

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102**

**October 10, 2023
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Vice Chair Kopp.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: J. Kopp, J. Vue, J. Foster, H. Henderson, U. Ward, C. Allen
Superintendent Gothard

Z. Ellis arrived at 6:17 p.m.

Staff: K. Thao, C. Long, A. Collins, Y. Vang, S. Schmidt de Carranza, S. Dahlke,
T. Sager, J. Turner, S. Gray Akyea, J. Danielson, A. Kunz, E. Wacker, C.
Green, P. Pratt-Cook, C. Anderson, K. Kimani, K. Morris, L. Corey, B.
Schmidt, H. Nistler, T. Parent, J. Vollmer, E. Oguz, A. Anderson, P.
Matamoros, D. Abrams, S. Dahlke

Community: S. Dziuk, L. Bolton, A. Deleena

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Kopp moved approval of the Order of the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Allen. It passed by acclaim.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Gothard began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He provided a recap of his recent time at the MASA conference in Duluth, and the many ties to Saint Paul from colleagues across the country. It was also great to check-in with others and learning about the different challenges from other districts across the state, and how our challenges align or are different from others. It was a humbling experience to support leaders in this way, and a great opportunity to come together and work together.

5. 3DE

Superintendent Gothard welcomed Jodi Danielson, Director of Schools and Learning, Elias Oguz, Principal of Washington Tech, and Sara Dziuk, President and CEO of Junior Achievement North to present this report. He provided the history and background of this initiative, and the need for the high school experience

to be relevant and meaningful. He also noted the partnership with the County and City in this program. The purpose and vision of 3DE was reviewed, including to inspire and prepare young people to success in a global economy, and the vision for a high school model to break through traditional barrier and redesign the framework of education from the inside out. A short video was shown that featured students. Further details on the program were also shared, including that it is a hands-on, project-based instructional model where student learn together to develop solutions to real-life issues and integrated core competencies. The case method models were reviewed for 9th and 10th grade, as well as 11th and 12th grade. Benefits to staff were also revied, as well as implementation in SPPS, including that all 9th graders at Como Senior and Washington in SY24-25, promoted during School Choice, and a scale-up plan to add one grade each year at each school. The timeline for readiness, student outcomes, and funding details were also presented, as well as partnerships for this program.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Henderson requested more details on the logistics of the program and how it will work in a school. Response: Principal Oguz noted that various options have been discussed, including an elective in 9th grade, or integrated into an existing course. At this point, it is proposed to be a specific course with AVID-like strategies to integrate the 3DE instructional model for 9th graders embarking on their high school journey. Year 1 will include all 9th graders, who will then continue it through 10th, 11th, and 12th grade, and adding a new cohort of a grade level of 9th graders each year. The logistics of the 10th grade level of 3DE are to be finalized, but will be similar, and may be an elective. There are decisions still to make for grades 10-12 and how that will look.
- Is the expectation that every 9th grader will be a part of this? Response: Yes. It is an instructional model, not a requirement for graduations. We want students to want to be a part of this, and Principal Oguz provided his experience as a high school principal. High school students are looking for meaning in their learning, and grounding in what they are learning. This is preparation for their career or job in the workforce, and the goal of world's best workforce, and the relance and alignment with career opportunities. This program provides the missing link and to bring business partners to the schools so that students can see them at the same level.
- Is it exclusively business partners involved? Response: We are looking to engage the entire community. Through the case studies, there will be different industries and careers, entrepreneurial businesses, hospitality, trades, healthcare, education, non-profit, and government work. This is to create a path to choices for life, and for students to be able to gain exposure to the full community.
- Considering that buildings have connections with the trades, or such as a CNA program, how is this complementing those, and not taking away from them? Response: We have discusses that, especially with Washington Tech and Como and how the programs fit together. 3DE leans into the 9th grade experience to exposure of a wide range of careers, and in identifying the opportunities, many are at the upper grade levels or college credits with criteria to meet before enrolling in that course. This is an opportunity for students to explore a wide range of careers and identify what they want to research more and in specific details. The model is explicit in the expectation that all students represented are participating, and the whole grade model is really helpful, with percentages of students in IB programs, or students with specialized services or multi-lingual learning to be represented equitably in the program, and does support the range of choosing various career pathways.
- What can educators expect or need to know? Who will be trained? Response: Specific educators will receive the full training, and in implementing the program in the first year, there will be weekly structures for teachers across grade levels to meet and understand the implementation of the

