

**To: Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education**

**From: Suzanne P. Kelly, Chief of Staff**

**Date: November 21, 2019**

**Re: Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment (EDIA) of Policies Relating to Placement of Students**

Minneapolis Public Schools is committed to the goal of creating a system in which all students and families, particularly those with the greatest need, have equal access to the best possible education and experience in our district's schools.

The Minneapolis Public Schools Accountability, Research, and Equity department recently completed its Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment (EDIA) of the district's policies that relate to the placement of students in our schools. The EDIA illuminates several critically important factors that our department and individual team members have wrestled with for at least two decades.

The combination of the District's system of attendance boundaries and the District's commitment to the families of Minneapolis to maintain class-size targets present a real, daily challenge for our work in equitably serving the families of Minneapolis. The responsibility of our department is to make our highly complex placement system accessible to families while providing the best customer service, and our ability to offer equitable school placement options to students and families with the greatest need is, as highlighted by the EDIA, hampered by the constraints of these systems.

The results of the EDIA bring forth two levels of needed change. First, it asks for examination of the current placement timeline and lottery process, with the goal of being inclusive of families who were not able or present to participate in the earliest phase of the school request period. This will represent a District-wide effort involving the work of executive leadership of multiple departments, and a revision of related policies, which, given the time since they have been reviewed, is overdue. It will also tie in to the deep examination of current boundaries and attendance areas that is already underway through the Comprehensive District Design initiative.

Second, it strongly advocates for better alignment of district resources to allow the Student Placement Center and New Families Center to increase and improve communication and transparency of the placement process, and community presence and outreach, and a welcoming and service-oriented experience at the Student Placement Center. We recognize that we are the first face of the Minneapolis Public Schools for many families, and it is our mission that all families feel welcomed when they come to us, and that they've been listened to when they leave. When this mission is not met, we need to do the work to repair our process and our relationships with the community.

Changes within the Student Placement Services department have already begun, and mirror the changes suggested in the report. We are improving and extending the distribution of our outreach materials, both printed and online, increasing our presence in the community; creating parity of services between the New Families Center and the Student Placement Center; and focusing on the delivery of the highest customer service to every caller, visitor and stakeholder. We have begun participating in equity training to help us examine our own implicit biases and better demonstrate cultural humility in our interactions with all parents, and are seeking additional professional development toward improved service and relationships.

The Student Placement Services department welcomes the opportunity to work with the Accountability, Research, and Equity department, our District partner departments, and our community partners to make the improvements needed to create a truly equitable system for the placement of the students of Minneapolis.