

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

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

**June 6, 2023
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Vice Chair Kopp.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Staff: K. Thao, C. Long, A. Collins, N. Páez, Y. Vang, S. Schmidt de Carranza,
S. Dahlke, T. Parent, T. Sager, J. Turner, S. Gray Akyea, J. Danielson,
L. Olson, A. Kunz, E. Wacker, C. Green, S. Dahlke, P. Pratt-Cook, J.
Grathwol, C. Anderson, L. Rider, J. Vollmer, M. Langworthy, S. Koppen

Community: L. Bolton, M. Wall, T. Lonetree, N. Woltman

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 Henderson. It passed by acclaim.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Gothard began by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He began his announcements with a recap of his quarterly meeting with staff and leaders in the district around federal pandemic funds, and the work from those. There are many deeply engaged in this work and progress, and noted that the meeting began with folks recognizing the accomplishments or the value of one another and placing certificates on the wall, and it was great to see the reflection of the collected work.

He also congratulated our 2023 graduates. He began graduation season with Bridge View on Friday, and it was an excellent start. Ceremonies are a great opportunity to be present with the symbol of this work. This is the class that was impacted by the pandemic in their freshman year of high school, and they are resilient scholars who overcame and continue to overcome, and we are grateful for their hard work and perseverance.

Lastly, he noted the weather, and the cooler temperatures. He thanked Tom Parent for speaking on the plans for the direct in regards to air conditioning, and noted that while air conditioning in buildings is on the long-range, we must also focus our financial resources. He thanked the staff for helping our students to remain cool on these unseasonably warm school days. He noted that he is often asked about changing the school calendar, but we continue to have two weeks for winter break, and one week for spring break, as well as professional development days for staff, and the Board has approved the calendar for the next two years. We also must start after Labor Day by statute, and need to have the state minimum of days and instructional minutes. It is a difficult task, and he thanked everyone for their patience.

Director Vue requested information on the highlights from the Quarterly ARP meeting, and Superintendent Gothard noted that is clear that our reading strategy is helping students to feel confident, growing in reading, and becoming proficient. More details were also provided on this strategy and plans for the future. Director Vue also requested information on the number of days and minutes of instruction required, which were provided later in the meeting.

5. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Jim Grathwol, Legislative Liaison, to present updates on the 2023 Legislative Session. Mr. Grathwol reviewed updates and progress on the SPPS 2023 Legislative Agenda items of:

- Stabilize Education Funding
- Special Education
- Fully Fund Existing Mandates
- Increase Diversify Educator Work Force
- Provide Resources for Child and Family Support
- School Safety and Security

Other bills impacting education were also reviewed and shared. Mr. Grathwol noted that his work is to work with legislatures create an edifice to protect the common good and the public good, and that includes public education. He also thanked the Saint Paul Delegation for their partnership and collaboration.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Henderson requested further information on the student support personnel and the separate formula and implications. Response: We can send the dollar amounts, but it is for nurses, social workers and other support staff that will be hired, and cannot be used to backfill positions - this is to hire new staff with these funds, and it is a per pupil formula. It aligns with recognizing that students cannot learn if they are hungry, and they are mentally stressed and traumatized in this post-COVID learning, and focuses on support services. Further details were also provided on school-based health supports, and funding details, with a \$14M increase in 24-25, and a \$9M increase in 26-27.
- Director Henderson also requested information on the cross-subsidies. Mr. Grathwol noted that we need to encourage and support and thank our legislators for their work, especially Senator Pappas. Superintendent Gothard also provided further details on school-based mental health grants.

- It was also noted that another bill passed allows for a one instance to renew a referendum, with the rationale that they pass at an extremely high rate and are costly elections, especially when run off-cycle.

6. POLICY UPDATE

a. Policy 506.06 Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Laurie Olson, Director of Security and Emergency Management, to present the Policy Update. Included in the presentation were details on the rationale for this proposed policy, including that the district currently does not have an official Board policy and it is required of the District to have a policy per statute. While this is a new District policy, the adherence is not new. The purpose of this policy is to comply with Minnesota statute and provide for a safe and welcoming educational environment free of contraband. Further details were also provided on the definition of "contraband", as well as violations. Further details were also provided on lockers and personal possessions within a locker, desks and personal possessions and student's person.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Ward requested information on the process on locker searches and where the boundary is for searching a bag within a locker. Response: Sometimes a locker is opened because of an odor, but other times there may be a reasonable suspicion where a bag may be open to search. Further scenarios regarding the searches of lockers and boundaries of searches.
- It was noted this policy is similar to other districts.
- Is there a report for the data of searches? Response: When a search is conducted, we do quantify all we do. If a search is based on reasonable suspicion, there is an entry into Campus, a parent notification; if a SSL is involved, there is a separate report as well.
- Director Allen requested a quarterly report to the Board of search data. Response: Any searches conducted by SEM are recorded. Data relating to searches to an odor may not be available.
- How will we handle illegal findings if the student is over the age of 18? Response: We do have discretion in certain situations, including small amounts of currently illegal drugs, and there may be a call to family, or a referral. In terms of other substances such as opioids, there is a different response.
- With the legalization of paraphernalia and small amounts of substances, how will that work? Response: Those infractions would be treated the same, with the best intervention, such as a counselor or social worker, and outside resources. Large quantities and cash are a different situation.