model, and also to reflect on their core course areas. There will be a specific teacher who is trained in the 3DE model, but also attends weekly meetings and sharing with the overall staff to integrate components into the core subject areas. Generally all staff will be trained to a certain degree of the 3DE model before implementation, with specific teachers receiving the full training.

- How were the schools chosen? Response: District leaders were interviewed to listen to their thoughts on the program, including principals. We also wanted to be conscientious where schools may have the capacity to pilot this program. There were conversations to gauge the capacity, interest, desire, and fit, and between Washington Tech and Como, with Principal Oguz's enthusiasm, innovation, and vision, and Como with the Academy of Finance perspective, both principals want to engage with students in this way.
- Director Henderson also requested future information on the cost and what it looks like as we "scale up" and further details on "scaling within the community."
- Would classes be taught by existing or additional staff? Response: Existing.
- What is the sense from the broader school community about how they feel about this change and its implementation? Response: We have met with staff and had conversations with teacher leaders and leadership team, and they welcomed the idea, found it to be innovative and liked the ideas. As continued conversations, we meet with the entire staff, and bring in 3DE staff to present and understand case studies, and culminating with student presentations and work on the solutions. Staff has a good understanding of the program, and for the most part, everyone is excited.
- Who is the WEM Foundation? Response: It is the Whitney and Elizabeth MacMillan Foundations, which is a private foundation in Minnesota. They are sunsetting next month, and as they are working towards that sunset, they identified promising organizations to invest in, and made this investment.
- Further details were requested on the cost for SPPS for this program. Response: There is no cost because the funding is from private philanthropy. In the future, based on enrollment and results, they may be an opportunity for cost sharing. As we've seen in other districts, and the shift in attendance, enrollment, and results, there may be opportunities to secure additional funding for the district and help with those costs, as with more scale, the costs will be driven down.
- Director Ward noted that this program seems really exciting for a lot of reasons, including highlighting and making instruction relevant and real, and seeing how it is applicable in the real work is interesting.
- He also noted a concern about the corporations that are providing the challenges and shaping the instruction, and the process for selecting them, and ensuring they are not "bad actors", and what is being done to safeguard? Response: As we look at the cases and opportunities, there are national cases that are included in all schools – with an example as the Arby's case across a school at the same time and then national competition. The national cases are developed by curriculum experts, and implemented and updates. We identify volunteers to launch and deliver the cases, and Junior Achievement partners with 10,000 volunteers, and schools in learning labs and volunteers to support students, and leverage the corporate and community networks to identify volunteers. The other half of cases are committed to looking at diversity of industries and background as they are brought into the program. We have heard that STEM-related cases are requested by schools, and also the possibility of governmental cases such as public safety, voting, housing, and environmental cases. There are also entrepreneurial and small business cases, or those in healthcare and trades – to ensure that students are able to see skills that are transferable to a variety of companies and industries. This will focus on the diversity and bringing in volunteers who are representative of the students to ensure the strongest experience for them.

