



Questions and Answers

1. Q. Why is the Board considering implementing a plan to reconfigure the District; including merging, closing and moving student populations?

A. The District is not in deficit; however, we must present a balanced budget to the State of Michigan that covers two years. Due to a declining birthrate affecting enrollment, rising expenses (such as health care for employees) and shrinking revenue; the District will be in deficit and its fund balance will be depleted in 2016-17. In legal terms, operating with a negative fund balance is illegal and is called bankruptcy.

2. Q. What does the *Imagine 2020* Plan consist of?

The main points of the *Imagine 2020* Plan are shown below. For full plan please visit the District website at southfieldk12.org.

1. **Right-Size** for quality, choice, & sustainability
2. **Expand** focus on early childhood learning
3. **Expand** career and college readiness programs
4. **Embrace** diversity (ELL, special education, language immersion)
5. **Freeze** all new hires, vacancies, wage increases, purchases (not necessary for core instructional & operational maintenance), technology refresh and non-grant travel -- unless already approved by the Superintendent.
6. **Investigate** employee buyout.
7. **Sell** Schoenhals Elementary School.
8. **Reduce** the Division of Instruction staff by 2.0 FTE and instructional staff based on projected pupil enrollment for 2015-2016.
9. **Close** Brace-Lederle and relocate K-8 students. Provide K-5 parents the option to select the elementary school of their choice (based on grade availability). **Relocate** Brace-Lederle 6-8 students to Levey Middle School. **Sell** Brace-Lederle school property.
10. **Close** Adler Elementary and relocate students. Parents will select elementary school of their choice (based on grade availability).
11. **Create** one unified comprehensive high school located at the Southfield High School facility
12. **Create** one K-12 university campus utilizing the current Southfield-Lathrup High School facility and the current Bussey facility. This will initially consist of students from University High School Academy and MacArthur University. (Application and Examinations schools).

3. Q. What is the timetable for implementing this plan?

A. The plan will be implemented in phases. The purely financial aspects of the plan will be implemented immediately for the fiscal year 2015-16. The more dynamic aspects of the plan that involve the physical movement of students, the allocation of human resources and disposition and efficient utility of school facilities will enter a planning phase in July 2015 for full implementation occurring in the Fall of 2016-17.

Unified Comprehensive High Schools

Q. Why is the District considering merging Southfield High and Southfield-Lathrup into the Southfield High facility?

A. The Southfield High School facility is a larger facility (504,061 sq. ft.) providing ample space for the combined student body. Moreover, the Southfield High Facility was a focal point for renovations of the most recent bond issue, and the updated facility and grounds provide a unique opportunity to bring all of the academic programs and career academies under one roof.

Southfield Public Schools possesses strong academic programming that provides a range of opportunities for our students to grow and develop. The following chart provides an example of the programming available at our current high schools.

<i>Southfield High School</i>	<i>Southfield Lathrup High School</i>
<i>Engineering Sciences Academy (including the robotics program)</i>	<i>Arts and Communications Academy (including dance and drama program)</i>
<i>Global Business Academy</i>	<i>Medical and Natural Sciences Academy</i>
<i>Advanced Placement Program</i>	<i>International Baccalaureate Program</i>
<i>WHSJ 88.3 Radio Station</i>	<i>SPS TV Station</i>

Each program is located at one of our two comprehensive high schools, and yet the programs are often under populated, and some have been reduced in number and are in danger of being eliminated because the student population at each individual school will not sustain them. Unifying our high schools will expand the available options to ALL of the students who matriculate in grades 9-12. Moreover, the programs will be more robust with more student participation and interest permitting the District to invest more human and fiscal resources into the programs and, as a result, invest more deeply in our children.

4. Q. What is the plan for transitioning Southfield High School and Southfield Lathrup High School into one unified comprehensive high school?

A. Unifying the two comprehensive high schools will require the work of a cross-functional team led by the Superintendent's cabinet. The cross-functional team will begin planning in earnest in the summer of 2015-16 to identify the myriad issues that will require attention and energy. Work streams will flow from the identified issues, and work plans and timelines will emanate therefrom. The team will consist of administrators, students, faculty and parents representing both Southfield High School and Southfield Lathrup.

