal insights and unverified by the project team).
  - i. Miami Dade did Localized Engagement
  - ii. Miami-Dade held individual town halls at each school to ask families why they are leaving for charter or magnet schools
  - iii. Families responded with specific features (e.g., G&T programs, STEM, etc.). The district then strategically added those features to underenrolled neighborhood schools.
  - iv. Overenrolled schools were not expanded further—attention was redirected to less crowded schools.
  - v. Participant shared their sentiments that this approach of understanding where families are hemorrhaging to and addressing their wants is the approach that MPS needs
  - vi. Project team encouraged sharing resources on the Miami-Dade model with the rest of the committee, inviting the speaker to contribute materials to the shared research folder.

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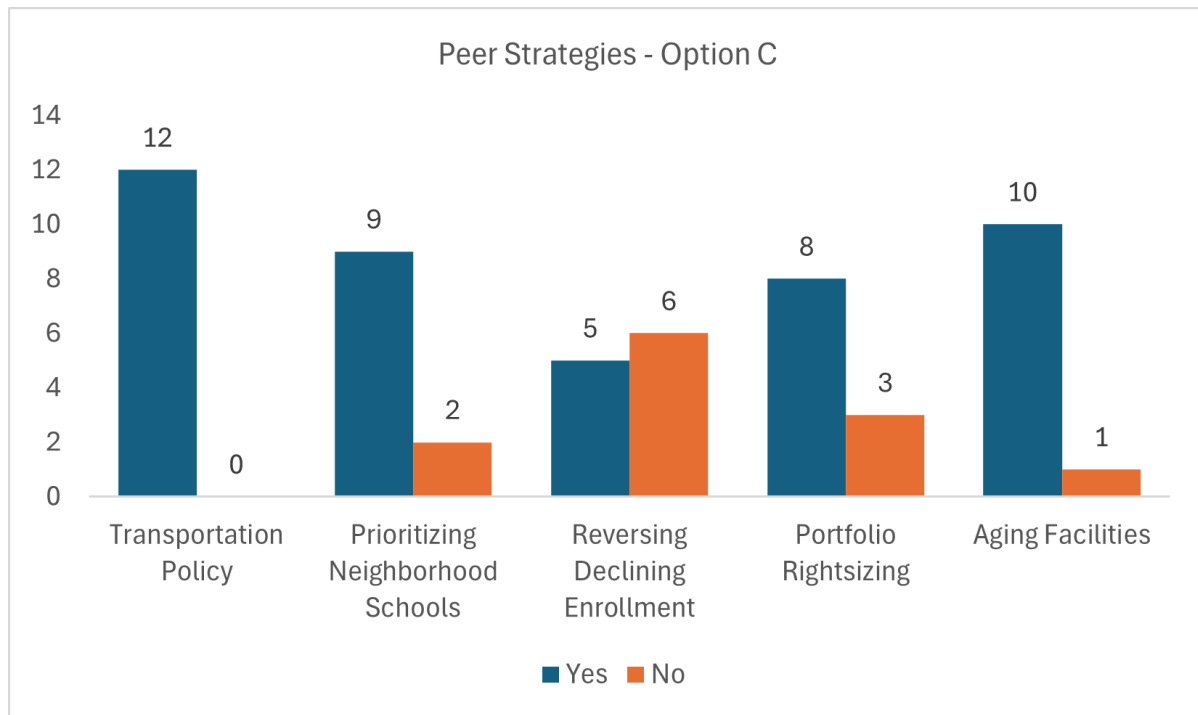
## Mentimeter Activity Overview

*Below is a summarized overview of the prompts that followed each grouping of peer districts*

1. Introduction to the Activity:

- The activity focused on asking steering committee members if they thought each strategy could be effective for MPS based on the information shared on the peer districts. This was a Yes / No prompt
- They were then asked to elaborate and share why they answered Yes / No

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- **Summary of responses** to, “Could a similar strategy on [insert strategy] be effective for MPS?”



**Transportation (Minneapolis + Cleveland)**

- Could a similar strategy on transportation policy be effective for MPS?
  - Yes 12 / No 0
- Please Elaborate. Why, or why not?  
[Responses below are noted as written by participants]
  - Cost
  - Parental buy-in will need to be a part of a roll-out, as many parents may also not be transit users
  - This already exists in the district to an extent
  - I also like the life-skills component of it.
  - Outcomes are impressive. Options that reduce the problem and cost of transportation should be explored.
  - We have too much chaos and weirdness when it comes to transportation access/boundaries. More sensible policies needed.
  - Changing the way MPS operates busing is critical. Lowering the walk-zone radius seems like a common-sense measure to reduce cross-city busing.

