WHAT WILL BE BEST FOR STUDENTS?
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ON SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

December 2017
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Recommendations included in this report were generated independently by the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation, based on research, interviews, and observations. SLPS Foundation undertook this work without seeking project funding that might influence the result.

SLPS Foundation staff Jane Donahue & Danielle Wallis are the primary authors of this report. Special thanks to the Regional Chamber of Commerce for their initial research. A list of the SLPS Foundation Board members who served on the school board governance task force is listed in the appendix.
INTRODUCTION: WHY THE ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION IS INVOLVED IN THIS WORK

“This could be a great opportunity to show that St. Louis can come together for its students.” -- Interviewee

In February 2017, just after the District celebrated the historic regaining of accreditation, the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) Foundation Board voted to devote time and resources to the inevitable question: “What’s next for SLPS school board governance?” The Special Administrative Board (SAB) is made up of three dedicated public servants who have served for 10 years, been instrumental in significant gains in District performance, and who will not be in place forever. The Elected Board has continued to meet, hold elections, and maintain awareness of district activities. Since the re-accreditation of SLPS, there have been a growing number of conversations about the shape and process of future SLPS governance. This decision ultimately lies with the Missouri State Board of Education, though state-level officials have encouraged the development of a plan for future governance and possible transitions to be crafted locally.

The SLPS Foundation exists to support the students of St. Louis Public Schools. Since its inception, the Foundation has invested over $16 million in District programs. Since 2015, the Foundation has raised nearly $12 million to support the SLPS Transformation Plan, the District’s current strategic plan. The positive impact of these investments relies on stable, effective district governance. More importantly, nearly 23,000 students’ well-being and academic futures are at stake. Without a well-thought out plan for transition that is backed by the community, the District’s hard-won progress could reverse.

The following report is grounded in one fundamental question: “What will be the best for students?” How can community leaders collaborate and push for even greater outcomes for students? The SLPS Foundation board and staff have been grateful to 25+ community leaders who devoted their time to consider SLPS school board governance. The Foundation partnered with the St. Louis Regional Chamber for initial research on best practices and models from other urban school districts. The Foundation’s undertaking has not been funded or commissioned by any specific funder, nor is it written for any one audience. The recommendations were independently developed by a subset of SLPS Foundation staff and board members who synthesized the research and community interviews to formulate possible recommendations for a successful transition. We know our voice reflects just one part of a larger body of citizens who care deeply about the future of SLPS students; we encourage others to get engaged as well.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report offers historical context, research and voice to a range of ideas and perspectives regarding school board governance. Each section makes some overall observations or conclusions.

Section One highlights the progress the District has made over the past 10 years (both academically and financially). Almost across the board, those we interviewed attribute the significant success to a productive partnership between the SAB and Dr. Kelvin R. Adams who was hired in 2008 and, based on our conversations, has near-universal approval as a leader. The achievements made thus far represent “the very first rung” of success; continued, accelerated progress is needed to truly achieve education equity in St. Louis. Among other challenges, problems such as declining enrollment (due both to a decreasing population of school age children in the City, and increasing school choices) and funding uncertainty remain.

Section Two provides a summary of academic research in this field, and makes the point that finding the “perfect” governance model is an elusive goal. In the United States, over 90% of school boards are elected. Alternative governance models started emerging in the early 2000s, mostly in metropolises where District enrollment and budgets were high, performance was very low, and political power existed to re-shuffle control. Other models (such as appointed and hybrid structures) have been tried. There is evidence that other structures can work, but there’s no definitive formula or compelling research case for any specific model.

Research stresses that the most important factors are WHO is on the board and HOW that board works together. Success relies on board members’ ability to collaborate on a common goal of improved student achievement, and establish both community trust and a great partnership with the superintendent.

Section Three of this report highlights St. Louis community leaders’ thoughts. Here common themes include: a fear of regression in progress, a desire for a model that reflects community representation and is highly transparent, and recognition that supports should be put in place to enable the next phase of leadership to succeed. Each leader has his/her own unique points of view about what’s needed next.

In Section Four, the SLPS Foundation outlines considerations for each possible path forward. If an elected board is pursued as the best permanent option, the Foundation lays out possible means for transferring institutional knowledge, gradually transitioning authority, increasing voter awareness and engagement, and sufficiently supporting the board. If an appointed board is pursued, the Foundation suggests modifications to who the appointers are, how the community can provide robust input regarding possible appointees, and how appointees would be held accountable. If a hybrid board is chosen, the Foundation articulates ideas that move this idea from serving simply as the “compromise” to being a workable possibility.

Finally, it is essential to recognize the community/political context in which this report was developed. This conversation is emerging at a specific point in time. In St. Louis, a growing movement of new leaders are highlighting the clear need for a new way of doing business, and the value of highly transparent and representative governance. There are also veteran leaders who want the trajectory of success to continue and fear derailment. At the state level, there is turmoil in the Department of Education. On the federal level, significant cuts to federal support are an imminent threat. The City of St. Louis is both growing (more, young businesses and people moving in to certain parts of the City) and declining (less school age children and families staying in other areas). In the business community, leaders are undecided on how best to support both charter and District schools. Overlaying all of these distinct issues is the reality that, as one interviewee put it: “There’s a just a lack of trust that we have in our city, and that mistrust is playing itself out in the timing of all of this.” We remain hopeful. The SLPS Foundation has had the good fortune of talking with many committed leaders and visionaries during this research. The nation has a body of relevant research regarding what’s worked in cities like St. Louis. And, as the families and students have shown: there are great minds and talents in our schools. That’s the light we should kindle as we collectively move forward.
SECTION ONE: BUILDING ON A TRAJECTORY OF STUDENT & DISTRICT SUCCESS

Before we get into proposed models and potential transitions, it is important to set the context for the discussion. Our interviews with community leaders revealed a nearly universal goal: to maintain and accelerate recent student successes, as well as the fiscal stability that has been achieved over the past decade.

Student Achievement Since 2007

As the charts below indicate, students’ academic performance has steadily improved since 2007.

![Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on MAP Assessments](chart1)

Likewise, graduation rates have improved over the past decade.

![More Students Graduating & Pursuing Postsecondary](chart2)
A Focus on Equity

The District has also focused on educational equity over the past 10 years. Dr. Adams and the SAB have consistently allocated resources to serve all students, and intensified support to students in the highest poverty schools (examples of support include adding full-time social workers to highest need schools, working to grow nonprofit partnerships to support students). Many of the signature “Calls to Action”iii outlined in Forward through Ferguson are ones that the District has been pursuing. These include:

• Doubling the number of students in quality, free, full-day early childhood education. The program grew from 1,145 in 2007 to 2,200 in 2017.

• Reducing discipline incidents by 83% since 2007 and becoming the first district in the region to ban suspensions in early grades. Disciplinary incidents went from 12,879 in 2007 to 2,133 in 2017.

• Expanding mental health services and trauma informed training across the District.

• Helping students across the District plan for post-secondary success. The District went from only one high school with a college counselor, to ensuring that all high schools have a college specialist or advisor, expanding ACT prep across the District, and tripling the number of college-prep or college level courses offered to students.

Financial Stability Achieved

Another major milestone that has occurred over the past ten years is that the District is on firmer financial footingiv. Evidence of this includes the following.

• Erased $56 million deficit. In 2007, the District was insolvent and faced formidable financial issues. In 2006, the District’s fund balance was - $30 millionv. By 2011, the deficit was $56 million. In 2011, the District had demonstrated enough progress and made a compelling argument to enable it to tap Desegregation Settlement Funds to wipe clean the debt.vi Since that decision, the District has ended fiscal years with reserve funding. In 2016, the surplus was 18% (or $62 million).

• Passage of Prop 1. The District broke a 25-year trend in 2016 with passage of the first property tax increase since 1991 to benefit public school students (both SLPS and charter school students in the City). The passage will bring approximately $27 million a year to the District for use on teacher salaries, early childhood education and character development programming.

Recent factors that present a challenge to this financial stability include:

• Declining enrollment. Enrollment has declined over the past 10 years from 32,000 to 23,000 students. Decline is due to both charter school enrollment growth (from 5,000 to 11,000 in last 10 years), as well as a decline in school-age city residents by approximately 13%.vii

• Uncertainty Regarding the Desegregation Sales Tax Lawsuit. In Spring 2016, the members of the Special Administrative Board joined the Liddell/Caldwell plaintiffs and the NAACP in filing a motion in Federal Court against the State of Missouri. This litigation seeks to gain clarity regarding the intent of Desegregation Sales Tax revenue, which was part of the 1999 Desegregation Settlement Agreement. When passed, the Desegregation Sales Tax was directed to SLPS to pay for desegregation remediation programs operated by SLPS. In 2006, the State redirected portions of the Sales Tax revenue to support charter schools. A judge’s ruling is expected in April 2018.
Steady Rise in Annual Performance Points

These academic and financial successes have contributed to a steady rise in Annual Performance Points, which has meant that the District moved from being unaccredited in 2007 to being fully accredited in 2016.

Inflection Point: What's Next?