5. Q. Will the class sizes be larger at the new comprehensive high school?

A. The District is bound by the contractual limits in the collective bargaining agreement for teachers. Class sizes will NOT be larger at the new comprehensive high school. However, more classes will likely be offered, and thereby filled, because of the additional student population. This includes Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses that cannot be offered because the student subscription for these courses is so small

6. Q. Will my Southfield-Lathrup student have access to all of the programs he/she had at Lathrup?

A. YES. As stated in the answer to question 4, one major advantage to the unification of the two comprehensive high schools is the unification of its programming, making them available to all students who matriculate into grades 9-12 within Southfield Public Schools. That includes, but is not limited to, academic programs, all of the career academies, clubs and extracurricular activities, and athletics.

7. Q. How will facilities be improved at the Southfield-Lathrup and Southfield High School facilities?

A. Southfield High School facility will be reorganized and some renovation will occur to accommodate all of the academic programming that existed in Southfield-Lathrup campus including, the Arts and Communications Academy, which encompasses the TV station and various arts and performing spaces. Southfield-Lathrup will be reorganized and some renovations will occur to accommodate three of the Districts premier choice programs: grades 2-8 of MacArthur University Academy K-8, an application program; University Preparatory Academy, grade 8, an examination program; and University High School Academy, an examination program. Kindergarten and grade 1 of MacArthur will be housed at the current Bussey Center. Each of these "schools within a school" will operate on a safe and secure mini-campus in the current wings of Southfield-Lathrup High School. Persons outside of school personal will need to be granted access for entry.

8. Q. Will athletes have an opportunity to move now vs. the proposed 2016-17 school year without penalty?

A. The District is exploring this option with the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Stay tuned for that answer. We will provide the answer when it becomes available.

9. Q. How will you ensure that athletes will be able to play with the new larger teams?

A. Unifying the two athletic programs will expand athletic opportunities for all of our children, ensuring the participation of our students in both the popular sports programs and minor sports programs. Moreover, because the unified SPS high school will have a larger talent pool in each of our sports programs, our competitiveness in Oakland County and across the State of Michigan will improve. As a result of that improved competitive standing, in terms of county and state results, college and university

scouts, not simply from the state of Michigan, but from across the nation will make the Unified Southfield High School a recruiting stop, thereby expanding student opportunities for recognition and scholarship.

Southfield Public Schools does not offer assurances that any of our athletes will be able to play for our current teams. Students must meet academic and skilled standards to play in a particular sport. Playing time will be determined according to the skill of the athlete in the discretion of the coaches for that team. New coaching staff will be interviewed and hired for **ALL** athletic teams. The current coaching staffs will have the opportunity to present their credentials, expertise and history to an interview committee led by the District Athletic Director.

Students at UHSA will continue to have access for participation in athletic programs at the comprehensive high school. The District will provide a shuttle at the end of the school day for ease of transportation for students to participate in after school practice and games.

10. Q. What about the strong legacies of each high school and the rivalry between them?

A. The cross functional team consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members will work to preserve the rich history and legacy of both schools. This will be done in innovative ways and may include halls of fame, preservation of trophies, memorabilia, other artifacts, and charting written and oral histories. Note, however, the unification of the two high schools into one presents an opportunity to make new and living history of which the communities of Southfield and Lathrup Village can be jointly proud.

11. Q. What will be the name of the new school?

A. The process for naming the Unified High School will be determined by a cross functional team consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members. Note also that this will include the choice of school colors, mascot, and uniforms for the unified program. The recommendation and selection of these items will be later ratified by the Board of Education.

12. Q. What will safety and security look like in the new configuration?

A. Southfield Public Schools will make the necessary investment in school safety to ensure that our students are educated in a safe and welcoming environment. School liaison officers and security personnel will continue to be present alongside administrators and staff within the building; but safety does not simply rest within the numbers of security officers, cameras, and administrators. The safety and security of a school building rests in the sense of community that is developed among the students and staff within the building. It is this relational aspect upon which the transition team will focus throughout the planning year of 2015-16.

University K-12 Campus

13. Q. Why is the District considering creating a K-12 University Campus at Southfield-Lathrup?

Imagine 2020 envisions the creation of a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educational campus at Southfield Lathrup High School. Creating a K-12 University creates additional options for parents by placing our application and examination schools in one campus. This campus will embody a vision of academic excellence that is akin to many of the private schools in both Oakland and Wayne counties. Seeking to maximize the opportunities available to current SPS students, the SPS K-12 University Campus will bring together three of Southfield Public Schools most desired programs:

- University High School Academy, grade 9-12
- University Preparatory Academy, grade 8
- MacArthur University Academy K-8

Students will continue to be admitted to the programs as they currently are. Students in MacArthur K-8 will continue the application process. Students in the University High School Academy and University Preparatory Academy 8-12 will be admitted to through an examination administered during pre-determined times throughout the year.

