



Dear SPPS Community,

This evening at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education, [the external team charged with reviewing our current Facilities Master Plan \(FMP\)](#) presented its findings and recommendations.

This review process, which I charged Chief of Staff Cedrick Baker to oversee beginning in May, has included interviews with staff from Facilities, Finance and other areas of SPPS; as well as review of thousands of documents, spreadsheets, contracts and meeting minutes.

My initial charge to this team was to gather information so that going forward, the District can appropriately learn, adjust and continue building for the future. I am confident in the thoroughness and independence of this important process.

Among the findings to note:

- There was no malfeasance during construction/remodeling of any of our facilities.
- Several projects cost more to complete than originally estimated, primarily due to the lack of necessary contingencies and an increase in the scope of several projects beyond initial plans. In spite of these added costs, the District did not overspend our budget - mostly because we were able to delay some projects in order to stay within annual spending limits.
- Essential systems, collaboration and program controls that provide adequate checks and balances in a large-scale capital improvement program are lacking or fall short in meeting the needs of our significant capital program.
- The construction and remodeling that has occurred in the last several years has resulted in high-quality facilities, spaces and environments that our students deserve and will help them learn, grow and thrive.
- Funding for these projects comes from sources outside the general fund, so resources to pay for facilities projects were not taken from funding dedicated to students or staff.

These and other findings of this team are disappointing, and ultimately, I am responsible. I can and will make changes necessary to ensure our future building projects meet the needs of our students in a strategic, affordable and accountable manner.

The full report, including the submissions from each of the external review team members, was released to the Board and public this evening. [Click here to access the complete report.](#)

The issues surrounding our FMP have created doubt and mistrust among our colleagues, our families and the greater Saint Paul community. This report - and the

actions I am committed to take as a result - are necessary to rebuild that trust and enable SPPS to continue to provide high-quality learning environments for all our students and staff.

I take my responsibility to our Board of Education, our students, our staff and our community very seriously. I will provide additional information and updates on the actions I will take as a result of the findings shared in this report in the near future.

In partnership,



Joe Gothard
Superintendent



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