SAINT PAUL FEDERATION
OF EDUCATORS LOCAL 28

March 7, 2021

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

Below is a summary of building concerns regarding the return to in-person instruction for the week of 2/28/21 – 3/6/21. A copy of this summary will be available on the SPFE website.

This week SPFE received a total of 17 concerns reported from building staff. Some reports contain more than one concern.

The following buildings reported concerns:

- Bruce F. Vento Elementary
- Como Park Senior High School
- Focus Beyond
- Global Arts Plus, Upper Campus
- Harding Senior High School
- Humboldt Secondary
- JJ Hill Montessori
- Johnson Senior
- L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion Upper Campus
- Murray Middle School
- Washington Technology Magnet
- Wellstone

There were 6 concerns regarding PPE

- Adults not masking
- Students not properly wearing masks properly or wearing inadequate face coverings
- Adults not using face shields
- Principals not supporting staff in enforcing mask usage with students

There are 6 concerns regarding student social distancing and safety

- Secondary classrooms will not be able to accommodate all students
- Distancing is not possible with younger learners
- 6' distancing is not possible with some secondary programs
- 6' distancing is not happening in hallways in buildings providing student supports

There are concerns regarding unclear quarantining practices.

- Reporting of suspected cases not happening.
- Unclear guidelines on who should be notified about potential exposure
- Staff believe they are not being notified they have been exposed to COVID
- Concern that siblings that share living space not quarantining when one tests positive for COVID

Concerns and unresolved VLS issues:

- SPPS still has not provided the total number of students have yet to be placed in VLS.
- Students are continuing to receiving truancy notices because the still have not been placed in VLS. This is an unfair burden for families.

- There are not enough VLS classrooms open to assign elementary students waiting for a placement
- Teachers who were denied accommodations are wondering why they can't be assigned to a VLS classroom with students waiting for that instruction.
- There is no clear timeline for when all elementary students will be placed into VLS.
- Families are not aware that the default will place students in in-person learning.
- Student placement has not been given appropriate support to assist families making the decision to place their student in VLS.
- Secondary students/families that have opted out of student supports are not aware they will need to opt out again if they wish to stay in distance learning. Why isn't VLS the default at this point in the school year.
- Secondary students/families are not aware that if they choose distance learning, they will not be allowed to return to in-person instruction.

SPFE continues to maintain a supply of child size masks for use because the district is not providing adequate supplies.

There is still no scheduled Town Hall/Listening session for SPPS staff.

District administration has left the following safety provisions to the buildings to manage during this pandemic. These are critical to keeping students safe. Why is there not more support for buildings to ensure that they can meet these standards, such as management of student enrollment numbers so a building does not end up with more students than it can physically handle?

- Why is SPPS encouraging educators to provide synchronous instruction to students by inviting virtual learners into class, when this is expressly not recommended?
- What is the plan to keep secondary students 3 feet apart at all times?
- What is the plan to maintain distance during transitions within the building?
- What is the plan for lunch? Will students eat in classrooms?
- With the additional students using busses, what is the plan for cleaning?
- Under the guise of "building autonomy", building administrators are not receiving adequate support or direction. Why is SPPS setting up administrators and educators to fail?

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