

ST. CLOUD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 742

Family & Community Advisories

Kickoff report to the School Board

Dr. Laurie Putnam, Superintendent

WHY WE LAUNCHED ADVISORIES

Families are choosing ISD 742, and we want every voice early

Growing enrollment

Three years of growth while statewide K-12 enrollment has declined.

Many communities

Over 40 home languages and a high share of families qualifying for free and reduced-price meals.

More than a test score

Advanced course taking above state averages; Tech and Apollo graduation rates rising.

Advisories bring together **families, staff, students and community partners**. Every advisory connects to **Superintendent Goal 4: Family and Community Partnership** and to our four pillars: Safety, Belonging, Collaboration and Academic Excellence.

Real voice, clear boundaries

An advisory is

- A place to bring real questions before decisions are final
- A multi-way conversation among families, staff, community and district leaders
- A source of insight that shapes our priorities, plans and communication

An advisory is not

- A governing body; the Superintendent and Executive Team make operational decisions, and the School Board makes final policy decisions
- The place to resolve concerns about an individual student or staff member
- A one-time event; this is a full year of work together

HOW THE WORK FLOWS

We listen, act and report back

01

Listen

We bring real questions and share what we know.

02

Advise

Members offer perspective, ideas and concerns.

03

Act

Leaders weigh the advice and decide next steps.

04

Report back

We share what changed, what did not, and why.

Every session is tracked: attendance, the themes we heard, action items with an owner, and the strategic plan focus area each one serves.

HOW ADVISORIES ARE ORGANIZED

Every advisory has a home and a plan

People

- A Cabinet sponsor who carries advice into decisions
- A facilitator for each conversation
- Families, staff, partners, and students where it fits

Rhythm

- Three meetings in 2026-27, more if members agree
- Sessions of about 90 minutes
- Next dates: January 11 and April 12

Follow-through

- Notes capture themes, not who said what
- Every action item has an owner
- Progress shared with members and in Goal 4 updates



We talk about systems, not individual students. Student records stay private, consistent with FERPA, and individual concerns go to the principal or a district leader privately.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19 · 6:00 TO 7:30 PM

The kickoff evening at a glance

Time	Together
6:00	Welcome
6:04	Grounding: who we serve and why it matters
6:10	How advisories work and what we promise each other
6:17	Meet our nine advisories
6:30	Advisory sessions: introductions, hopes and goals, first questions, next steps

MANY VOICES, ONE SHARED PURPOSE

Our 2026-27 advisories

Advisory	Pillar	Focus
Gen AI & Ed Tech	Academic Excellence, Safety	Responsible, human-centered AI and technology
Immersion Education	Academic Excellence, Collaboration	Chinese and Spanish immersion, K-12
Crush Activities	Belonging	Cooperative athletics, fine arts and activities
Curriculum & Instruction	Academic Excellence	What we teach and how we measure growth
Community Education	Collaboration	Early learning, youth and adult programs
Special Education	Belonging, Academic Excellence	Partnering with families of students with disabilities
School Finance	Collaboration	Budget priorities, transparency, stewardship
Safety & Wellness	Safety	Safety and district wellness practices
Equity: Family Affinity	Belonging	Affinity groups for caregivers and families

Gen AI & Ed Tech

Helps us use generative AI and educational technology in ways that deepen learning, protect students, and prepare them for the world ahead.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. Where can AI and technology meaningfully strengthen teaching and learning?
2. How do we protect student privacy and data as tools change so quickly?
3. What do families need to know to support responsible use at home?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 5 parents and 3 staff

1. Data privacy, data center footprint, and protecting student creativity
2. Supports for students with needs; tools that give teachers more time with students
3. Policies and frameworks

ACTIONS

- Resource document to members by October 26
- Possible family guide to responsible use at home

Immersion Education

Guides our commitment to high-quality Chinese and Spanish language immersion opportunities across our district.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. How do we grow guaranteed, high-quality immersion experiences for every student in grades K to 12?
2. Where are we succeeding, and what opportunities still exist?
3. How do we help families understand and choose among our programs?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 12 parents and staff, all but one of them parents

1. Celebrating what is going well
2. Challenges, concerns and areas for improvement
3. Imagining what our programs could be

FOR JANUARY 11

- Members bring marketing ideas
- Members bring ideas to strengthen the program for all students

