



SPPS District Financial Advisory Committee Summary
February 24, 2025
4:00 PM to 5:30 PM

1. Welcome & Introductions, AND Thank you.

- Tom Sager: Executive Chief of Financial Services
- Jim Vue: Board Member
- Daniel Moser: Executive Director of Finance
- Mee Moua: Community Member
- Al Ickler: Community Member
- John Thein: Superintendent
- Mikisha Nation: Community Member
- Michelle Michell: Community Member
- Carlo Franco: Board Member
- Christan Tanttari: Executive Assistant

2. Grounding: [Review Purpose of the Group](#)

3. The importance of informing AND advising.

4. School Staffing (Guest presenter, Dr. Adam Kunz, Assistant Superintendent)

- Dr. Kunz and the other Assistant Superintendents provide a level of oversight to school buildings by helping principals get the resources that are needed within their allocated budgets.
- Dr. Kunz shared a high-level overview of how school leaders manage the budget allocations that they are given: When a school gets their budget, it's not just a check that is issued, it comes attached to mandates on what it can be used for (ex: types of teachers, EA's, social workers, etc.). Our budgets are also driven by bargaining agreements, FTEs through Title 1, and initiatives such as family engagement money that is mandated.
- A community member asked Dr. Kunz if schools have agency in determining their needs? Dr. Kunz shared that the majority of agency schools have are a result of their collective bargaining agreements. If a school has a certain flexible amount of money (which is typically a small amount) principals will reach out to discuss their options; usually to hire a staff member that the school would benefit from.
- High poverty schools are mandated to have smaller class sizes than that of low poverty schools.
- As an example, a non-title elementary school in the district likely has no decisions that need to be made; their budget is set with little wiggle room.
- Dr. Kunz referenced the [24-25 School Allocation Guidelines](#), which is a 27-page document that goes into great detail on how budget allocations are determined for the district. This document will be updated for 25-26.

- A survey went out to SPPS families about the budget process last year, soliciting feedback for priorities that families, community and staff have. Similar opportunities to provide feedback are available this year ([Submit Feedback About FY26 Budget](#) here)
- A community member asked how many schools have site councils? Dr. Kunz has a spreadsheet of all the parent organizations within the district. Per our agreements, a site council has some ability to influence, and Dr. Kunz advises his principals to get a feedback loop going with their families.
- How do we get more people involved? Working through your school's contact person or family liaison and asking them what they are doing and when the next meetings are.

5. [Review notes from 12/16/2024 Meeting.](#)

6. [Update on FY 25 and FY 26 Budgets](#) (Previously Shared with BOE during past several months.)

- A community member asked how the potential federal changes could factor into this projection? The negative \$51M assumes we will continue to get funding. The current administration's decisions are something that school districts all across the country will be paying close attention to.
- A community member asked how do we know if the Title 1 funding is secure for next year? Chief Sager answered that the Council of Great City Schools is monitoring closely but there are a lot of unknowns right now.
- Title 1 has about \$2M in cuts this year, and that's going to be a tough hit.
- We service far more pre-K students than we actually get funding for.
- Assigned fund balance: school districts have restricted accounts (assigned or committed) and per statute we have to keep a certain amount in our unassigned general fund. Tapping into our unassigned fund is part of the strategy to help alleviate the deficit.

7. [School District Property Taxes, and Community Home Values, and Income](#)

- This is a snapshot of median home values, median household income, and school district taxes from various local districts to compare. At our last meeting, it was asked to bring this type of comparison to the table.

8. [Tasks & Timelines from 2018 Referendum](#)

- There is some concern from community members that people may not be clear on the benefit of passing a referendum. Families/ tax payers want to know what we have done and what we will do to improve things. It will be important to show the benefit of passing a referendum.
- The consensus is that this committee wants to continue to pursue an increased operating referendum but we also want to make sure we have explored any other sources of revenue that could benefit the district.
- A community member suggested that maybe through the robust surveying process, it may be determined that the St.Paul community only has a tolerance for half of what we



are pursuing in terms of an increased operating referendum. Yes, that is a possibility and half the amount would be better than none.

9. Follow Up Items for Next Time...

- A request to post meeting materials online.
- This committee would like to look at population data from the state demographer's office.

Adjourn: 5:30 PM or before.

Next Meeting: April 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM, Room 5A