English Language Learner students will also continue to be served on the Southfield-Lathrup campus. The plan will continue to serve ELL students in grades 6-12 on the Unified K-12 University Campus at Southfield-Lathrup. The general academic program for students on the Unified K-12 University Campus is by application or examination. Yet, *Imagine 2020* envisions only one transition for our ELL families and a program design that will mimic the powerful embrace that our ELL students feel at Vandenberg. Students will not be required to take the traditional examination for entry, and this intimate environment will extend the culture and climate to which our ELL families become accustomed at Vandenberg K-5.

14. Q. Will University testing be available to Lathrup students so they can remain at the 12 mile school campus?

A. Yes. Testing for University High School Academy occurs each year, periodically for students. Similarly, testing will be made available to all students in the fall of 2015-16 for those students at Southfield-Lathrup High School who wish to matriculate into University High School for the fall of 2016-17.

15. Q. Is it wise to have elementary kids in the same building with middle and high school students?

A. Private and parochial students have operated within this model for many years. A K-12 campus provides opportunities for peer interactions and additional tutoring that can promote academic growth.

Moreover, the Southfield Lathrup facility is an ideal facility for several smaller mini-campuses to operate to ensure that contact between older students and younger children is purposeful.

The new University K-12 campus will be housed at the Southfield-Lathrup facility, which has a natural setup for separation and security of each grade level, with separate learning areas, and entrances. The University Campus envisions utilizing the Bussey facility and Southfield-Lathrup High School as a “campus” which will house each of these affiliated, but distinctly separate populations in the following manner:

- Early Elementary Campus (MacArthur K-8 University, grades K-1) will be housed in the Bussey Educational Center with a tuition-based pre-school program
- Upper Elementary Campus (MacArthur K-8 University, grades 2-5) will be housed in D-House of Southfield Lathrup
- Middle Grade Campus (MacArthur K-8 University, grades 6-8) will be housed in C-House of Southfield Lathrup
- Junior High Campus (University Preparatory and University High School Academy, grades 8-9) will be housed in B-House of Southfield Lathrup
- Senior High Campus (University High School Academy, grades 10-12) will be housed in A House of Southfield Lathrup.

16. Q. What is the timetable for moving UHSA and MacArthur students into the Southfield-Lathrup Campus and restoring the after school programs?

A. The movement of the University High School Academy (grades 9-12); University Preparatory Academy (grade 8) and MacArthur K-8 University Academy into the Southfield Lathrup campus will occur in fall of 2016-17. The programs will occupy the wings of the Southfield Lathrup facility as detailed in question 16 above.

17. Q. Will my UHSA student have transportation to the Southfield High School campus for after school activities and sports?

A. With respect to athletics, students at the University High School Academy (grades 9-12) will continue to have access for participation in athletic programs at the unified high school. The District will provide a shuttle at the end of the school day for ease of transportation for students to participate in after school practice and games.

With respect to other extra-curricular activities, i.e. marching band, when interest in those programs have been gauged, the District will make a determination regarding how we might best facilitate such access.

18. Q. Will there be transportation available for MacArthur students?

A. Transportation will be provided according to the District’s adopted policies and procedures. Currently, most students in our application programs, of which MacArthur is one, do not receive District provided transportation to and from school.

19. Q. What will be the name of the new school?

A. As with the unified high school, the name of the University K-12 Campus will be determined by the cross functional team consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members. Each of the schools contained on the campus, however, will maintain their respective current respective identities

and their admissions criteria. The recommendation and selection of these items will be later ratified by the Board of Education.