The success achieved over the past decade is the result of students, teachers, parents and District leaders pushing hard in a coordinated direction. As one governance leader put it: "If any one person had done one less thing, we wouldn't be here."

An initial goal of this report was to document what school board leadership practices enabled success. Below are reflections from those that worked closely with the SAB on those key behaviors or practices.

FOCUS WAS ALWAYS ON STUDENTS FIRST: Personal agendas have not ruled. The goal of increased student performance has always been the ‘north star.’

CHOSE, RETAINED AND TRUSTED THE SUPERINTENDENT: The opportunity to choose and collectively hire Dr. Adams as the superintendent was a formative decision for the SAB that helped them to cohere. Dr. Adams was considered to be “the moral center,” and several interviewees emphasized Dr. Adams’ role as being the most important factor for the success of the district over the past decade.

CLARITY OF PURPOSE: A clear, common focus and a specific charge to improve the District contributed to growth. The members of the SAB transitioned from individuals collaborating on a project, to a team with a shared goal.

UNDERSTOOD GOVERNANCE: Board members trusted Dr. Adams to manage day-to-day operations. The SAB members had their focus on the long game, on systemic change, and weren’t attracted to a few star programs or opportunities.

ACCOUNTABILITY: The State Board of Education was paying close attention to the performance of the board and the District. Board members were accountable to each other, with the sense that they were in this together.

NOT MICROMANAGED BY THEIR APPOINTERS: Board members had very limited communication with their appointers during their board membership, so while accountable, there was also a sense of independence from the agendas or preferences of their appointers. Some decisions that the board made (i.e., the desegregation sales tax lawsuit) were made on behalf of District interests, even when they went against what their appointers intended.

STABILITY: The composition of the board and the superintendent remained the same for the better part of a decade, which provided stability for the district and allowed the “kinks” to be worked out in the first two years of their post. This enabled the latter years to be focused on doing the work of governance, rather than learning it, or developing board norms/culture.

REPRESENTED A VARIETY OF SKILLS AND BACKGROUNDS: This allowed for well-rounded discussion, expertise, and priorities.

TRUST & EACH MEMBER HAD EQUAL POWER: While not always in agreement, there was trust between board members and the superintendent; they considered themselves a 4-person team and did not mislead one another.

CIVILITY/CAPACITY TO DEFER: Early on, the SAB board members acknowledged their differences of opinions, and decided to “disagree without being disagreeable.” Any differences of opinion would not focus on personal attacks.

MATURITY: The SAB board members tended to be established in their careers, and were not seeking to use their board membership as a means of bolstering their careers.

SMALL NUMBER: Having only 3 members made consensus easier to reach.

WILLINGNESS TO BE UNPOPULAR: Separating the board from an elected process enabled the board members to make decisions that they felt supported the students of the District, without consideration for whether the board members might hurt their chances for being re-elected.

CULTURE OF SUCCESS: Board achieved and conveyed a culture of success.
SECTION TWO: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Academic research can shed important light on possibilities for SLPS. Alone, it won’t provide the answers, but other urban districts’ results and lessons learned will provide value to our collective discussion. A macro summary of the research can be boiled down to three essential points:

1. No single governance model out-performs another.
2. The most important factor is choosing principled, strong leaders who will work well together and with the District leadership.
3. Community buy-in and trust in the governance structure is key.

Research-Based Arguments For & Against Governance Models

Based on research findings, below are synopses of advantages and challenges of each model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows for increased opportunities for public discussion and criticism.</td>
<td>Constant turnover damages local systems’ likelihood to make academic progress. Superintendents turnover is common under elected leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic community engagement can occur. Elections model the democratic process.</td>
<td>Can develop factions that make the board dysfunctional.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can prompt the community to take a greater interest in their schools.</td>
<td>‘Big money’ support for political campaigns can determine elections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May have greater independence and freedom to act in the best interests of the district.</td>
<td>Accountability is diffused for the voting public, in comparison to a vote for or against a mayor who has control of the board.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be more diverse when elected from districts (rather than ‘at large’ elections).</td>
<td>Board members could micromanage administration and not understand complex budgets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can make equitable educational opportunities a priority, if current opportunities are inequitable.</td>
<td>Qualified individuals can be reluctant to subject themselves to the difficulties and expense of an election campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be more transparent.</td>
<td>Elections may not result in a diverse and highly skilled school board.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be more responsive to the public will and can provide an opportunity to emphasize the primacy of community over particular political ideologies of education (e.g. privatization and market-based systems).</td>
<td>Off-cycle elections are at odd times when few voters are paying attention, and have historically attracted lower voter turnout. Teachers unions are likely advantaged in these situations and special interest groups dominate the board.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed members do not run campaigns and therefore may generate less controversy in the community. xxvii</td>
<td>The community does not have a direct voice in the selection of the school district’s governing body. xxvii</td>
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<tr>
<td>There may be opportunity for greater selectivity in choosing qualified board members, xxix identifying members with requisite legal, educational, financial and administrative skills. xxx</td>
<td>Members have less independence and freedom to act in the best interests of the school district. xxx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduces institutional fragmentation that can impede strategic action (i.e. coordination between mayor &amp; the board of education). xxxiii</td>
<td>There may be less chance of authentic community engagement and responsiveness to community preferences. xxxi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively associated with more spending on instruction, smaller student teacher ratios and greater percentage of resources allocated for K-12 student support. xl</td>
<td>Specifically, for Mayoral Appointed Boards:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mayors can provide a vision and focus for the schools and a board that supports it (e.g. universal preschool; community schools; principal training). xli</td>
<td>- There may be little or no oversight over policies or finances. It is difficult for them to ask the important questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mayors can coordinate services to schools with other city departments/better leveraging of overall municipal system. xlii</td>
<td>- Mayoral appointees may be less responsive to the public will. xxxiv</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mayors are more accountable to the public, and more high-profile than school board members. xliii</td>
<td>- They may reflect a political ideology about education, e.g. privatization and a market-based system that can replace community. xxxv</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tenure for superintendents is somewhat longer and is dependent on mayors’ tenures. xlv</td>
<td>- Members may not express their own opinions, but may only echo the mayor; thereby eliminating any give-and-take discussion. xxxvi</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The board may reflect the mayor’s priority for selective enrollment schools or for certain neighborhoods. xxxvii</td>
<td>- There may be too much centralized power if the mayor also appoints the CEO and the Chief Education Officer. xxxviii</td>
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<tr>
<td>- In Chicago, Mayoral control has led to unstable administrations. Since 2009, there have been 5 CEOs of the Chicago Public Schools. xxxix</td>
<td>- The community does not have a direct voice in the selection of the school district’s governing body. xxvii</td>
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Prepared by the SLPS Foundation
How St. Louis School Governance Compares to Other Cities

When looking at large urban school districts, no meaningful trend exists on whether appointed or elected board governance produces greater academic gains for students:

### Evaluating Governance Structures by Academic Growth in Urban School Districts, 4th Grade Reading Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>2003-2015 Gain in Reading</th>
<th>Governance Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>No Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>No Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Advantages and Challenges of Hybrid School Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having both appointed and elected members provides an opportunity for a consensus of the board to be reached when hiring a CEO/Superintendent, thus avoiding too much power in the hands of the mayor.</th>
<th>The board would not have as clear a focus as if it were all appointed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The mayor continues to have a stake in the board, but not all members on the board are beholden to one individual.</td>
<td>Risks not being able to reach consensus on plan for reform and improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases transparency and potentially more checks and balances, as compared to an appointed board.</td>
<td>Can undermine public input and public confidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How to Set Up a Hybrid School Board

- **Advantages**
  - Can provide authentic community engagement.
  - May provide more opportunity for open discussion of policies.
  - Provides a measure of democracy and could serve as an incentive for the public to take greater interest in the schools.
  - Provides an avenue to express the will of the community, especially when it might differ from that of the mayor.
  - The elected members would be free to ask difficult questions, thus providing oversight over the finances and the administration.

- **Challenges**
  - The elected and appointed members could develop into factions that could make the board dysfunctional.
  - Researchers are either negative or inconclusive about hybrid boards:
    - Hybrid boards rarely work, especially when they are combination of appointed and elected.
    - There are only a few examples of hybrid school boards, and most of those are recent, providing little evidence for positive or negative outcomes.

- **Having some elected members:**
  - Can provide authentic community engagement.
  - May provide more opportunity for open discussion of policies.
  - Provides a measure of democracy and could serve as an incentive for the public to take greater interest in the schools.
  - Provides an avenue to express the will of the community, especially when it might differ from that of the mayor.
  - The elected members would be free to ask difficult questions, thus providing oversight over the finances and the administration.

- **Having some appointed members:**
  - Makes certain that the mayor is engaged in the governance of the public schools.
  - Provides the opportunity for the schools to collaborate with other city departments to provide services to students and their families.
  - Provides the opportunity for the mayor to appoint people with specific skills and/or increase the diversity of the Board when the elected members do not represent these outcomes.