Crush Activities

Helps us make sure every student can find their place, their people and their pride through Crush athletics, fine arts and activities.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. Which students are not yet participating, and what stands in their way?
2. How do we build pride around Crush across all of our community?
3. What access and opportunity issues exist, and how do we address them?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 9 attendees: staff, parents, alumni and community members

1. A shared vision for the student experience in Crush cooperatives
2. Successes and challenges so far
3. Key decisions where members will give input

ACTIONS BY NOVEMBER 15

- Share grades 6-12 participation data by geographic area
- Share Crush supervision and “home” sites, where applicable

Curriculum & Instruction

Helps shape what students learn, how we teach, and how we measure and share what students know and can do.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. What evidence of learning matters most to families, beyond a single test score?
2. How can we report progress in ways that are clear and useful?
3. How can families see and support learning at home?
4. What feedback do you have for curriculum in review cycles?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 9 attendees, staff and parents

1. Middle level redesign task force work
2. Secondary course proposal process
3. Language Access Plan

ACTIONS

- Family feedback captured for the middle level task force
- Course proposal survey goes to families at the feedback stage

Also reviewed: the curriculum review cycle; handbook, code of conduct, and developmental and instructional milestone resources.

Community Education

Strengthens community connection, youth development, adult learning, and facility use opportunities.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. How can we foster stronger community partnerships to enrich youth and adult learning?
2. Which youth and adult programs would our communities value most?
3. What resources or support would help every community member easily access Community Education?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 3 attendees, 2 parents and 1 staff

1. Adults with Disabilities plan, including Project Challenge for ages 16+
2. Community Education State Annual Report
3. Members' hopes for future agenda items

NEXT STEPS

- Consider returning meetings to Quarryview, where 10 to 12 members regularly attend

Project Challenge courses are popular and often full.

Special Education

Partners with families of students with disabilities to strengthen services, communication and inclusion across all of our schools.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. Where is the family experience of the IEP process strongest, and where must it improve?
2. How can every school strengthen inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities?
3. What information and support do families need to be full partners?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 10 parents, 9 staff, and Dani Mehr with 6 special education supervisors

1. Belonging, peer friendships and inclusion
2. Clear, family-friendly IEP information, from evaluation to measuring progress
3. Family IEP learning evenings and a family resource guide

ACTIONS

- Share feedback with the full special education leadership team
- Draft learning and resource ideas to share November 30

School Finance

Helps us understand community priorities as we plan budgets, steward resources, and explain clearly how public dollars serve students.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. How should our budget priorities reflect what our community values most?
2. How can we explain school finance clearly and transparently?
3. How should we report back on our investments, including referendum projects?

What this advisory prioritized

Meets November 16 and in the spring, mirroring our audit and budget cycle.

Priorities will follow after the November 16 session.

1. [Priority, after November 16]
2. [Priority]
3. [Priority]

[Optional: a theme in members' words, no names]

Safety & Wellness

Helps us understand what makes students feel safe, connected and ready to learn each day.

Guiding questions for 2026-27

1. What helps students feel safe and known at school?
2. What do parents and community members want to better understand about our safety and wellness practices?
3. How should we communicate during emergencies, weather closures and difficult events?

What this advisory prioritized

October 19 · 4 parents and 3 staff

1. Belonging: greeted by name, trusted adults, breakfast and diverse menus
2. Clearer safety communication: protocols, drills, traffic and buses
3. Timely, multi-channel communication in emergencies

ACTIONS

- January meeting narrows the action items
- Input shared at a future family safety meeting

Equity: Family Affinity

Affinity groups give caregivers and families a regular place to be heard, most of them monthly.

Advisory	Meets	Next meeting
Caregivers and Families of Latino Students	Monthly	October 28
Caregivers and Families of 2SLGBTQIA+ Students	Monthly	October 28
Caregivers and Families of Native/American Indian Students	Monthly	October 1
Native American Parent Group (NAPAC)	TBD	TBD
Caregivers and Families of African American and Black Students	Monthly	October 20
Caregivers and Families of Somali Students	Monthly	October 23
Caregivers and Families of Asian American/Pacific Islander Students	Monthly	October 20

NEXT STEPS

What comes next, and how the Board will hear from us

November 16

School Finance

First session for the School Finance Advisory.

January 11

Session two

Advisories take up their first priorities.

April 12

Session three

Members hear what changed and help shape next year.

[Date]

Board update

Themes, actions and outcomes through Goal 4.

Board updates will share themes and actions, never individual comments or information about any student or family.

Thank you

Our students are better served because families and community partners are at the table with us.

Questions and discussion