- o Consider a cost share? E.g. Students pay 25 cents per ride.
- o Some students are already using public buses. It can show time management and independence.
- o I think not offering busing to high schools is a sensible policy that would help foster independence and improve enrollment at neighborhood schools.
- o Bus passes is something that should be offered to high school students. Don't necessarily agree with taking away busses from high school students.
- o High school can take the county bus. It would help with the tiers of transportation that cause backups in tiers 2 and 3 having to start later in the day.
- o It's wise to utilize a tested strategy yet understand that it should be adjusted by the cultural norms of our district.
- o Then we can use transit money for facility improvement! The public buses are already running so really it could be 'free'
- o MCTS is not reliable or fast enough for so-called "city-wide schools." How might this be addressed in an equitable manner?

### **Prioritizing Neighborhood Schools (Cincinnati + Indianapolis)**

- Could a similar strategy that focuses on prioritizing neighborhood schools be effective for MPS?
  - o Yes 9 / No 2
- Please Elaborate. Why, or why not?
 

[Responses below are noted as written by participants]

  - o Yes... But it takes a comprehensive and supported plan. I don't know that we have the capacity to do it this comprehensively.
  - o The Indianapolis rollout feels VERY relevant. Working with middle schools is important to support through because there are so many different 6-8 models that would need support
  - o Equitable program expansion in neighborhoods is great and should be explored. The catch is the grade level configurations. Families like k-8, they perceive them to be safer than 6-8 schools.
  - o I like the idea of strengthening neighborhood schools, but not sure it's what MPS needs.
  - o Should go to neighborhood schools before closures.
  - o Every high school is a specialty school on paper, but we need to fix the paper to reflect reality.

### **Reversing Declining Enrollment (St Paul & Oakland)**

- Could a similar strategy on reversing declining enrollment be effective for MPS?
  - o Yes 5 / No 6
- Please Elaborate. Why, or why not?
 

[Responses below are noted as written by participants]

  - o Our state legislature is NOT California's state legislature - that's for sure!
  - o Yes...ish. Funding contingent. What is the goal, financial stability or increased enrollment?
  - o MPS should incentivize MPS and city employees to send their kids to MPS
  - o More effective to build institutional capacity.

- o Online advertising seems like a questionable way to increase enrollment when after you google the advertised school “shooting” or other negative press pops up.
- o How would we prioritize which schools get funding for advertising?
- o I love the TK model. There is such a great news for early childhood quality education. If the kids could then love into k-? - great! Lots of foundations are interested in investing in early childhood.
- o A centralized advertising campaign is too much for MPS to do. Social media spreads bad news faster than good news. MPS can’t keep up out communicating the bad.

### **Portfolio Rightsizing (Denver & Kansas City)**

- Could similar portfolio rightsizing strategies be effective for MPS?
  - o Yes 8 / No 3
- Please Elaborate. Why, or why not?
 

[Responses below are noted as written by participants]

  - o The state hates MPS
  - o There is no path to financial viability that does not involve school closures.
  - o Kansas City had a huge desegregation case that impacted the enrollment decline. Closing half the buildings to right size the district is needed.
  - o MPS doesn't need all the buildings it owns but it does need the revenue from the sale. The funding can be a catalyst to a better system.
  - o MPS has too many buildings with too few students.
  - o Having a board decide potential uses is not going to produce equitable outcomes
  - o If you frame it in the right way, right sizing can be done.

### **Aging Facilities (Baltimore + DC)**

- Could similar portfolio rightsizing strategies be effective for MPS?
  - o Yes 10 / No 1
- Please Elaborate. Why, or why not?
 

[Responses below are noted as written by participants]

  - o Wait ..... We have money to do this?!!!!!! Whoa!
  - o Yes please.... let's develop a funding plan!
  - o Replacement of schools before closing other schools is a winning strategy.
  - o Re-mixing our buildings into new facilities would be wonderful
  - o Yes! Building a new building and closing several in proximity allows the community to get excited about going to the new place and seeing it happen!

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- **Summary of responses to, “Could a similar strategy on [insert strategy] be effective for MPS?” for all 3 meetings**