- **Accountability is diffused in comparison to an all-appointed board.**

- **Can sometimes act faster.**

- **The mayor continues to have a stake in the board, but not all members on the board are beholden to one individual.**

- **Increases transparency and potentially more checks and balances, as compared to an appointed board.**

- **Can undermine public input and public confidence.**
Research Consensus: Behaviors that Produce Success

Recent research has contributed to an emerging understanding about the school board’s role in improving student achievement. The research team of Tim Waters and Robert Marzano (2006), from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), found a positive correlation between district leadership and student achievement. Their findings are similar to The Lighthouse Study (2001), commissioned by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) which also highlights the board’s role in improving student achievement. Both studies confirm that the following behaviors are critical to success:

- Set and commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement
- Have strong shared values about what is possible for students
- Allocate and align resources to meet strategic goals that promote student achievement
- Focus on accountability and policies to improve student achievement
- Create a collaborative relationship with community partners, leaders, staff, students, and families
- Use data to monitor and course correct
- Spend time in team development and training
- Have the trust of the community

Research from the Council on Great City Schools has documented decline in student wellbeing when boards get enmeshed with political issues that are not about students (teachers’ contracts, buildings & operations), set priorities that aren’t about student achievement, and/or leaders become factionalized.

SIDEBAR: Academics’ Highlight Unique St. Louis Characteristics That Stall Success

The fate of the Saint Louis Public Schools has been the research topic of numerous academics’ work. All make observations on the dynamics that make St. Louis’ situation unique. Both academic studies noted below point to deep fragmentation and distrust that will challenge our civic capacity to act. Below are just a few highlights.

From City Schools & City Politics by John Portz, Lana Stein, and Robin R. Jones (1999).

On Business Engagement. The systemic perspective on educational reform that evolved in Boston and Pittsburgh has been absent in St. Louis. Rather, the business community has focused on narrowly defined activities that are more manageable and doable…School administrators seemingly value maintaining their control over schools and don’t encourage adoption…(business engagement) has been more driven by a concern over the image of the city than an overall interest in quality public education.

On a Coordinated Approach. To date, the low cohesion of the city’s leadership and their lack of deeply shared interest in the school system leaves slim ground for optimism. Fragmentation and structural constraints are profound impediments…the divide of race remains a continuing impediment…race is not addressed forthrightly. Perhaps the desegregation settlement will make a watershed, but the outlook for the development of civic capacity to address the problems of St. Louis schools is guarded at best.


On Collaboration. In St. Louis, for over two decades, the federal district court had supervised the area’s voluntary desegregation program, making many decisions…in turn, school administrators became very protective of their shrunken turf. Outside intervention was discouraged.

On Moving a Reform Agenda. We argue that there are class-inflected conflicts between forces for reform and forces depending on machine politics. Pro reform coalitions tend to be dominated by business and political elites and supported by neighboring concentrations of highly educated middle class professionals. In St. Louis, anti-reform coalitions are dominated by ward organizations and local politicians who fear a loss of power, and these coalitions are supported by precincts with larger shares of working class, elderly and African American residents

Reform forces were doomed because machine forces still know how to work low turnout municipal elections in St. Louis.
SECTION THREE: WHAT COMMUNITY LEADERS THINK

Starting in April 2017, the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation began a “listening tour” to learn what leaders thought would be important in order to plan and prepare for possible new school board leadership in the Saint Louis Public Schools. We started with those most directly involved with school board governance, including Special Administrative Board members, the Chair of the Elected Board, DESE Board leaders, two former Missouri Education Commissioners, and the SLPS Superintendent. In July 2017, we shared these leaders’ collective recommendations with all those interviewed. Next, at their suggestion, we widened the circle to include other regional leaders from business associations, the teachers’ union, nonprofits and the legislature. We invited a total of over 30 stakeholders, and were able to complete interviews with over 25 leaders. (See Appendix A for a full list.) Without the budget or staff to do community surveying, we encouraged other entities to consider engagement of parents and educators, and were glad to see that essential step taken by the Special Committee on school board governance.

These conversations with leaders served a couple of purposes:

1. To encourage leaders to start thinking about how they could support a productive transition;
2. To collect a range of ideas that could inform the larger conversation about best governance in SLPS.

Each interview had a similar structure: reflect on pros / cons of the two governance structures St. Louis has experienced (appointed and elected), envision possible steps forward, and identify essential political and community factors that should be considered during a transition. Not surprisingly, the leaders interviewed do not express one single solution. Opinions about best governance structure were fairly evenly split between appointed, elected and hybrid, and many leaders had thoughts about strengthening voter awareness and engagement. Below is a summary of their ideas.

What are the Advantages & Challenges of Appointed Boards? Leaders’ Reflections

The Advantages of Appointed Boards

- More capacity to attract high caliber candidates. Certain characteristics and experiences can be sought in appointees.
- Given low voter turnout, the appointing process can allow for more robust vetting than the election process.
- Opens the possibility to appoint veteran leaders who would not normally consider running for school board.
- Can replace appointees at any time if not performing adequately.
- Less turnover in board membership, providing more opportunity to build a functional team over time.
- High levels of accountability – just three elected officials are responsible for making appointments, and if educational progress does not occur, there may be consequences when the appointers are up for re-election.
- Members are less inclined to take on anything more than the exact role of the board.
- Appointed process enables access to leaders who do not have time/interest in running for an elected office.
- The current structure allows for consideration of candidates who don’t live in the city.

In their own words:

“The same skills you need to get elected don’t overlap with the same skills you need to provide oversight,”

"Most of the time I am absolutely in favor of the will of the public to elect a school board, in this case, I would say that we should keep the system that we have because it is working, and it is critical that it works.”

“The main benefit of the appointed board was stability, and the ability to bring in Dr. Adams and have him stay and work constructively, realizing some of the improvements that have been realized -- though he’ll be the first to say that there is a lot more to do. The drawback is that an appointed board doesn’t feel democratic to people; it feels like something that’s been imposed upon them.”
“The SAB did create stability on the board, which seemed to coincide with stability of the superintendent. With elected board, stability is possible but not guaranteed.”

“The SAB was a collection of very educated, astute business people who have been able to lead the district back from a tumultuous place, make sound decisions and keep students first.”

“I am personally for anything that is working. If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.”

“I think we have achieved stability….and I consider stability to be the bottom rung of success. I think that a transition presents a risk that we could fall off of the first rung…I don’t usually aspire to maintain stability, but here I do so that we can take the next step up the ladder”

“It’s a small group that doesn’t have to be whipped, in a political sense, by a superintendent. The superintendent can spend more time with the staff, more time in the buildings, more time with the kids...(there’s) consistency and efficiency because there’s not a cycle election.”

“Do you take a board that the public has voted in such an abysmally small percentage for over the years and just hand them a $250 million institution that is critical to the success of the region?”

The Challenges of Appointed Boards

- Appointed board members do not represent the choice of the public.
- No training or personal experience with city/public schools required.
- No guarantee that an appointed official is better qualified than an elected official; only the appointer needs to be satisfied with qualifications of appointee rather than the majority of the voters.
- Potential for political/corporate corruption, separated from the will and accountability of the people.
- The community won’t put up with an appointed board in the long term.
- The governor (an appointer) may be too far removed from the community.
- The personalities of the current SAB members will be difficult to replicate in potential future appointed boards.
- Uncertainty around current mayoral leadership in this area.

In their own words:

“Anything but an elected board is insulting to citizens….we know how to represent ourselves. I cannot see anything other than an elected board in this day and age.”

“People are afraid that the ‘money powers’ will take over the school board and continue the expansion of charter schools, rather than normal people who support public schools to serve on the school board. There’s not really a ‘pro-public school person’ on the SAB; because of this, it has driven the public desire to have an elected board [because most are pro-public schools], even though they don’t know who is going to be on the board in 10 years.”

“It’s confusing for parents/community members to have two active [city] school boards, and only one has authority.”

“There was little transparency [under the leadership of the SAB.]”

“I think there’s a degree of commitment there that you can’t just recreate [without lived experience].”

“I’ve heard from a lot of people that they feel like it’s taxation without representation….we have a right to an elected board…regardless of the things that [the SAB] has done for the district.”
What are the Advantages & Challenges of Elected Boards? Leaders’ Reflections

The Advantages of Elected Boards

- Peoples’ voice is very important.
- A locally elected board places value on the vote of the people.
- Can be removed from office through an election if public loses confidence in board members.
- Larger number of board members allows for greater representation of communities, and more opportunities to interface with community.
- Can support student enrollment numbers due to increased parent engagement.
- General precedent is that school boards are democratically elected, and for that precedent to be disrupted in a majority African American district is not politically viable in the long term.
- Current elected board is poised for leadership because of following factors: shared code of ethics, diverse composition, continued monitoring of SAB decisions, efforts to seek transparency.
- People want to be heard, and desire avenues to engage.

In their own words:

“Everything with the elected board is open, the people are attentive, they know what’s going on, the way in which they move, the public will know about it. If they aren’t sure, the public can apply pressure…they can go to the meeting and yell at the board…with the appointed board, you have the potential to miss that…if it’s appointed, politics are involved. Even if you voice your opinion you can’t do anything to get that person removed from office.”

