



SAINT PAUL FEDERATION  
OF EDUCATORS LOCAL 28

March 28, 2021

Chair Foster, Vice Chair Vue, Directors Allen, Brodrick, Ellis, and Kopp:

Below is a summary of building concerns regarding the return to in-person instruction for the week of 3/21/21 – 3/27/21. A copy of this summary will be available on the SPFE website.

As an elected body, Saint Paul residents (including a large portion of SPFE membership), look to the SPPS Board of Education to share information on district decisions and policy. When information is not shared by the SPPS BOE, it creates a sense of distrust with the Board and with SPPS, as evidenced by the past issues surrounding SPPS Facilities. We strongly encourage the SPPS BOE to begin sharing regular updates of their weekly meetings with Superintendent Gothard, in the spirit of transparency. We have included these questions in the report, and hope that you can provide answers that can be shared with families and SPFE membership.

This week SPFE received a total of 12 concerns reported from building staff. Some reports contain more than one concern.

The following buildings reported concerns:

- Central High School
- Crossroads Science and Montessori
- Four Seasons A+
- Global Arts Plus Upper Campus
- Harding Senior High School
- Humboldt High School
- Maxfield Elementary
- Murray Middle School
- Saint Paul Music Academy
- Wellstone Elementary

### **Building Concerns**

*Active COVID Cases:* Currently SPFE is aware that there are active COVID cases requiring quarantine at five locations: Four Seasons A+, Murray Middle, Maxfield Elementary, Saint Paul Music Academy, and Wellstone. We are aware of these cases because members reported them to us. SPFE submits a data request each week. These requests have not been met. *Is the SPPS BOE being notified which buildings have active COVID cases, and how they are using that information in their decision-making?*

Now that vaccinations have been opened up to all Minnesotan's 16 years and older, will SPPS be advocating for and asking the State of Minnesota for easily accessible vaccination clinics at our high school sites for our students? Doing all that you can as leaders in our city to increase the vaccination rate of the families we serve is the best way to keep our students and families safe. Will school board members join us in advocating for these measures by reaching out to the Governor and state legislators?"

*Communication regarding COVID exposure:* District-wide there does not appear to be a consistent implementation around who is being informed and/or quarantined after exposure. Educators that move through different classrooms are not always notified when they have been exposed. Families and staff continue to be concerned that the district is unwilling to share which buildings have active COVID cases. /



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*Special Education: What is the plan for how SPPS will fill the approximately 50 open SpEd TA positions? These positions are critical to supporting our special education students and meeting their needs. The difficulty filling these low wage positions should be a priority—the challenges related to hiring TAs goes beyond the pandemic.*

*MCA Testing: We understand that SPPS must follow state and federal requirements. What is SPPS doing to advocate for the easing of standardized testing during a pandemic? Will SPPS be actively notifying families of their right to opt their children out of testing, particularly VLS students?*

*Concurrent teaching: Concurrent teaching of in-person students and distance learners is not required, and is not recommended. SPFE has begun receiving reports that building administrators are pressuring educators to teach concurrently.*

*Classroom overflow: There is no detailed plan on how to address classes that exceed the maximum capacity for students. The suggestion that teachers should be responsible for tracking capacity and identify which students are sent to an overflow space for each class during the day to make sure the distribution is equitable is not appropriate. How will families be notified, in advance, when their students will be placed in overflow locations? Who will staff overflow locations?*

#### **Memoranda of Understanding**

SPFE has communicated to the district that we intend to follow the [previously agreed upon MOU](#) regarding the return to secondary learning.

#### **Collaboratively Seeking Full Funding for Racially Equitable Schools**

SPFE has recently updated their research and recommendations for fully funding our public schools. Our new report is available and has been shared with members of the Saint Paul Delegation. You can access the report [here](#).

Sincerely,  
Nick Faber  
President, Saint Paul Federation of Educators

cc: Dr. Joe Gothard, Superintendent  
Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer  
Dr. Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer  
David Watkins, Chief of Schools