



## Frequently Asked Questions – Community Partnership Schools

### **Q: Why is Minneapolis Public Schools granting additional autonomy to Community Partnership Schools?**

A: MPS believes that greater autonomy, when coupled with a high level of accountability, can significantly accelerate student achievement. We believe greater autonomy can increase innovation in classrooms, allow the development of best practices and increase site-level ownership of success. Autonomy also offers more flexibility to meet the unique needs of students and will drive the Davis Service Center to be more student-centered and service-oriented.

### **Q: Are Community Partnership Schools new or existing schools?**

A: The Memorandum of Agreement describes a process for new or existing schools to become Community Partnership Schools. For cohort one, only existing schools were approved. For cohort two, teams will be invited to complete the Request for Proposal for a new program as well.

### **Q: How do you become a Community Partnership School?**

A: In order to become a Community Partnership School, existing schools must:

- Participate in a school site interest meeting
- Submit a letter of interest
- Participate in a needs assessment, design phase and planning phase
- Complete a full Community Partnership School site plan
- Be recommended by the Community Partnership School advisory committee, as well as approved by the superintendent and the MPS Board of Education

In order to become a Community Partnership School, a new school must:

- Assemble an applicant team that meets defined criteria
- Submit a letter of interest
- Participate in design and planning phases which include community input
- Complete a full Community Partnership School site plan
- Be recommended by the Community Partnership School advisory committee, as well as approved by the superintendent and the MPS Board of Education

**Q: How will you ensure school staff are included in the Request for Proposal process?**

A: For existing schools, the site plan must detail how staff was involved in developing the plan. In addition, a staff vote must be conducted to determine the level of staff support for the plan. The vote results will be reported to the Community Partnership School advisory committee.

**Q: What are the expectations for engaging families and other stakeholders in the Request for Proposal process?**

A: In order to be approved, the site plan must demonstrate families and the community were involved in developing the plan. Existing schools are encouraged to begin surveying families and providing opportunities for input from the beginning of the process. The plan design team must include at least one parent. New schools will be required to have structured opportunities for members of the school community to provide input and feedback on proposals.

**Q: What happens to current employees of schools that become Community Partnership Schools?**

A: The current collective bargaining agreement allows teachers to voluntarily transfer if they choose not to be part of the Community Partnership School.

**Q: What are the budget implications to becoming a Community Partnership School?**

A: In order to provide flexibility in resource allocation decisions, Community Partnership Schools will receive their budget allocation through a student-based allocation model where funds go directly to the site. Schools will have the opportunity to take advantage of buy backs of district services.

**Q: Are Community Partnership Schools the same as high priority schools?**

A: Any current or planned MPS school can apply to become a Community Partnership School. High priority schools are those designated by the state of Minnesota. High priority schools may apply and be approved as Community Partnership Schools with the same degree of autonomy. Specific accountability procedures may be adopted for any schools that meet this criteria.

**Q: *Have Community Partnership Schools been created in other parts of the country?***

A: The MPS Community Partnership Schools model is a hybrid of several different models that have been successfully developed across the country that focus on increasing autonomy, partnerships and accountability in order to improve student performance. Cincinnati, Boston, Los Angeles and Denver have all adopted models of increased partnership and autonomy. We have learned from these models and will continue to borrow their best practices.

**Q: *Why is the process for becoming a Community Partnership School longer for cohort two than it was for cohort one?***

A: Lessons learned from the cohort one process contributed to establishing a longer development process for cohort two. School teams will start with the opportunity to participate in a design phase that will include workshops, site visits and technical assistance to help develop a clear and transformative vision rooted in the needs and assets of their community. They will then take that vision into a structured planning phase to develop their full site plan. Additional time will also promote more stakeholder involvement in the process.

**Q: *How will outside partners be involved in Community Partnership Schools?***

A: Community Partnership Schools will have the opportunity to use outside partners to help carry out their vision and accelerate student proficiency. This may involve current school partners or new partnerships established in the planning process. The role of outside partners will vary by school, but all partnerships should be aligned around meeting specific school and student needs.

**Q: *How long will Community Partnership Schools be given to improve student outcomes?***

A: Research shows that any program takes several years of successful implementation to see an impact on students. For that reason, Community Partnership Schools will be given three years to demonstrate successful implementation on initial progress indicators. Schools will be evaluated over those three years in terms of implementation and qualitative success indicators while their progress on their performance targets also will be monitored.