School Closings

20. Q. Why is the District considering closing Brace-Lederle? Where will those students go?

A. The District examined academic achievement, facility utilization, and fiscal sustainability. Only 47% of the capacity of Brace-Lederle school is currently utilized, the lowest among K-8 schools in the District. Finally, the number of students at Brace-Lederle can be integrated into excess capacity of other, 6-8, K-8 and K-5 facilities within the District, with the adjustment of District feeder pattern boundaries. Initially, the students in grades 6-8 will be reassigned to Levey K-8, and parents of K-5 students will be able to choose the school for their students to attend as space within the school permits. Transportation will be provided according to the District's adopted policies and procedures

21. Q. Why is the district considering closing Adler? Where will those students go?

A. The District examined academic achievement, facility utilization, and fiscal sustainability. Only 50% of the capacity of Adler School is currently utilized, the lowest among K-5 schools in the District. Finally, the number of students at Adler School can be integrated into excess capacity of other K-8 and K-5 facilities within the District, with the adjustment of District feeder pattern boundaries. The parents of Adler K-5 students will be able to choose the school for their students to attend as space within the school permits. Transportation will be provided according to the District's adopted policies and procedures

22. Q. Is it wise to close schools? What is your rationale for this?

A. The District examined its student enrollment and noted that it has lost more than 30% of its K-5 population during the last several years. Declining student enrollment is an issue that is faced throughout the state and nation and is simply a function of demographics. Facilities cannot operate efficiently when they are operating well beneath capacity. Couple the historical demographic data with enrollment and financial projections, closure of school buildings is needed for the District to maintain financial health. Therefore, the District chose to close one K-5, one K-8 and to unify the comprehensive high schools (9-12) into one facility. The closure of these facilities permits the more equitable and efficient distribution of human resources, fiscal expenditures, and capital expenditures to balance our budget and move towards fiscal sustainability, while enhancing academic programs and parental choice throughout the District.

Other Considerations

23. Q. What will happen to special education students?

A. All students who have Individualized Educational Plans will continue to be served according to their IEP plans. By law, students with IEPs must be educated in the least restrictive environment as determined by their disability. There are students, however, whose IEPs require that they be served in a self-contained classroom. Accordingly, within the Unified Comprehensive High School, students with IEPs who have Mild Cognitive Impairment, Moderate Cognitive Impairment or who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder will be served in a

Support Services wing in self-contained classrooms. The Handy Man laundry service will be relocated to the Unified Comprehensive High School in this wing.

24. Q. Will teachers/administrators be displaced? Will the decisions to keep teachers be based on performance or seniority?

A. All teachers and administrators from the schools who are merging and/or closing will be placed according to the terms of their respective collective bargaining agreements and in accordance with law within the State of Michigan.

25. Q. Will the District release funding for students to attend other schools?

A. The Southfield Public Schools will operate within the dictates of the laws of the state of Michigan to ensure its fiscal health and sustainability.

26. Q. Have you considered the financial effect of families leaving the District because of this plan?

A. Yes. The District has considered the potential financial effect of families leaving the Southfield Public School due to this plan. The alternative, i.e. to do nothing, is a choice that will lead to financial instability for the families who remain in the Southfield Public Schools and depend upon us to make sound fiscal decisions. Accordingly, the District has chosen to implement *Imagine 2020* which seeks to continue that legacy of this District by right-sizing our school District in recognition of declining enrollment and dwindling resources; to highlight, build upon, and expand the choice options that are available to families; and adopt a plan for financial sustainability moving into very uncertain fiscal times.

27. Q. How dependent is the success of this plan on the District's ability to sell the buildings specified in the plan?

A. The plan is not dependent on the sale of any properties. The sale of any facility would be applied to future capital projects, assisting with the cost of facility upgrades, maintenance, and technology.

28. Q. How much are we saving with this plan?

A. The District estimates that it will save \$8.3 million dollars per year by implementing this plan.

29. Q. Can implementing this plan help improve student's academic performance?

A. Yes. By implementing *Imagine 2020*, the District envisions that it can invest more in our students, and fulfill the primary goal of the District, which is teaching and learning; provide more rigorous programming for the students we serve and greater quality and choice programs for the families of Southfield and Lathrup Village.

30. Q. How will this plan be marketed?

A. The District will implement a strategic, multi-faceted plan to make the residents of Southfield and Lathrup Village aware of quality academic programming and the exceptional opportunities that are offered at Southfield Public Schools.

31. Q. What is the potential outcome of this plan?

A. Imagine 2020 charts a course for a system of schools where teachers, principals, parents, staff, policymakers, and the entire SPS community collectively focus all of our energy, efforts, planning and development, resources and initiatives on building a culture of achievement and success. In this system of schools, excellence is the norm, talent is cultivated, opportunities are made equal, and success is measured by the steady improvement of teaching and learning in classrooms throughout the system. Imagine 2020 envisions a school system where all students succeed, families have numerous quality choices and as a system, we manage the operations and resources with integrity, care and sound decision making for the future of SPS.