- More information was requested on “bad actors.” Director Ward noted those companies with extreme pollution in neighborhoods, or the video showing companies notorious for treating workers poorly or funding extremist, right-wing organizations, which is concerning.
- Further details were provided on the national cases, and that students may partner with local volunteers in the community – such as the Arby’s example and partnering with Chef Bono, and how phenomenal it is to work with students to support them based on their own experiences. The cases are instructional as to how an educator exchanges material with a student and opportunity for teachers to use their backgrounds and skills.
- Director Ward noted that he understands the folks doing the instruction are not working for the corporation, but it feels like an advertisement for the company to students. There may be a situation where SPPS families are impacted by a case corporation and it’s being promoted in the school system, which would be upsetting to many, and may be something to look into with this program.
- Superintendent Gothard noted that this is a partnership including partnering with business in our city, and others across the country, with hundreds of partnerships. This will also follow policy to ensure we are doing right for our students
- Director Vue requested further information on the 3DE staff and leaders at the school sites. Response: At each high school, there will be a director of school leadership role, and the district will influence and hire – that leader will not be paid by the District, and will oversee the implementation of the model. There will also be a director of cases who sources the volunteers and coordination of the cases, and working across buildings and supporting teachers and the student experience. This role will also be influenced by the District, but the position will not be on the district payroll, and will be a position through Junior Achievement. The Director of School Leadership will be in the school building every day. Other roles will be between schools and shared. It is similar to Achievement Plus programming and those partnerships, as well as AVID, where there is differing degrees of oversight in the buildings. With two schools doing this work, it is a strength as a team with Principal Oguz and Principal Brown.
- Director Kopp noted a few questions, including how this way of learning embeds those skills, and about students who may arrive later including in 10th, 11th, or 12th grades and supports for them. Response: We have heard that it takes 1-2 cases before students are immersed and understanding the role and to embrace this new way of learning. In the second case, students are engaged and working with their peers and teachers in different ways. As we think about the cases, students are learning new skills and exposed to different ideas, and those are then also woven into the other subject areas. Educators in different departments are able to reinforce the learning in the 3DE class. The competencies that are learned in 3DE are critical for success in this model, but also in their life, and students are able to attend class ready to engage and be comfortable in the same ways as the 3DE class. A recollection of a recent trip to visit a school with the 3DE model in Houston was shared, and the ways students were engaging with one another in an Algebra class.
- From what was observed, this sounds like a cultural change? Response: Yes, the changes can be felt in the hallways, in classes, and student engagement. In one school, for the first year, first semester, there were referrals of 97 students in the 9th grade. Half of the grade is in 3DE, and only 9 of those referrals were students in the program, and there was not a single referral after September 30th. For the changes that are seen in students in the 3DE model, there are changes in the entire school, and that connection and change is seen very quickly.
- The core competencies are built-upon each year, and they continue to level up. Those students who join later in the program, after 9th grade, receive those core competencies and very quickly join their peers.
- Director Foster noted that in the core competencies are tied to effectiveness for students’ future, and know they will be critical for both school and in the workforce. Students will continue to grow

and feel equipped to graduate with this experience and strength. The history of these skills was also noted, and their place in past curriculum. It was also noted that with the current leadership of the country, we need our young people to embrace the idea that they can become proficient in anything they want to do in their future.