“When there is an elected school board with authority; there will likely more voter engagement, which will result in different people running for office, and different people being elected. Those elected board members who are effective are likely to be re-elected, and those that aren’t effective will be voted out.”

“I appreciate the impacts and the reasons for the SAB, but my general thinking is that more supports for community responsiveness and accountability are helpful. Elected board members are directly accountable to people, but particularly the populations affected because they are elected by the parents and the citizens of St. Louis, and this is a positive thing…I find it hopeful that transition can happen. I recognize it will take some intentionality to ensure that solid, qualified, accountable, child-focused candidates are ready, and well positioned to run for those offices.”

“Increased voter turnout would be good, but there is still a large number of voters participated - over 30,000 - that voted for school board members [in the 2017 election]. The fact that many come out, and still vote for school board [candidates ] says that the community doesn’t want to be ignored, and wants their voices to be heard in the St. Louis Public Schools.”

The Challenges of Elected Boards

- With higher turnover through regular elections, there is less opportunity to build a functional team.
- It takes time to learn the job; the planning process for re-election begins at about the same time that a new board member gets their “sea legs.”
- Sometimes people run for office for the wrong reasons (e.g. business reasons, or to bolster a political career).
- Low voter turnout in school board elections can lead to less effective board members.
- It takes money to run in an election; some candidates are supported with funders that have agendas.
- With larger boards, members are “fighting for airspace” at the top.
- Parents may run because of experience with their own child, and become a one-issue board member who fails to see the bigger picture.
In their own words:

“The amount of time, money spent on elections is going to be enormous….Imagine if you got to invest that in schools instead? *[In St. Louis, this] election will get reduced to a political game; people are going to use these posts to promote their own self-interests.”

“Before the SAB, there were people who did not have expertise in running an organization. There were squabbles that took time, resources and grabbed headlines... I don’t see the merits of an elected board at all right now.”

“The elected board was factionalized. The school, the teachers were represented. The cafeteria workers were represented, the janitor. Everybody but the parents and the kids.”

“People running for elected boards are often running against the current establishment, regardless of how well it has or hasn’t worked.”

“This is too important to leave to chance. We need leaders whose first allegiance is to kids. Electing a strong board may be possible but it is a high-risk venture.”

“Historically, we’ve seen the drawbacks of an elected board in St. Louis. I am hopeful we have learned our lessons from our past and are willing to putting all that aside to make the best decisions going forward that are based on making sure our kids are stable.”

Note: we did not specifically ask interviewees about pros/cons of a hybrid board because we did not want it to appear that we were seeding an idea, nor does St. Louis have a “hybrid experience” on which to reflect. However, as is evident in suggestions below, many interviewees consider a hybrid board as a viable possibility.

What are Some Possible Ways to Move Forward?

During our conversations with leaders, we heard many ideas and suggestions regarding how best to organize a school board in order to promote what’s best for students.

Most interviewees were providing ideas, not detailed plans that considered all factors at play. Instead, the ideas listed below are rooted in priorities that these leaders hold about school board governance: stability, representation, gradual transitions, and balance. Generally, ideas and suggestions fall into these categories:

Elected Board Ideas

Some of the interviewees expressed the desire to transition authority to the elected board immediately, while others suggested a gradual transition with some type of interim hybrid reality.

1. Transition to an Elected Board Immediately

• I don’t think it has to be a gradual process because I have full faith in the people currently on the board.
• The current board is ready to assume leadership. They are qualified and prepared.
• They need to turn it over as soon as possible, with a short, well-defined transition.

2. Transition to an Elected Board Immediately, and Provide Supports

• Have SAB members serve in an advisory capacity to the elected board, which would have board authority. SAB members would provide context and guidance in order to preserve institutional knowledge and provide stability.
• Provide a staff person to the elected board to support them in staying abreast of national trends and best practices, and assist with coordination.
• Ensure that the board chair has needed supports and training in order to lead effectively.

3. Shift to an Elected Board, But Change Elections

Prepared by the SLPS Foundation
• Start from scratch upon transitioning board authority, electing all seven members at once with differing term lengths to allow for staggered re-election cycles.
• Time the transition such that the board and superintendent transitions don’t happen at the same time.
• Organize the board into sub-districts to promote representation and accountability, rather than at-large members.
• Time the transition of board authority after the next election for school board, to ensure that the majority of board members will have been elected at a time when the public is aware that a transition is imminent.

4. Shift Authority Gradually from an Appointed to an Elected Board

• Involve the elected board, or members of the elected board in SAB decision-making prior to transitioning board, to ensure continuity.
• Have at least a year where both the appointed and the elected board are in power to ensure transfer of institutional knowledge.
• Delegate specific tasks/domains to the elected board and have it work with a senior member of SLPS staff to work out kinks of board functions, and to become familiar with internal functions of the District.
• Change state statute to reference to a probationary period over 2-3 years: that the SAB remains in place or the transition district remains in place until an elected board is fully in place and has demonstrated to the State Board that they are maintaining the stability and process of the District, to allow the elected board to receive necessary training and to develop a relationship with one another and the superintendent.

Appointed Board Ideas

Other interviewees expressed a desire for no change in governance, and suggested that the current structure of an appointed board be maintained.

• A mayor appointed board could work in a city with a progressive mayor, but that might not be the right fit given current factions in St. Louis, and even within the African American community.
• Despite the fact that it will be politically difficult, an appointed board will deliver best results for students and most stability for the system.

Hybrid Board Ideas

Some those interviewed posited the idea of a hybrid board; some believed it would make sense during a transition, others thought it might be a permanent solution.

• Maintain current appointed members and elect remaining four board seats.
• Have three elected members, three appointed members, and one neutral party.
• A Hybrid format of 5 or 7 members: 3 appointed, 2 elected; OR 4 appointed, 3 elected. Having appointed board members provides continuity; until voter turnout improves. Over time, when one SAB member cycles off, then an elected member cycles on so that eventually the board is made up of elected members.
• A Hybrid format with a total of 5 members: 3 appointed, 2 elected (or the other way around) to ensure that the transition is gradual and that the board is not composed of all new members at one time. Essential skill sets/perspectives are business, education, and parent representation. No term limits for appointed members but law should say that it be until a certain date or at-will of appointer, to create a moment of “check in” for that appointee. The transition would be to hold an election for 2 seats and have them serve alongside the current SAB. Keep elections on regular election cycle to promote voter turnout.
• DESE should have the flexibility to select people from the current elected board to serve alongside the appointed board.
Recommendations for Any Transition

Many themes emerged across conversations that apply to any transition in governance. Those themes include:

**Needs to be Gradual.** Most interviewees agreed that any transition should happen gradually and not seek to be “disruptive” to the stability of current operations. The elected board/individual members have not had access to essential information that would impact their governance (e.g. budget conversations, long-term planning, etc.), nor have they had the opportunity to congeal as a board around the actual work of governance, or interact with district staff as partners.

**Need a Transition Plan.** While there is not specific agreement on the composition of a transitional structure, many interviewees made suggestions about how a transition could be structured. There is not agreement on whether a transition plan should come from the two existing boards themselves, from an external entity, or from the community. However, there is general agreement that both existing boards should provide input into the process, as they know the most about the realities of both boards. Any viable plan must have the long-view in mind.

**Community Input is Critical.** Some interviewees emphasized the importance of community/parent voice in defining a transition process.

“The process is crucial. If people have the sense that they’ve been heard and involved in the process, they’re much more likely to support whatever the outcome is. But if it feels a group of people sat in a room and decided for them, there’s going to be less legitimacy to what happens…reaching out, early and often to the critical stakeholders—and some of them aren’t going to be the usual suspects, the people you’re comfortable talking to, necessarily—but it’s important to bring those folks in and bring them along with you. And I think that’s especially important given the historical moment we find ourselves in, in St. Louis right now with frayed civic trust. The sense that it can’t be business as usual with some of our major institutions.”

**Stagger Leadership Changes.** Currently, the SAB’s authority is set to expire in 2019, which is also the end of Dr. Adams’ contract. There is broad agreement that it is essential that these transitions do not happen at the same time and that a transition plan be developed and accepted (and potentially implemented) before Dr. Adams leaves the superintendent position.

**Increased Voter Awareness is Critical.** With St. Louis City participation in recent school board elections being as low as 11% and as high as 30%, most of the interviewees stressed the need for organized efforts to increase voter awareness about school board service, and the responsibilities of school board members. Additional interviewees expressed a need for stronger pathways & supports to develop potential board candidates.

**Candidates Have to be Vetted by a Neutral Party.** Many of those interviewed stressed the need for the community to create a rigorous means of vetting candidates (e.g. debates, forums, or other means, so that the community can cultivate and elect candidates that are best equipped to serve on behalf of students.

