PROJECT SLUG: SCHOOL\_DEFECTIONS

DESCRIPTION: Series of stories looking at the rising trend of students not going to school in the district where they live. In Minneapolis and St. Paul, 30% of students in the districts go to a charter school or other district -- that’s up from 5% in 2000. Most of the growth has been in the past 10 years and the two core districts are especially feeling the pain of this in their budgets. This trend is moving outward to the suburbs and those districts could be feeling it soon, as well. We are also looking into whether this is exacerbating the achievement gap problem, especially in Minneapolis, where the largest group of students leaving the districts are blacks (mostly going to charter schools).

DATAVIZ IDEAS: Simple visualizations (possibly static?) showing exodus of kids over time, by location and race. Interactive allowing readers to see what’s been happening in their district

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EDITORS: Maureen McCarthy

START DATE: early May

EXPECTED PUBLICATION DATE: early to mid June

**Idea phase:**

\_\_**Meeting to discuss idea with stakeholders,** including viz creator, data editor, rep from design team, and any reporters/assignment editor pitching or involved with the idea

Questions to address:

--Who will create data viz? And do they have time to complete this by and expected publication date?

--What data will it use? And do we have it in hand? Or how do we get it?

--What’s the key mission of the overall data viz for the reader?

--Does this need to be interactive? Or is static ok?

--If this is interactive…..On first view, what’s the key point the viz needs to get across?

--What visualizations (done by others, done by us) might be similar or have similar components that we want to replicate?

--Who are the stakeholders on this project?

\_\_**Sketch a lo-fi prototype and have it reviewed by stakeholders**

--include what it will look like on mobile

\_\_**Make a rough schedule** with deadlines for an initial draft review, design review, expected completion and expected publication. Add dataviz to the [Viz Planning](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1l0Ktb-_CBGS5tjBN0jnGJQCW8aCpIiFqX9GVxAgylXk/edit?pref=2&pli=1#gid=468155950) schedule

**Work phase:**

**\_\_2nd prototype -- HTML comp both desktop and mobile versions; Review with stakeholders**

--Assess whether the prototype is going to be feasible and adjust, if necessary (i.e. is there something that we simply can’t do either because of the data or code limitations?)

--Does this achieve the key mission?

--Are there any code-related hurdles to overcome?

--Is the interface intuitive?

--Will this be in the story page? On it’s own page?

--Do we need anything special for promotion purposes (i.e. animated gif, video)?

--Is there anything holding up additional work on this? (waiting on data? Waiting on text or chatter from reporters?)

--Review and revise schedule as needed

--Are there any other stakeholders that need to be involved at this point? (including anyone who might need time to build promotional materials)

**\_\_Build phase:**

---- Solidify structure, flow, UI elements, screens, nav elements (dropdown types, button styles, active/inactive btn states)

--Get all headlines, chatter, source info, etc.

---Design -- fonts, colors, etc.

---Make sure visualization is returning the correct data

---Code validation

--Mobile design and functionality testing

--Cross-browser testing (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, IE)

--Does the text/chatter need to be edited at this point?

**\_\_Draft review with stakeholders**

--one more opportunity for reporters, editors, etc. to review viz and make sure it’s meeting the mission and is staying in line with the expected story(s) and other elements. The viz should be in pretty good shape at this point, but likely needs some design work

--review/revise deadlines

**\_\_Design review with Jamie Hutt’s team:**

Questions to address:

--Overall: Can user quickly discern “key mission” or story being told?

--Flow/sequence: Does user navigate viz in the intended sequence/order?

-- Try testing with colleagues cold to the project, asking questions like “Where do you go first? Where do you go next? etc”

--Navigation: Is viz nav easy to use? Are color/language/design cues clear?

--Size/space: Is viz as concise as possible?

-- Screen size: Can viz be viewed on a single desktop screen? Mobile screen?

-- If not, do cues clearly signal more content exists in nested menus, pop-ups, at separate URLs or just off-screen?

-- Tidyness: Any wasted UI elements, spacing, etc?