- Questions around the teacher evaluation and effectiveness were noted. Response: We are having conversations with staff and building leaders, and focusing on the child. The engagement with 3DE looks at teachers to ask questions about the engagement in their classroom and how they are feeling. 3DE and Junior Achievement are not evaluating teachers – they are asking about the teaching and engagement, and also asking students about their engagement.
- With the young people designing the work, will they be compensated by the partnerships for their great ideas? Response: The cases developed are not actual cases, but are developed by the curriculum team - the solutions and products proposed are not linked to the partners actions. The cases may not be tied directly to the company or partner, but it is the exposure to the types of industries and issues.
- Director Allen noted that she understands that, but feels the partners will use the ideas presented.
- Examples of work were also noted – in thinking about how to engage with students on solutions, and how to work with the City or County to dig into items like education, voter turn-out, and environmental topics.
- Will there be discussion around intellectual property? Response: We don't know the answer to that yet, and anticipate it will be a part of the program.
- How will this program engage ELL and SPED students? Response: Washington Tech is 40% ELL students, and we believe this level of engagement and participation and co-teaching with classes to access the materials, discussions, and relevance to ensure students are more engaged in the learning environment. This will be more hands-on, problem-based, project-based learning materials and visual. This is a model of learning to expose students, where learning is amplified and enhanced. This same perspective also applies to students in SPED. An example of the current Federal 3 ASD program with a business model for a coffee cart at the school was also shared.
- Director Foster thanked the team for this program in talking about bringing our schools into the 21st century. She thanked Junior Achievement for being a collaborative partner, and looks forward to its future in SPPS.
- Director Ward thanked Mr. Shepard for his work with the coffee cart.
- Director Kopp requested information on the 12th grade capstone project. It would be interesting to bring forth projects that are important to students and meaningful. Response: We have a lot of local cases, and are looking to school partners, topics, industries, and cases for students and the topics in which they are interested. We are actively recruiting case partners and growing our number of cases to see where the interests lie and bring them together.

6. BUDGET ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed staff to present Budget Engagement and Community Values. He noted that we are entering the budget season, and have been tasked to do more engagement, and those opportunities will be shared tonight. It noted it will be a challenge – there is a historic investment in education, but it is making up for the past years of underfunding, and there's also the expiration of ESSER funds in 2023. The engagement objectives were reviewed, including round 1 of gathering feedback regarding how to communicate effectively about school and district budgets, gathering a set of community values to inform the resource allocation process, and provide a basic understanding of school district and school buildings budget. Round 2 will include building trust between community stakeholders and the district by communicating back how gathered feedback was used to make resource allocation decisions

and influence communications around the budget. Details were also shared on community engagement focus group sessions in October 2023, as well as information on the All PACs Meeting session. Information was also shared on the public input surveys from staff, families, and students grades 7-12. Details were also presented on the District Finance Advisory Committee, members, and the application process.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Foster noted concerns about the upcoming engagement sessions and the different areas of the city. How are we ensuring all families have access and opportunities for these engagement sessions? Response: The anticipated timeline is tight, but we want to be transparent, and had extremely good success with opportunities at Progressive. We will be adding opportunities at Highland and Jie Ming, and West Side schools.
- Survey opportunities were also noted, and the questions that pertain to all. Administration was also asked to move up the timeline, and in order to get information to senior leaders and the values, the 15th of November is likely the deadline for survey responses.
- The resources and logistics for engagement sessions were also noted. It was also noted that it has been heard that the team will add at least 2 more budget sessions – including on the West Side, East Side, and particularly for African-American families.
- Director Allen noted the ideas of Zoom opportunities, or through StreamYard.
- Director Henderson noted questions on what comes after the engagement sessions. Response: Following engagement, the next step is to use the information from the meetings and incorporating what was heard – for example hearing that yellow buses are a value – and turning that information into a real budget scenario and the costs associated.
- It was noted the importance of ways for buildings to have a space or box to input what they value. We are hoping that communities encourage families to complete the surveys, as well as staff. A board member noted engagement opportunities for students to encourage their family to complete the survey – through extra credit or centered in Foundations class.
- It was noted that the conversations on the impacts of ARP funds and giving them tools to give voice to these tough decisions about what they enjoy and love about their schools. Community members may be upset about talking about the broad idea of values, when they want to discuss programs that are directly impacts, and real programs funded by ARP dollars.
- Director Kopp noted the importance of being clear about the output of the budget engagement sessions, and to be mindful, thoughtful and candid.
- Director Ward noted confusion on the conversations about collecting values versus collecting spending decisions. Response: For example, yellow buses as a value. We imagine families would state getting to school safely as a value.
 - He noted where the line is drawn for these conversations, as he thinks there should be space for the community to state what they would like to spend more funds, rather than values.
 - It was also noted that the role of the Board needs to be defined in the creation of the budget, and the role of authority in making decisions and scenarios. We don't want the decisions to fall on families, where one group gets something, but another loses something. We need to be careful in language and defining expectations. Director Ward noted he does not agree, and the Board should be making decisions.
- Director Allen noted she would like to see clear and transparent information around strategies that worked before ARP funds, strategies implemented with ARP funds and the outcomes, including WINN strategies. She would like to see it laid out clearly for the public and the Board about

strategies that are used for learning loss. Response: Chief Turner noted a process with our Office of Equity, Strategy, and Innovation to look at our partnerships and values and their alignment.