**Race Matters.** If appointed, the board has to have a majority of African American leaders. These leaders must be individuals whom community believes have their back, with no sellouts. All appointees have to have “cross over” appeal, accepted by diverse group of citizens. One interviewee reported the effects of racial segregation at the levels of business, civic, and political leadership: that there is a lack of African American leaders in the St. Louis community, and that those who do have power have been selected by white leadership, and tend not to have standing in middle, working class, or poor black communities. Whether an appointed or elected board, this creates a challenging landscape for an effective and equitable governance transition for a district that most directly impacts the black community.
SIDEBAR: Notable Moments in St. Louis School Board Elections

**Remembering a hard-fought battle.** For over 30 years (from 1921-1955), African American leaders worked to elect an African American to the St. Louis Public Schools Board of Education. The effort began in 1921, when Rev. George E. Stevens became the first African American on the ballot for the St. Louis Board of Education. It was not until 1955 that the first African American candidate was elected: Rev. John Hicks. *(Diversifying the Board of Education, Claude & Yolanda Weathersby, Missouri History Museum Magazine, Spring 2017)*

**Beginning in 1953** voters started to elect members of a blue ribbon faction to the board. Led by businessman Daniel Schlafly (1953-1981) the blue ribbon faction sought to expose endemic corruption in the school district. *(City Schools & City Politics by John Portz, Lana Stein, and Robin R. Jones, 1999)*

**In 1988, the White Citizens Council** captured 6 of the 12 seats on the board, and voted in a block. The White Citizens Council was "hell-bent on destroying any cooperativeness in the community. They wouldn’t even visit the north side schools." *(Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform, Frederick Hess, 1999)*

**In 1991, Mayor Schoemel & Civic Progress led the 4 Candidates 4 Kids effort** to oppose anti-busing candidates. “Realizing the negative publicity such an outcome would engender, Civic Progress and the mayor, and other community leaders, fashioned a slate of candidates.” *(City Schools & City Politics, 1999)*

**Reform vs. Existing Structure (2003 – 2006).** The time period leading up to the State takeover was marked by swings in elected leadership. Across the nation, “cities considered or adopted new oversight structures in which the mayor would take over the schools and appoint board members” *(Democracy at Work? School Board Elections and Reform in St. Louis, Kimball & Stein). In St. Louis, Francis Slay was elected in 2001, “he and his staff tried to achieve control of the school board through elections.” *(Democracy at Work? School Board Elections and Reform in St. Louis, Kimball & Stein)*

**In 2003,** a reform slate “Four for the Future” Jackson/Archibald/Clinkscale/Schoemel Slate was put together by Mayor Slay, Civic Progress and Black Leadership Roundtable, and was elected. The campaign included investment by three groups of nearly $300,000, as well as Fleishman Hillard publicity. The STL American also endorsed the candidates. *(Democracy at Work? School Board Elections and Reform in St. Louis, Kimball & Stein)*

The long-time superintendent retired, and the board hired turnaround firm Alvarez and Marshal, and William Roberti to serve as acting superintendent. The board also announced that the district had a budget deficit of $90 million and started school closings and massive lay-offs.

**In 2005,** Slay backed three candidates, and Civic Progress funded their campaigns. Three opponents of the reform also ran. The opponents of school reform won two seats with candidates O’Brien and Purdy. Flint Fowler, one of Slay’s candidates, won the other.

**In 2006,** two reform candidates were contested, Clinkscale and Buford (who replaced Schoemel when he resigned); opposition pulled off an upset and defeated reform candidates; Peter Downs and Donna Jones were elected. The newly-elected reform majority fired superintendent Creg Williams, and hired Diana Bourisaw. Mayor Slay asked the State to intervene.

**In 2007,** the State took over, declaring the District was failing, and created the Special Administrative Board (SAB). The Elected Board continued to meet monthly and hold elections, though held no formal authority.

**In 2008,** the SAB hired Dr. Kelvin Adams to serve as the Superintendent.

**In 2016,** the District regained accreditation, and community conversations began about returning governing authority to an elected board. The elected board has been meeting monthly. One person observed: “The media coverage dwells in dynamics of former elected boards and projects those dynamics onto current board which isn’t fair; the media narrative that persists is that the elected board is dysfunctional, and it is not.”
SECTION FOUR: SLPS FOUNDATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its observations, community conversations, and research, the SLPS Foundation has developed a series of recommendations to support effective governance in the Saint Louis Public Schools.

IF AN ELECTED BOARD IS PURSUED

Belief #1: Gradual Transition is best to maintain institutional knowledge and operational consistency, and to allow time to strengthen electoral processes around school board elections.

Belief #2: St. Louis Needs to Improve Voter Turnout. While St. Louis fares better than the national average for voter turnout in school board elections, voter turnout needs to be stronger for school board elections. Recent turnout was 11% in 2014, 20% in 2016 and 30% in 2017 (also the year of a mayoral race). Additionally, in some years, school board incumbents ran unopposed.

Belief #3: St. Louis Needs to Increase Voter Awareness of What Makes a Strong School Board Candidate. Numerous community leaders cited the need for a neutral party to hold meaningful candidate forums and for voters to become more aware of what qualities are needed for effectiveness. We agree. Additionally, a more established pipeline is needed in order to create pathways for strong candidates. The Foundation would advocate for some form of vetting of candidates based on criteria that research shows are critical to success.

Belief #4: Equip the Board for Success. If an elected board is the chosen path, the community should galvanize around promoting its success. Resources such as access to training and coaching should be provided. Other possibilities include:

- Ongoing consultancy with an entity like Council of Great City Schools,
- A staff person assigned to do research, scheduling, preparing for meetings for board, etc.

IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

The logic behind implementing a gradual transition to an elected board is that it provides continuity in governance, allows for institutional knowledge transfer, and offers an opportunity for effective board norms to be modeled. It should be noted that a gradual transition to an elected board was also the recommendation of the Special Advisory Committee on the St. Louis Public Schools made in 2010.\textsuperscript{lviii}

SLPS Foundation makes these recommendations hoping the following factors are in place:

- No new appointments for the Special Administrative Board. The models described in the following pages seek to provide continuity with the current SAB members. If any currently appointed SAB member steps down, no new appointments should be made during the transition process. Instead, an elected board member should be added to the board (in order to achieve the needed number of members), rather than identifying a replacement appointed member.
- Dr. Adams’ sustained leadership throughout the transition will be essential, to provide continuity in operations, and allow the elected board to become established before undergoing a superintendent search.
- Two of the below structures involve a board temporarily made up of both appointed and elected members (options A and B). Guidance from the Council of the Great City Schools generally advises against hybrid school boards. If using a hybrid model as a transitional tool for a short period of time, the Council strongly emphasizes the importance of a shared pledge among all members to work together for the betterment of the district and its students.
- Establish safety nets and ‘fail-safe’ measures to guard against slippage in student performance. Because student performance data is not available in real-time, these measures could be activated at the first sign of board operational dysfunction, as determined by a neutral entity.
Possible Structures for Gradual Return to an Elected Board

A gradual transition could take the form of several models; please see corresponding charts in order to visualize each possible structure for transition. The following four models are not listed in any particular order.

OPTION A: Transitional Hybrid Model  A staggered transition of members, adding elected members and removing appointed members over a period of several years. In 2021, the SAB members would “roll off” of the board and the SAB would dissolve. The composition of the governing board each year would be the following:

- 2018: No change
- 2019: 5 members in total. 3 SAB members, 2 elected members.
- 2020: 7 members in total, 3 SAB members, 4 elected members
- 2021: 7 members, all elected. SAB dissolves.

OPTION B: Shadowing/Mentoring Model  A gradual transition in which elected board members have the opportunity to shadow appointed members, serve alongside appointed members, and seek guidance as needed from appointed members.

For a one-year period, all or select members of the elected board to shadow the SAB, with access to all communications and documents but with no voting rights. This would come with a commitment to shadow in good faith, not providing critique to appointed board practices or exposing those elements that are confidential, but rather becoming acquainted with the status of SLPS policies, finances, and operations, while observing SAB practices and making note of which practices they will seek to continue as the elected board transitions into authority.

For a second one-year period, four members of the elected board will serve alongside the appointed board (continues on next page)
members, and the remaining three members of the elected board will continue to shadow all communications and documents of the temporarily hybrid board.

For a third one-year period, the SAB will remain intact, but will hold no authority. All seven members of the elected board will hold authority, and the SAB will remain privy to all communications and documents. The SAB will be available to advise the elected board as needed over the course of that year. Members of the SAB would make a commitment to shadow in good faith, not providing critique to elected board practices or exposing those elements that are confidential, but rather to provide information or perspectives as requested by the elected board. After this year, the elected board will maintain governing authority, and the SAB will dissolve.

**OPTION C: Transition of Duties Model** A gradual transition of duties (e.g. management, finances, personnel) from an appointed board to an elected board, over a period of several years. Over a 10 year period, the public school district in Newark, New Jersey transitioned its authority from state control to elected control by transitioning domains of responsibility that aligned with the domains on which the district was evaluated by the state. If and as the domains were evaluated at earning 80% of possible points, that domain was transitioned to be under the authority of the elected board (see Appendix C). A similar model of transitioning could be implemented in St. Louis, identifying set domains of authority, with clear, pre-determined conditions under which those domains would be transitioned from an elected board to an appointed board.

