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In winter of 2021, the Board of Education of the City of Saint Louis (“the Board”) was grappling with the same tough question that presently challenges many cities across the United States. How do you best maximize the 21st-Century education you are charged with providing for the children of your city?

Facing declining school populations, aging school buildings and declining neighborhoods with little or no development opportunities, the District embarked on an 18-month Community Visioning process. Emerging Wisdom, a local consulting firm, was hired to facilitate a series of meetings with stakeholder groups spanning the community in both public and private sectors. Participants provided feedback on SLPS school experiences and answered a series of questions including their definitions of “A System of Excellent Schools,” the first of five pillars in the District’s Transformation Plan 3.0. The community feedback informed the process from the start and led to some tough decisions.

In the face of a shrinking population of children, stagnant development, disjointed city planning, and an inexplicable and unfettered expansion of schools, the Board voted to consolidate schools and resources to provide an excellent education and important services to every child attending a Saint Louis Public School (SLPS). This resulted in the closure of seven schools and the redesign of another. At the same time, the Board acknowledged that the city’s present educational infrastructure was obsolete and that there was a need to take action. Their intent was to stop the pattern of misaligned behaviors by various decision makers that has caused a disconnect in educational services over time. Thus, the call for a Citywide Plan for Education was born.

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Goals:

- Engage the community in the planning for developing a citywide plan for education for St. Louis.
 - Initiate a productive conversation about education in St. Louis.
 - Shift the mindset of our community from being consumers of education as a commodity, concerned only with their particular choice--to being citizens for a better educational system overall.
 - Create a better version of public education for all school-age children.
 - Increase the number of students who study in public schools across St. Louis.
 - Enhance economic development, which brings with it more families.
 - Stand together for all children in St. Louis.
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What IS the Citywide Plan for Education?

The Citywide Plan for Education IS a:

- Concept for re-imagining education for all school-age children, a concept that was introduced by the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis through a resolution in February 2021.
- Chance to BRING TO LIGHT the actions being actively considered by decision makers, now and in the future.
- Opportunity to OPEN UP intellectually honest dialogue on how best to provide St. Louis children (and families) the education they deserve, no matter what school they attend.



Why is there a NEED for a Citywide Plan for Education?

The current educational infrastructure is obsolete. For decades, the educational landscape in St. Louis primarily included public and parochial schools. In recent years, charter schools have opened and both charters and public schools have closed largely due to declining enrollment, mirroring the city's decline in population.

St. Louis, once one of the 10 largest cities in the US, is now ranked 65th. St. Louis' population has dropped from over 700,000 to 300,000 in a relatively short time frame. Despite a declining number of school age children over the years, the number of schools open to serve them has continued to increase. Although the job of educating students still requires the same high-level and quality of service, the scale is much different. The enrollment is different. The level of competition for students is different. In addition, the needs of students are different. The Citywide Plan is necessary because there is a disconnect in the infrastructure that will continue to impede success unless it is addressed.

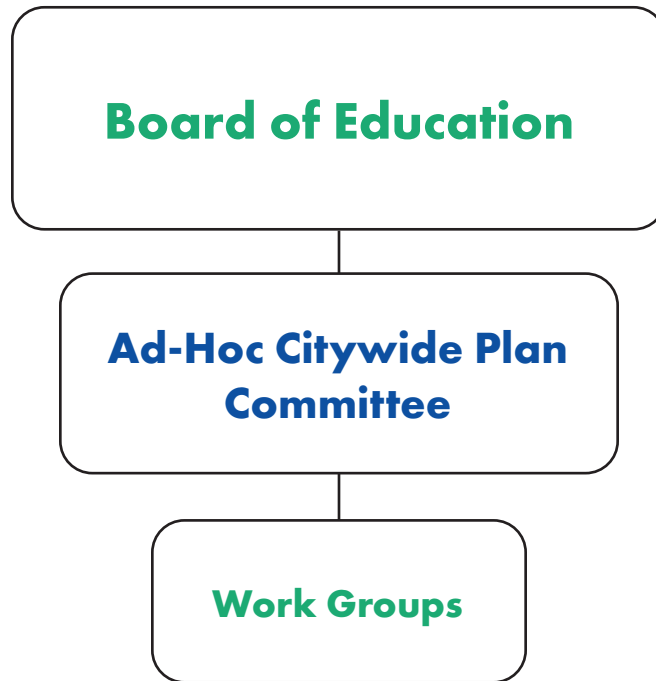
The Board's 2021 Citywide Plan resolution and similar declarations issued by the St. Louis Board of Alderman (Oct. 2021) and the Missouri School Boards Association (Jan. 2022) formalize the idea that our progress together can only come through a unified vision, a common set of commitments, and clear guidelines of engagement.

Recognizing that the St. Louis' overall success in its journey to be a top-tier city is inextricably linked to the success of its schools, the Board is engaging all stakeholders in developing this Citywide Plan.

Work Group Planning

Citywide Plan Structure and Focus:

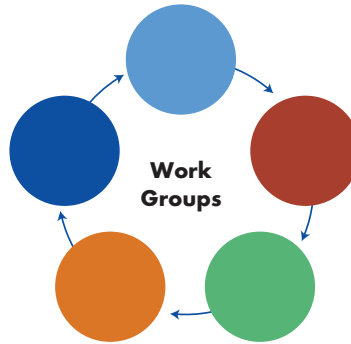
The Board of Education of the City of St. Louis (BOE) has empaneled a diverse group of stakeholders to help guide the citywide planning process over a period of 18 months.



Building Work Groups:

The CWPC will select two co-chairs for each work group and work with the chairs in inviting committee members to participate. Reflecting the diversity of our city, all work groups will be intentionally built to include members with a variety of racial, ethnic, socio-economic, educational, and professional backgrounds and experiences. In addition to subject matter and technical experts specific to each, all groups will include a cross section of stakeholders including, but not limited to, educators across all formats, parents, students, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) administrators, policy-makers (state and local), local and regional university faculty and community members.

Work Group Descriptions



School Experience

All schools in St. Louis City are charged with providing high-quality education to all students and yet, successful outcomes in both public and charter schools are varied. The School Experience work group will explore what is currently happening inside all city schools and identify where improvements must be made to better meet the needs of children and families.

Health, Wellness & Safety

St. Louis' public education system's ability to achieve optimum results is also impacted by the environment surrounding students and schools. The members of the Health, Wellness, and Safety work group will identify the in-school and out-of-school factors that promote or impede the physical, mental and emotional health and wellness of students.

Education Workforce

Schools are also centers of employment. Educating students, a public education system requires a strong, qualified workforce. The Education Workforce Considerations work group will study the city's education labor market to identify where improvements are needed in order to create powerful teacher/leader pipelines and implement high-quality professional development.

Logistics

St. Louis has experienced significant population declines and demographic changes over the past 100 years and yet, new schools have been added without realigning the educational infrastructure. The Logistics work group will examine the current physical infrastructure of the city's public education system in order to build an efficient and effective school system that serves the city's current needs and promotes 21st Century schools.

Community

Schools are anchors of the neighborhoods they serve. A strong school- neighborhood relationship is mutually beneficial. However, fewer schools are needed as a result of St. Louis' declining population. The primary focus of the Community Work Group is to understand the relationship between the city and its public education system and identify policy solutions to support and strengthen both.

Citywide Plan for Education Process