- Director Ward raised a question on what is being collected during the engagement. Response: At this level in the first phase, it will be about values, and then that data will be turned into programming information. Director Ward noted concerns about the vagueness of the questions, and it may not be as specific as families and community members had hoped. Chief Sager noted that typically when going through this process, the detailed information is also included and specific examples are sent. There are themes that are generated, and are aligned to the strategic plan.
- Director Ward requested clarification on the information for sessions and that they are open to all.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked Mr. Pablo Matamoros from the Office of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships to consider meeting in elementary and middle schools to be more inclusive.
- Director Vue noted questions on the timeframe, including the middle of November for Phase 1, spring of 2024 for Phase 2, including March/April before Spring Break.
- He also noted questions on the public input survey questions, and to ensure the same questions are being asked in the survey and focus groups.
- Ms. Gray Akyea also provided examples on the survey questions, including broader questions and iterations of the same questions for parents, students and staff.
- How are we using information from the safety conversations from last year? Response: All of the data will be used collectively for the budget.
- The Team noted they are tasked with looking to add a couple more meetings, as well as an online meeting option.
- Surveys will be sent out October 23-31, 2023.
- Director Ellis noted concerns on the questions.
- Director Allen noted it will be important to ask parents if their child participated in a strategy on the survey.
- Chief Turner noted the questions will be probing questions. Dr. Gray Akyea also provided more details and examples of survey questions.
- Regarding DFAC, Director Ward requested information on the application and rubric by which to decide the committee. Response: It will incorporate interest in the process, as well as background in leadership, business, finance, which are helpful but not exclusive. Individuals with a sense of community involvement and engagement and positive relationships will be considered, as well as problem-solving skills. We'd also like to hear from individuals who haven't been involved previously, with new voices and new perspectives.
- The role of this group in Finance business was also discussed, including as a financial advisory group, involved in the audit review and corrective action plan, investment strategies, property tax levy and inputs, parameters around the budget process, and financial planning for facilities, as well as future considerations for a voter-approved referendum. There will be about 4-6 meetings per year. It will be mainly dialogue and discussion, and mainly consensus.
- Director Allen noted concerns about the "balance" of participants on the committee, and the criteria. As a balanced group, she would like to see it be representative of the demographics of students served in SPPS. There are four positions for community members. It was noted that if we are not seeing the representation and voices in the applications by October 3, the application submission deadline will be extended. It was also noted that Ramsey County County Manager also sent out a message to the Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee group to inform them of this new group to send to their constituents as well. Director Allen noted that gender should also be considered in the group composition.

- Director Ward noted this is exciting, and appreciates the work in trying to address the concerns board members shared and avenues to share in the budget process. However, there is an aspect that is not resolved, which is how the Board interacts with the budget.
- Director Vue encouraged Administration to use a different name than District Financial Advisory Committee, specifically “District” in the name. He noted we need to be grounded in the district we serve, and in SPPS, and in the political sphere, “district” has been used to alienate certain folks in the district. Chief Turner noted that Chief Sager will be empowered to determine a different name.
- Director Foster thanked everyone for the robust conversations.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Director Kopp moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Henderson seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

For clarity and to facilitate research, these minutes reflect the order of the original Agenda and not necessarily the time during the meeting the items were discussed.

Prepared and submitted by:

Sarah Dahlke, Assistant Clerk, St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education