**OPTION D: Advisory Board Model** A gradual transition of institutional knowledge, by engaging longstanding SAB members as consultants or non-voting participants on the board for a set period of time to provide context and/or guidance as it is requested by the elected board. This is likely the only model of gradual transition listed here that may not require legislative change.
IF AN APPOINTED BOARD IS PURSUED

Belief #1: The Current Structure Has Promoted Student Outcomes. The current appointed structure has been successful in improving student achievement, particularly with relatively stable membership of the appointed board. If an appointed board is maintained, possible means of maximizing elements that have worked in the past include:

- Maintain a 3-person board.
- Maintain appointments by the Mayor and the President of the Board of Aldermen, given their immediate stake in the success of the school system.
- Reduce possible politicization, and increase connectivity with DESE State Board by switching state-level appointment from the Governor to either the DESE board, or to the Missouri Commissioner of Education.
- Encourage stability by creating terms of service for appointed members, and staggering the timing of terms so that all slots are not re-appointed at the same time. Additionally, establishing terms limits board member turnover based on the political goals of the appointing bodies.

Belief #2: Improved Community Voice/Engagement Is Needed. Appointed boards should have clear and meaningful mechanisms to incorporate community voice. Possible means of incorporating community voice. When the SAB was put in place in 2007, there was not adequate community input or involvements. Some possibilities include:

- Require appointees to represent specific communities (either geographic areas of the City of St. Louis, or roles such as parent, educator, business leader).
- Select appointees from a group of candidates selected by the community, either through a separate vote, or from the elected board, with no option for appointers to delay appointments as a political tactic.

Belief #3: Improved Accountability Is Needed. Mechanisms are needed to hold the SAB and/or individual members accountable for student outcomes. Possible means of improving accountability include:

- Create a provision that allows the community to vote to remove an appointee from office, if their performance has been unsatisfactory.
- Require disclosures of board members to ensure transparency regarding potential conflicts of interest.

Belief #4: Equip It For Success. An appointed board should engage in continuous training and coaching and the community should make every resource available to board to equip it for success. Possible means of equipping the board for success include:

- Ongoing consultancy with an entity like Council of Great City Schools,
- A staff person assigned to do research, scheduling, preparing for meetings for board, etc.
IF A LONG-TERM HYBRID BOARD IS PURSUED

As mentioned earlier, guidance from the Council of the Great City Schools generally advises against hybrid school boards, citing a tendency towards factions that can render a hybrid board dysfunctional. Other sources state that hybrid models are generally untested, with only a handful of examples from which to draw conclusions. However, hybrid models were brought up several times by community stakeholders as possible structures for school board governance, with the general feeling that an “in-between” solution might be a fit for St. Louis’ unique history.

The make-up of a board could be majority elected, or majority appointed (either 5 members or 7 members). One unique aspect of a permanently hybrid board is that there is the potential for the majority group to be switched, simply by replacing one member of the board: this allows for the circumstance in which the DESE board seeks to access some of the stabilizing benefits of an appointed board, it can more easily toggle the hybrid board to be majority appointed, and back again to majority elected when performance stabilizes.

If a hybrid model were pursued, all beliefs articulated in previous sections for an elected board, and for an appointed board, would also apply to a hybrid model. All members would need to rise above possible fragmentation with a shared commitment to collaborate in the interest of students. In order to set the board up for success, it would likely need access to expert facilitation, and all board terms (appointed or elected) would need to be staggered to provide continuity. Additionally, major decisions made by a hybrid board should likely require a supermajority (5 to 2, or 3 to 2) so that a unified vision can be presented and pursued publicly.

CONCLUSION

The SLPS Foundation recognizes the significant work that lies ahead, and appreciates the service of those tasked with designing the best possible plan for SLPS governance, one that first and foremost serves students. This task represents a truly important civic responsibility, and requires thoughtful dialogue, rigorous research, and skilled leadership.

As articulated in this report, there are many paths to be considered. While the heat of this decision will attract energy and dynamic conversation, the SLPS Foundation encourages all involved to plan for the long-term. It will take many leaders—with diverse perspectives and experiences—to craft and relentlessly pursue strategies that offer students the best possible opportunities, and that poise St. Louis for a stronger future.
APPENDIX A: WHO WAS INTERVIEWED

Phase 1 Interviewees (directly involved in district governance)

- Dr. Kelvin Adams, SLPS Superintendent
- Dr. Melanie Adams, SAB member (former)
- Ms. Susan Jones, Elected Board President
- Mr. Mike Jones, DESE Board
- Commissioner Chris Nicastro, DESE (former)
- Dr. Vic Lenz, DESE Board
- Mr. Rick Sullivan, SAB Chair
- Commissioner Margie Vandeven, DESE (former)

Phase 2 Interviewees (community, political, & institutional leaders)

- Ron Jackson, Kimberly Norwood, Rita Days, Black Leadership Roundtable
- Donald Suggs, St. Louis American
- Mike McMillan, Urban League of Greater St. Louis
- Jason Purnell, For the Sake of All, The Brown School, WUSTL
- Starsky Wilson, Deaconess Foundation
- Maranda Richardson, Black Funders of St. Louis
- Kathy Osborn, Regional Business Council
- Tom Irwin, Kathleen Strout, Civic Progress
- Marty Murray Jr., Democratic Committeeman
- Sally Topping, Teachers Union
- Lyda Krewson, Nicole Hudson, St. Louis City Mayor’s Office
- Michael Butler, State Representative
- Tishaura Jones, St. Louis City Treasurer
- Lacy Clay, U.S. Representative

Other leaders were invited to participate in these interviews but either were not able to participate, or declined.

In its initial plan for collecting community perspectives to augment the academic research on this topic, the Foundation included a phase of this work titled “Seek Community Input/Public Forums & Conversations” noting that is “not something the SLPS Foundation can lead, but is a critical step.” As the work of the SAB’s Special Committee on school board governance solidified and developed a systematic approach to gathering community input, the SLPS Foundation largely deferred to its data collection processes. Staff attended the community meetings as observers, and eagerly await the data collected through surveys and personal testimonies, which we hope will be taken seriously by decision-makers as they process that data, this report, and other efforts to inform a productive conversation on school board governance.

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APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE SLPS FOUNDATION

The St. Louis Public Schools Foundation exists to serve as a trusted bridge between District needs and community generosity to promote educational success for St. Louis Public School District students.

Established in 1998 as an independently governed not-for-profit organization, the Foundation works with donors, community experts, and District and school-level leadership to galvanize community resources, and to ensure that strategic investments support evidence-based programs that align with District priorities and school capacity. In its management of private donations to the District, the Foundation is committed to fiscal stewardship and honoring donor intent; it provides a high level of transparency and accountability to donors and leverages its capacity to manage, disburse, and audit private sector contributions to the District. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised and distributed more than $16 million, and has served as an important catalyst of reform and innovation.

The Foundation has aligned its fundraising and investments with the District's Transformation Plan, which serves as SLPS’ blueprint for accelerated student success over the next five years.

**Strategic Priorities of the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation**

The Foundation has aligned its fundraising and investments with the District's Transformation Plan, which serves as SLPS’ blueprint for accelerated student success over the next five years.

The Foundation has identified the following four strategic priorities; the Foundation also manages several modest school-based funds.

**Priority #1 Sustaining Quality and Free Early Childhood Education for at least 2300 students**

Quality early learning programs can result in increased school success, and reduced costs in special education, remedial classes, and even incarceration later in life. Student performance clearly illustrates the importance of early education: current fourth graders who attended SLPS preschool are scoring higher in both communications arts than are students who did not attend SLPS preschool. Current funding for preschool expansion comes from one-time Desegregation Settlement funding which will expire in 2018.

**Priority #2 Intensifying Career and College Preparation**

The Foundation helps to support college advisors in all SLPS high schools, and to increase rigor of academic preparation for the ACT and college courses. The ultimate goal is to raise academic readiness as measured by an increase in ACT scores, and increase college enrollment rates by at least 5-10% and ensure persistence to degree.

**Priority #3 Building and Supporting Excellent School Leadership**

Great principals attract talented teachers, create a culture of high-expectations, and provide stability for the school community. On average, 9-14 principals leave each year due to terminations, retirement, or moves to other school districts. The Foundation is supporting innovative talent and recruitment strategies for exemplary principals, as well as professional growth opportunities for some of the District’s homegrown rising stars.

**Priority #4 Promoting Student Health and Wellness**

The Foundation is assisting the District in scaling up a successful obesity prevention program to approximately 1,500 additional students. The Foundation is also working with the District to intensify trauma-informed mental health services to students.