-- Relationships: Do related viz elements appear on same screen (ie: Search fields and search results)?

-- Color

-- Psychology: Do color choices support or confuse intended meaning?

-- Number: Are there too many colors?   
-- Tone: Are colors too saturated?

--Does it work for colorblind?

-- Typography

-- Style: Are type choices consistent with existing styles, typefaces?

-- Size: Is type sized adequately for screen size and for respective role (headlines, narratives vs UI/labels/calls-to-action vs metadata like bylines, sourcelines, footnotes, timestamps)

-- Language: Is viz copy edited as tight as it can be? Is UI language clear/concise?

**\_\_Copy editing:**

Questions to address:

--Do the headline, chatter and UI language give readers enough guidance in how to interact with the data viz?

--Address all AP style, grammar, spelling and fact-checking issues

--Make sure to click through the viz to see different views, where you will probably find additional chatter, headlines, etc.

--Look beyond the words, too. Is the interface intuitive? Do the visuals tell a story?

**Publication-prep:**

\_\_Final review with stakeholders, including top-level editors

Questions to address:

--Does this achieve the key mission?

--Is it easy to use? Intuitive? Does message get across? (get some outsiders who haven’t seen it yet)

--Does it fit appropriately with the other content for the story(s)

\_\_Loop in social media specialist and anybody else needed for promotional purposes, if not already in

\_\_Thumbnail and/or any other material to use for promotional purposes (including wording suggestions for tweets, Facebook posts, etc).

\_\_Move code/data to publication server(s)

\_\_Story embeds and links built and distributed, as needed

**Post-publication:**

\_\_Post-publication adjustments/fixes

Before making any changes, run them by data editor or alternatively digital design team leader or web team leader; and document any changes that were made (including reasons)

\_\_Post-mortem discussion and notes

--What went well?

--What opportunities were missed?

---What to improve upon for next time?

\_\_Update template checklist, viz style guide (eventually) as needed based on post-mortem

Proposed budgets

June 4

Overview

FLEE: More and more Minnesota parents are moving their children from their home school districts to charter schools, according to a Star Tribune analysis of state enrollment data. The number has taken off in the past 10 years, with the growth in the number of charter schools. The trend is most acute in Minneapolis and St. Paul, though suburban districts have also seen an increase in defections. The state's two urban districts have seen their percentage of defections to charter schools rise from 5% in 2000 to 30% in the past school year. The impact is stark. Minneapolis and St. Paul, both facing budget deficits of about $27M, are poised to make painful budget cuts. LONETREE.

June 11

STPAUL: A look at what the loss of students to charter schools and other districts is having on St. Paul schools. White flight is a major component here, unlike Minneapolis. The district is struggling to find a configuration of schools that will keep the students they have and win back some of those who have left, satisfying the demands of both middle-class and low-income families. One problem is that parents that don't get their first choice of elementary school in the annual lottery do not move to their second choice in St. Paul. Instead they go to a neighboring school district or charter school. Another is that Hmong families who make up a significant segment of the city are opting for Hmong charter schools. LONETREE

June 12

MPS: Black families are bailing out of Minneapolis schools to charter schools in the city in ever-increasing numbers despite numerous attempts to satisfy them. We'll use this trend as an opportunity to look at impact the defections have on the academic performance of the schools left behind. We’re going to see if we can find historical data to show if the achievement gap in MPS has widened over time, and whether there’s a relationship between that and black kids fleeing the district. Are the most proficient black students leaving the district? BEENA

June 13

BURB: Suburban school districts may not see as many defections as Minneapolis and St. Paul, but many suburban families are moving their kids out of their home districts as more charter schools have set up in suburban areas. We'll take a closer look at the winners and losers. Among the winners are Minnetonka and Mahtomedi, which have taken very different approaches to open enrollment. Minnetonka has advertised itself in neighboring districts. Mahtomedi has closed itself off. Among the losers are districts like Forest Lake, where 25% of students living there attend a charter school or other district. Still shaping this story, but could be a series of vignettes showing the various impacts on districts when families move in or out. BEATRICE.