

Working Draft

Rightsizing/Consolidation Criteria

What are rightsizing and consolidation?

The dictionary definitions of rightsizing and consolidation are as follows:

Rightsizing: to undergo changes to produce an optimal size ¹

Consolidation: the process of uniting ; the quality or state of being united ;
specifically : the unification of two or more corporations by dissolution of
existing ones and creation of a single new corporation ²

For Saint Paul Public Schools, these terms are used when referring to changing to an optimal size and merging programs. With the current structural deficit and projected declining enrollment, we do not have sufficient funds to provide essential programming and support services to ensure a premier education for our students while keeping every school open.

Various options for rightsizing and consolidation exist including:

- Closing buildings, closing programs
- Closing buildings, relocating whole/modified programs
- Merging programs
- Repurposing buildings

Nationwide, school districts have utilized the following criteria when considering rightsizing/consolidation:

- **Educational value/academic performance:**
Measurable high academic performance should be taken into consideration. Schools may need to be closed “to address AYP compliance.”³
- **Enrollment:**
Does a specific area have consistent declining enrollment? Can a school be “combined with neighboring schools without creating additional safety, transportation or instructional problems ⁴?”
- **Facility condition and utilization:**
Consolidation may be considered if “the facility has been identified for replacement or major upgrades⁵.” Is there another facility which can provide the same functionality? “Future adaptability and flexibility of the buildings”⁶ should also be considered.
- **Closing and consolidating small and under-utilized schools:**
Smaller buildings typically cost more to operate per student.
Consolidating/rightsizing schools can improve academic achievement and save on operating costs.

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rightsizing> 12 Jan. 2009.

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consolidation> 12 Jan. 2009.

³ Burnley, Kenneth, Detroit Public Schools, “Making Detroit Public Schools More Efficient & Effective: Staying the Course While Dealing With Challenges,” 26 Mar. 2003.

⁴ Granite School District, “Annual Population Review Procedures,” 15 Mar. 2006.

⁵ Granite School District, “Annual Population Review Procedures,” 15 Mar. 2006.

⁶ MoundsView Public Schools, “Criteria for Building Repurposing Scenarios,” 18 Aug. 2004.

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We recommend using the following comprehensive criteria to determine rightsizing and consolidation of schools:

Educational Value/Academic Performance:

Programming and curriculum

- Program necessity as determined by statute, mission, or as a match/leverage for other initiatives in play
- Uniqueness of educational offering/program (eg. language immersion)
- Potential expansion of programming
 - High demand, successful programs
 - Articulation of programming across K-12
- Equity of programming
- New specialized programs
- Program effectiveness

AYP/test results

- Schools in “restructuring” (Stage 5) “pre-restructuring” (Stage 4) or “corrective action” (Stage 3)
- Schools that may be in corrective action soon

Consider pipeline/gateways that impact first experience with schools (eg ECFE, Pre-K, Discovery Club) or that provide significant touchpoints for the 66% of St. Paul households without school age children to connect with school programs

Facility Condition:

Adaptability/flexibility of buildings –space utilization

Educational adequacy – adequate condition to support curriculum

Physical plant

- Age of building: Building useful life – replacement cycle
- Major upgrades/remodeling needs
- Major repairs needed
- Costs of deferred maintenance

Cost of upgrading to meet educational adequacy

Operating costs per building

School/District Funding:

Consolidation/rightsizing costs

- Building repurposing costs
- Transportation costs for relocation

Potential salary/staff savings

Potential savings by repurposing buildings and relocating from leased space

Operating costs per building

Funding subsidy

Potential legislative changes

Cost of debt for current building

Savings impact (general fund, lease levy, etc)

Potential use and earning possibilities by external groups/partners (rent or lease space to others)

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Enrollment/Trends:

- Long and short term enrollment impact - economic viability to provide robust academic programming
 - Demographics of area – population overlay
 - Impact on desegregation rule
 - School boundaries (attendance area, preference area, transportation area)
 - Geographical proximity to other schools / geographical uniqueness
 - Housing/foreclosure trends
 - Proximity to other services (eg. parks & rec, libraries, etc)
 - Potential changes in the city (eg. new housing construction)
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Other Considerations:

- How are we going to deal with the building and political impact of choices?
- Other community investments being made in the same area
 - SPPS investment (eg. recent remodeling, new playgrounds, etc)

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A Brief History of Rightsizing and Consolidation at Saint Paul Public Schools

In order to address structural deficit challenges, SPPS has closed and consolidated facilities in the past. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the school district began closing and consolidating schools to adjust to declining enrollment⁷. In addition to closing schools, SPPS has consolidated school facilities and repurposed buildings to save on lease costs. The following is a list of the some of the most recently closed or repurposed buildings:

1. **Closing buildings, closing programs**

Edgecumbe was closed in 1977. The building was then leased to the St. Paul Police Department. In 1989 the property was sold.

2. **Closing buildings, relocating whole/modified programs**

1001 Johnson Parkway – the lease was terminated in December of 2008. Programs previously housed at 1001 Johnson Parkway were moved to other locations.

3. **Merging programs**

Linwood/Monroe – Linwood was a K-6 building. Monroe was K-8. In 2008 the two programs were merged into one program with K-3 at Linwood and 4-8 at Monroe.

4. **Repurposing buildings**

Homecroft was repurposed for early childhood and special education programs in 2008.

⁷ Sigvertsen, Jene, “From the Past to the Present: An Inventory of Saint Paul Public Schools Facilities.”

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Glossary

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A measure of year-to-year student achievement on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests that is part of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. According to NCLB, Minnesota and other states must develop target starting goals for AYP and the state must raise the bar in gradual increments so 100 percent of the students in the state are proficient on state assessments by the 2013-2014 school year.⁸

Articulation: Refers to how educational programming and course content flows from one level to the next. (eg. are programs consistent from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school?)

Closing buildings: Closing a specific building. All programs held in a closed building would be moved to a different location, modified or stopped.

Closing programs: Stopping a specific program offering. The program would not be moved to another location.

Consolidation: The process of uniting; the quality or state of being united; *specifically* the unification of two or more entities by dissolution of existing ones and creation of a single new entity.

Deferred maintenance: The practice of postponing needed repairs and maintenance due to lack of available resources to perform required maintenance.

Desegregation rule: Under Minnesota Statute 124D.86, integration revenue is provided to “create or enhance learning opportunities which are designed to provide opportunities for students to have increased interracial contacts through classroom experiences, staff initiatives, and other educationally related programs.”⁹

Educational adequacy: The degree to which a school’s facilities are set up to support the curriculum offered in the building.

Facility condition: The physical properties of a building. These include building age, structure, repairs needed, etc.

Funding subsidy: Additional funds allocated to schools to meet programming needs.

Geographical uniqueness: The distinctive nature of a building in a particular area (eg. the only high school in a particular area).

Merging programs: Programs can be consolidated and merged into one building.

⁸ Saint Paul Public Schools, “Strategic Plan for Continued Excellence: Implementation Guide,” Apr. 2007.

⁹ <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/getpub.php?type=s&num=124D.86> 13 Jan. 2009.

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Operating costs: The costs to run a building including electricity, heat, water, cleaning, trash, etc.

Optimal size: The most desirable size of buildings to provide the best education and programming for students while being cost-effective.

Program: The curriculum and educational offerings of a particular building.

Repurposing buildings: A specific building would not be closed, but the programs offered at that building would change.

Rightsizing: To undergo changes to produce an optimal size.