7. FY24 BUDGET UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Tom Sager, Executive Chief of Financial Services, to present the FY24 Budget Update. Topics included a review of Revenue - All Funds, Expenditures - All Funds, Projected FY24 Ending Fund Balances, Summary of Main Points, and Next Steps.

Graphs showing FY24 total revenue by source, as well as FY24 General Fund revenues sources were also presented, with the majority of both funded by State Aid. Charts showing FY24 expenditures by fund

and FY24 General Fund expenditures were also reviewed. A summary of all funds - fund balance budget was also presented.

The summary of key points for FY24 budget included:

- Increases in new state aid revenue was positive. Yet, some of that was offset by revenue loss due to declining enrollment and ESSER II funding.
- District plans to draw down part of its general fund balance to maintain existing programming, student supports and new initiatives.
- Unassigned general fund balance is anticipated to be 5.31 percent at the end of FY24. This remains in compliance with School Board Policy 701.01.
- ESSER III funds will expire after FY24. SPPS anticipates budget prioritization and realignment for the FY25 budget development.
- Anticipated increase in construction fund revenue is based on anticipated bond sale in early FY24 to continue SPPS Builds initiatives.

Next steps include:

- June 7-15: Small group meetings with School Board members
- Apply any final adjustments to proposed budget
- June 20: Present and recommend for FY24 proposed budget for approval
- January/February 2024: Present revised FY24 budget based on fall enrollment, FY23 audit results, employment contract settlements, etc

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Henderson requested more information on the projections, and if they have shifted. Response: The district is on a path of declining enrollment, however we've shown signs of stabilizing, and have taken those figures and applied them to next year, which is good news in terms of revenue.
- Director Ward was wondering about the enrollment and retention committee, and if we are exceeding our goal. Response: Yes.
- Director Henderson requested further information on the stabilization. Response: We have continued to innovate and create programs, and families are supported. We have also invested our ARP funds wisely, and we are right-sizing the budget to move forward to create new without taking away programs we currently have. We also have not factored in enrollment for our new school. The PreK hubs have also supported the stabilization.
- Further information was also requested on the ESSER funds and to be transparent with our community as those funds are sunsetted. We are on track to allocate these funds.
- It was noted that at the August Committee of the Board meeting, an agenda item will include a FY25 Budget discussion, including ESSER budgets.
- Director Ward noted that at a previous meeting, he raised the issue of community and Board involvement in the budgeting process, and requested further information if a plan for the budget next year including community and Board involvement would be presented. Response: This year's budget process included indirect engagement, including regarding safety and security, and the East African Magnet School, as well as reading strategies funded by ESSER. For FY25, the process will include more direct engagement, especially with ESSER funds set to end, and aligning properly. Superintendent Gothard also noted that building sites received their budgets sooner, and included three rounds of interview and select.

- Director Ward noted that we do need to have a regular, standing way for the community to be involved to shape the budget, as well as the timing of the presentation of the budget. He also requested that the Board approve a process to help shape the budgeting for FY25, how the Board will receive information for FY25 earlier, and how the Board will be engaged as the budget is being shaped for FY25.
- Director Allen followed-up on her request to have the data disaggregated regarding achievement in schools.

7. WORK SESSION: FY24 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET REVIEW

The Board then reviewed the proposed budget for the Board of Education, specifically. Changes were also presented, including the change in the legislative liaison and election contract with Ramsey County per UFARS. District cell phones were noted as a change, as well as funds for the Board Retreat(s). More information was requested on Fees for Services as noted in the budget document. Information was also requested on previous use of Travel and Conferences funds. Membership dues were also reviewed., as well as professional development opportunities and funds. Inflationary costs in salaries and benefits were also noted. Community engagement funds regarding Student Outcomes Focused Governance work were also discussed.

There was also a robust discussion on the streaming of Committee of the Board meetings, to increase transparency in our work. Viewership data was noted, as well as information on staffing. The potential changes to the format of Committee of the Board meetings was also reviewed. Discussion also focused on deeper ways of outreach and engagement with our current structure. A higher-quality of audio recording to be available was also discussed. Apps such as StreamYard were noted as a possibility. The Board recommended Administration to bring contract figures to the Board.

Further information was also requested on SEAB and the status of that contract.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Director Kopp moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Ellis and Director Allen seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 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