Visit the SLPS Foundation website to view our most recent Annual Report: [www.slpsfoundation.org](http://www.slpsfoundation.org)
APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF OTHER DISTRICTS’ TRANSITIONS

HYBRID BOARDS WITH APPOINTED & ELECTED MEMBERSHIP

Of the three main types of school boards in the United States, hybrid boards are the least common and the least tested. Because of this, there are not many concrete conclusions that can be drawn or reasonable expectations that can be predicted from implementing a hybrid board. Two hybrids that have shown progress include Baltimore and Hartford.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baltimore Public Schools District (1997-present)</th>
<th>Hartford Public Schools District (2002-present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Board Structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>School Board Structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Between 1997 and 2016, Jointly appointed by mayor and governor</td>
<td>- Four elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Moved to 100% mayor approved in 2017. Candidates apply for nomination by filling out online application</td>
<td>- Five appointed by mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In 2022, the 9 member board will expand to 11 with 2 elected commissioners added</td>
<td>- 1/3rd of members must be minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results (2011-2014)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Results (2006-2013)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- % of students with mean wGPA ≥ 3.0 increased 4.3%</td>
<td>This hybrid structure is showing results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- % of students with mean wGPA ≥ 2.5 increased 6.4%</td>
<td>- Hartford has made significant improvement in reading performance since 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- % of students taking AP/IB courses fluctuated but did not change</td>
<td>- Hartford has made notable gains in math since 2007, but those leveled off in the last two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Graduation rates increased 8.2%</td>
<td>- Special education students are outpacing statewide peers in math, but just keeping pace in reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- College enrollment rates decreased 7.2% (from 49.8% to 42.0%)</td>
<td>- Middle and high school English language learners (ELL) closed the achievement gap with ELL peers at the state level, but still lag far behind their native English-speaking peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hartford’s graduation rates have increased each year, but one in three students fails to graduate in four years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hartford has boosted SAT-taking, a gateway to college attendance, by providing the test for free during the school day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECENT EXAMPLES OF TRANSITIONS FROM
APPOINTED TO ELECTED BOARD GOVERNANCE

I. GRADUAL TRANSITION TO AN ELECTED BOARD: ANN ARUNDEL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Anne Arundel School Board (Maryland), is moving from an appointed board to an elected board. Note: this included a change in election timing, so that school board elections will occur when presidential elections occur.

- The District’s move from an appointed board to an elected board has recently begun and will be completed by 2020.
- Currently board is comprised of 8 board members, appointed by the governor.
- If an appointed member resigns, the appointer is no longer the governor (per bill passed in 2017). Instead appointees are approved by a 13-member commission.
- A transition board will consist of both appointed and elected members, starting in 2018: 4 members will be elected from council districts for a six year term; 2020: 4 new members elected from 3 council districts for four year term; 2024: Members from all seven councilmanic districts will be elected. Going forward, school board elections will take place only during presidential election years.

Because the elected school board proposal calls for eight members rather than nine, actions will require five votes to pass. The student member of the board retains his or her full voting rights.

II. IMMEDIATE SWITCH FROM APPOINTED TO ELECTED GOVERNANCE: DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

From 2009 to 2017, the State of Michigan oversaw the school district through an appointed emergency manager. On July 1, 2016, a state law divided Detroit Public Schools (DPS) into two districts: DPS and the Detroit Public Schools Community District. DPS remains as a legal entity to pay down more than $400 million in debt. The Detroit Public Schools Community District manages day-to-day operations for public schools in conjunction with the state-appointed Detroit Financial Review Commission. The 11-member board for Detroit Public Schools was replaced by a seven-member board when new members took office in January 2017.

This decision created a new school district, so a new election was held. 10 of 11 former elected members ran for new board. Whole new board took control in 2017.

- New District created (Detroit Public Schools Community District)
- New board elected (old board was in place, but those members were invited to run again)
- 63 candidates ran for 7 spots
- The board size went from 11 to 7
- The candidates receiving the most and second-most votes won six-year terms. Those candidates gathering the third, fourth, and fifth-most votes won four-year terms, and the candidates receiving the sixth and seventh-most votes won two-year terms
III. INCREMENTAL TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES/AUTHORITIES: NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Newark Public Schools transitioned over 10 years from a state-controlled model to a locally elected board.

1995 STATE-TAKEOVER

In 1995, the state of New Jersey took over authority of the Newark Public School District, which is made up of 65 schools, educating 36,000 students. The state takeover sought to improve poor academics, crumbling buildings, and what was seen as corrupt leadership. The locally-elected school board was relegated to a “Newark School Advisory Board.”

2014-2015 PROTESTS FOR LOCAL CONTROL

In anticipation of the 20th anniversary of state-takeover, protests in favor of local control were common among students, parents, and teachers; the mayor often called for the resignation of the then state-appointed superintendent Cami Anderson, despite the governor’s reappointment of her post. In 2015, Christopher Cerf was appointed by the state as the new superintendent of the school district, with the directive to guide the district back to local control. Unlike his predecessor, Superintendent Cerf developed a working relationship with the city’s mayor.

2016 PANEL APPOINTED BY MAYOR & GOVERNOR PRODUCES REPORT FOR LOCAL CONTROL

In 2016, a report was authored by the Newark Education Success Board, members of which were appointed by Governor Chris Christie and Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, titled “Pathway to Local Control”, recommending return to local control if performance benchmarks were met.

The panel that authored the report consisted of 9 members, four appointed by the mayor, and five appointed by the governor, and included representatives from corporations, education advocacy groups, governmental posts, corporate leaders, a student/protest leader, the clergy, and the sitting superintendent.

The 45-page report contains recommendations informed by community meetings and suggestions from school staff and community members.

Recommendations include:

- “measures to assure close partnership between the School Board and Superintendent,
- “increase transparency and accountability,
- “assure meaningful parent involvement,
- “maintain a culture of achievement and high expectations,
- “rebuild trust with those persons who are critical of past efforts,
- “attract a world-class leadership team,
- “foster Community Schools
- “and collaborate with charter schools on best practices, resources, equity polices, success indicators and more."
- “Other recommendations are designed to ensure that children of all races, cultural backgrounds and learning needs have an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve their full potential.
- “With regard to finances, the Success Board recommends an audit of district practices preceding transfer to local control, development of a financial improvement plan, and maintenance of sufficient reserves.

“With regard to every element of the transition, the NESB recommends that the Newark Board of Education continually monitor, evaluate and report out on progress.”
2017 NJ STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTES TO END STATE-TAKEOVER, BEGIN TRANSITION

In 2017, the New Jersey Board of Education voted to end its state-takeover of the Newark Public School District, and return control to the locally-elected school board. It had been 22 years since the Newark school district has been governed by an elected board.\textsuperscript{30}

Elections to the local school board continued during state control. In the 2016 election, after conversations had begun about turning total control over to the elected board, all 9 members of the elected board were endorsed by the City’s mayor, and had been part of the Children First Team or the Newark Unity slate. The 2017 April election for 3 open seats had 16 candidates; three of those candidates make up the Newark Unity slate, which was endorsed by Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, and three other candidates have formed the Community Team slate.\textsuperscript{30} The chair of the elected board reflected on the training that the board has undergone to prepare for the return to local control.\textsuperscript{30}

2017 TRANSITION PROCESS

"This is not like hitting a light switch where there’s one moment when there’s no local control. It is a statutorily set process that has a number milestones and checkpoints."\textsuperscript{31} – Supt Christopher Cerf

Elements of the transition from state to local control have already been underway for a decade. The domains that align with the New Jersey education monitoring system (the Quality Single Accountability System) were gradually transition from state control to local control, so long as that area received above 80% of possible points based on the state’s annual evaluation of the district’s growth and performance. The transition of authority follows this timeline\textsuperscript{32}.

Up until 2017, the state-hired superintendent has had veto power over all of the advisory board’s decisions.\textsuperscript{33}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>State Control</th>
<th>Local Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-2006</td>
<td>Operations, Fiscal Management, Personnel, Instruction &amp; Program, Governance</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2013</td>
<td>Fiscal Management, Personnel, Instruction &amp; Program, Governance</td>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Operations, Fiscal Management, Personnel, Instruction &amp; Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Operations, Fiscal Management, Personnel, Instruction &amp; Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS FOR FINAL TRANSITION OF GOVERNANCE, 2017 & BEYOND

State Accepts Scores & Recommends Transition: In September 2017, the state board moves to accept the scores and determine if they meet the threshold. If they do, then the commissioner recommends that he board vote to return local control to the district.\textsuperscript{34}

Commissioner and District Develop Transition Plan: Between October and December 2017, the commission will work in collaboration with the district to develop a transitions plan. The plan is expected to take 3-6 months to finalize, and will be presented by the commission to the local school board.\textsuperscript{35}

Commissioner Presents Plan to Board: Once the commissioner presents the plan to the board, it will officially receive control of the district. The board will then have the power to pick a superintendent who is in charge of the day-to-day management of the schools. The district must also hold a referendum next year (spring 2018) to let the public vote on whether they want an elected board or one appointed by the mayor.\textsuperscript{36}

Superintendent's Contract Expires, With Option for Changes: The state appointed superintendent's contract expires in June 2018, though it allows for changes if needed during the transition to local control.\textsuperscript{37} It is expected that the transition plan will outline the process for replacing him with a leaders selected by the local school board.\textsuperscript{38}
**APPENDIX D: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF SIMILAR DISTRICTS**

Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, districts that are similar\(^1\) to St. Louis Public Schools have the following governance characteristics. Governance information is limited to what is available via their district websites, and related news coverage. Please note that this information does not take into account district performance, or racial demographics. School districts are ordered based on student populations, largest to smallest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District (SD)</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Governance Type</th>
<th>Median Household Income(^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newark Public Schools</td>
<td>Newark, NJ</td>
<td>Elected – recently appointed</td>
<td>$33,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines Public Schools</td>
<td>Des Moines, Iowa</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$48,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham Public Schools</td>
<td>Durham, NC</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$52,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Public Schools</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$40,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarillo Public Schools</td>
<td>Amarillo, TX</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$49,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose Unified SD</td>
<td>San Jose, CA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$90,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati City SD</td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$34,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscogee County SD</td>
<td>Columbus, GA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$42,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk City SD</td>
<td>Norfolk, VA</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>$45,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu Parish SD</td>
<td>Lake Charles, LA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$37,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond County SD</td>
<td>Augusta, GA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$38,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis SD</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$43,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery County SD</td>
<td>Montgomery, AL</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$45,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Valley SD</td>
<td>Boulder, CO</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$60,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis City Schools</td>
<td>St. Louis MO</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>$35,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane SD</td>
<td>Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$43,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodi Unified SD</td>
<td>Lodi, CA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$51,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester City SD</td>
<td>Rochester, NY</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$31,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma SD</td>
<td>Tacoma, WA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$53,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubbock SD</td>
<td>Lubbock, TX</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$45,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson SD</td>
<td>Jackson, MS</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>$32,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poudre SD</td>
<td>Fort Collins, CO</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$57,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alachua SD</td>
<td>Gainesville, FL</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$32,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockford SD 2005</td>
<td>Rockford IL</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$40,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Springs, No 11</td>
<td>Colorado Springs, CO</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$56,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison Metro SD</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$56,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise Independent SD</td>
<td>Boise, ID</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$52,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield R-XII SD</td>
<td>Springfield, MO</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$33,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield SD</td>
<td>Springfield, MA</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>$35,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh SD</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$42,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham City SD</td>
<td>Birmingham, AL</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>$32,404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^1\) For the purposes of this chart, similar districts are designated by NCES as being in a City, have at least 51 school buildings, and between 24,000 and 35,000 students. A high number of school buildings with a relatively lower student population is being interpreted here as a sign of population decline, which is an effect that has challenged St. Louis City schools.

\(^2\) Income information is taken from the U.S. Census American Fact Finder data from the 2016 American Community Survey, and is not adjusted for cost of living, but is adjusted for inflation.

Prepared by the SLPS Foundation
APPENDIX E: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2010 REPORT

VII. Recommendations

A. Recommendations to DESE

• The Committee recommends that the following principles shape the policies and operations of the school board:
  – A school board represents the education system to the public. The board should carry tax initiatives and bond issues to voters and concern itself with the fiscal integrity of the district.
  – A school board represents the public to the superintendent. The board must set the standards and expectations for quality education and hold the superintendent accountable for responding to the public’s questions and concerns.
  – A school board’s most important duty is to hire and retain the best possible superintendent, and dismiss one who is not an effective educational leader. If the chosen superintendent cannot run the district better than the board members, that person is not the right one for the job.
  – The superintendent is responsible for running the district, employing and monitoring staff, and preparing budgets.
  – Board members should not interfere with the superintendent’s duties by micromanaging. Instead the board should demand full and honest reporting from the superintendent and then deal directly with the superintendent to assure itself of the quality of education offered in the district.

• DESE should ask the state legislature to redefine the powers and duties of St. Louis’s school board to comply with best practices of effective boards as described above and to clarify that the board’s central duty is to hire, retain, and, when necessary, dismiss a Superintendent who is responsible for the daily management of the school system. This should be achieved by amending RSMo. § 162.621.

• We recommend that DESE be mindful of the importance of stability and consistency realizing that SLPS needs a sustained period of stable leadership if current initiatives are to progress. In 2006, this Committee concluded that stable leadership would be crucial for the future success of the SLPS. The Committee stands by that conclusion.

• The current members of the SAB have shown that they can work together for the good of St. Louis’s children and should continue to serve on the SAB. Because of the importance of stability and consistent policies, DESE should monitor the SLPS and maintain the current SAB as long as progress is being made or until accreditation is regained.
• DESE should develop reasonable criteria for assessing progress in the SLPS, recognizing that it takes time to turn a large school system around. DESE should measure SLPS progress against data collected for the 2010-2011 school year, which will be collected according to the current Accountability Plan. If DESE determines that progress is not being made toward accreditation, DESE should consider recommending to the appropriate appointing authorities that one or more members of the SAB be replaced.

• While the Committee supports the ongoing work of the SAB, we believe, as we did in 2006, that it is a temporary solution for serious problems. When accreditation is regained, we recommend that DESE initiate a return to a permanent form of governance. Well ahead of that time, the legislature should be asked to amend RSMo. § 162.1100 to allow for the transfer of operational power from the SAB to a permanent board.

• We conclude that there is no clear evidence to indicate that an elected board is better than an appointed board or vice versa; however, we believe that an elected board will be most acceptable to St. Louisans and, hence, will garner the most community support in the long run. We therefore recommend that the permanent board be elected.

• We recommend against moving to a permanent hybrid board, part appointed and part elected, believing it undesirable to have two classes of board members.

• The transfer from the SAB to an elected board should be done in such a way as to maintain stability and continuity and to minimize disruption. We recommend that an elected school board be gradually phased in over a period of several years. The legislature should amend RSMo. § 162.601 to accomplish that goal. School board members should be newly elected beginning on the first general election date after accreditation is regained. For example, in year one, two new members would be elected to add to the three members of the SAB; in year three, two more members would be elected bringing the elected members to a four to three majority. At the time of the next election two new members would be added and two members of the SAB would step down. The remaining single member of the SAB would step down at the time of the next election.
B. Recommendations to the Community

- All those who are interested in the SLPS should always keep in mind:
  - Educating children is the most important goal, but good education will not happen without a well-run school system with good personnel and financial policies, orderly and safe schools, good relations with teachers, trust and support of the community, parental support, and a host of other factors; the superintendent and the board must do many things well. Those leaders are charged with one of the most important and challenging tasks in our society.
  - Stability and consistency are not ends in themselves, but they are necessary for a successful school system.
  - It is necessary to take a long term view. Today's second graders, for example, should still be in school a decade from now. The situation today is very much influenced by decisions made five years ago; one cannot make long term educational or budgetary judgments based on the experiences of one or two years.
  - The community has a responsibility to support good education for the children.

- School board elections should be well publicized in advance of Election Day and qualified citizens should be encouraged to run.

- We recognize the arguments of those who say that, in the past, an elected system frequently resulted in a dysfunctional school board, and we believe that a major problem has been that voters do not have enough opportunity to learn about the problems of their school system or the qualifications of the candidates. Methods should be developed to encourage people to vote, to inform the voters about upcoming school elections, the challenges facing the school system, and the qualifications of candidates.
APPENDIX F: ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN SLPS

The following slides are excerpts from a November 21 meeting of the Special Administrative Board. The full slide deck can be accessed by clicking here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY POPULATION</th>
<th>SLPS ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POPULATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL LOSS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>318,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>21,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>19,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>15,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>20,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pop. ages 0-19</td>
<td>77,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pop. ages 5-19</td>
<td>55,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LOSS:** 6,768

**0-19 LOSS:** 8,191

Total reduction = 3,480 students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55,680</td>
<td>49,513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District (PK-12)</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District (PK-12)</td>
<td>26,696</td>
<td>23,216</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter (K-12)</td>
<td>8,146</td>
<td>11,071</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICC (K-12)</td>
<td>4,770</td>
<td>4,366</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Residents 5-19</td>
<td>55,680</td>
<td>49,513</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by the SLPS Foundation
REFERENCES FOR MAIN REPORT

1 Mr. Richard Gaines and Mr. Rick Sullivan (Chair) have served since 2007. Dr. Melanie Adams served from 2007-2016 until she moved out of town. Ms. Darnetta Clinkscale began in 2017.


3 More about enrollment can be found in appendices of this report.


23 Education Encyclopedia State University

24 “Putting Students First: Building Effective School Governance” A White Paper from Stand for Children

Prepared by the SLPS Foundation
Leadership Center. By Christine Campbell, June 2012

xxix “School Boards—Selection and Education of Members” by Education Encyclopedia State University.com
http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2390/School-Boards-SELECTION-EDUCATION-MEMBERS.html

xxx “Considering the Design and Effects of Appointed Boards in Urban Districts,” Presentation made by Kenneth Wong, Nov. 2017:

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xxxii Wong presentation, Nov. 2017:

xxxiv “Putting Students First: Building Effective School Governance” A White Paper from Stand for Children Leadership Center. By Christine Campbell, June 2012

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A copy of this report is available upon request. Please contact SLPS Foundation.

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