

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

**PUBLIC HEARING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**360 Colborne Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102, and**

**Available Streaming Online at [www.spps.org/boe](http://www.spps.org/boe) and Saint Paul Cable Channel 16**

**November 30, 2021  
5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chair Foster then read the following statement: This public hearing is being held pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 123B.51, subdivision 5. That section states that: "The Board may close a schoolhouse only after a public hearing on the question of the necessity and practicability of the proposed closing." It further states: "Parties requesting to give testimony for and against the proposal shall be heard by the board before it makes a final decision to close or not to close the schoolhouse."

Chair Foster noted the meeting would begin with a presentation of the Envision SPPS proposal and, following its conclusion, the Board would hear from parties requesting to give testimony for and against the proposal.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Board of Education: J. Vue, J. Foster, J. Brodrick, C. Allen, J. Kopp, Y. Carrillo, Z. Ellis  
Superintendent Gothard

General Counsel Long

**III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA**

**Chair Foster then moved approval of the order of the main agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Vue.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Vue	Yes
Director Foster	Yes
Director Brodrick	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Kopp	Yes

Director Carrillo	Yes
Director Ellis	Yes

The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

#### IV. ENVISION SPPS: PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL,

Director Foster turned the floor over to Superintendent Gothard to introduce the presentation -- Envision SPPS: Align school facilities with well-rounded programs

Superintendent Gothard thanked the board and audience members for joining the public hearing. He noted how the Board of Education gave the administration direction with approval of the strategic plan which led to the administration's development of the Envision SPPS recommendations. He then turned the floor over to Chief Turner who led the presentation.

Chief Turner began by providing an overview and summary of events and meetings leading up to tonight's meeting, including reference to the official public notice in the public record. She then provided a recap of what took place during the special meeting of the Board of Education the previous night and, for the purposes of transparency, the next steps in the Envision SPPS review process. Chief Turner emphasized that the Public Notice provided the rationale for the list of school closings proposed and then read the text of the slide presentation (See BoardBook for November 30, 2021).

Chief Turner read the following official state of the public notice:

“At SPPS, we believe all students deserve the full range of educational opportunities and student support that a robust, well-rounded education affords. A well-rounded education is one that meets the Minnesota state's educational standards by providing students with learning opportunities that give them the skills to succeed in school, college and career. Barriers to providing all SPPS students with a well-rounded education at every school include declining birth rates and increased competition from schools outside of SPPS. This has resulted in an excess of 8,000 empty seats across Saint Paul Public Schools making many school programs unsustainable. As a result, the following school programs have been identified to be closed so that students can be relocated to programs that provide access to a well-rounded education.”

- **Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary**, 707 Holly Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104
- **Galtier Elementary School**, 1317 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104
- **Highwood Hills Elementary**, 2188 Londin Lane, Saint Paul, MN 55119
- **Jackson Preparatory Elementary School**, 437 Edmund Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103
- **John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary**, 740 York Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106
- **LEAP High School**, 631 N. Albert Street, Saint Paul, MN 55104
- **L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion Lower**, 1305 Prosperity Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106
- **Parkway Montessori and Community Middle School**, 1363 Bush Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106
- **Paul & Sheila Wellstone Elementary**, 1041 Marion St., Saint Paul, MN 55117

Chief Turner noted the robust, dynamic conversation with the administration the previous night (See: Special Meeting Minutes, 11/29/2021). Chief Turner then presented a summary slide of the Board of Education's response to the Envision SPPS recommendations as follows:

**SLIDE: Recap of Nov. 29 BOE Special Meeting discussion**

**Area A:**

- LNFI lower merges with LNFI upper at upper campus for fall 2022
- Parkway closes June 2022; reopens as upper campus for Hmong Dual and Culture program

**Area B:**

- Highwood Hills remains open

**Area C:**

- J.A. Johnson closes and merges with Vento at Vento for fall of 2022

**Area D:**

- Riverview Spanish Dual and Community both remain open
- Cherokee Montessori remains open

**Area E:**

- Galtier closes in June 2022 and merges at Hamline
- LEAP remains open
- Wellstone dual Spanish Immersion and BioSmart remain open

**Area F:**

- Obama remains open
- Jackson Hmong Dual and Culture closes and merges at Phalen
- Jackson community closes and merges at Maxfield
- Capitol Hill pathways ends

Chief Turner also noted the firm direction from the Board of Education to remove the following schools from the list of proposed school closures and to provide additional information about additional schools:

**SLIDE: Board of Education Directive (See: 11/29/2021 Special Meeting Minutes)**

- These schools have been removed from the recommendation to close:
  - Highwood Hills
  - LEAP High School
  - Wellstone Biosmart and Dual Spanish Immersion
- The BOE has asked for additional data, information and impacts for the following schools and programs:
  - Cherokee Montessori
  - J J Hill Montessori
  - Obama
  - Riverview Dual Spanish Immersion & Riverview Community

Chief Turner concluded by reviewing immediate next steps to hear public comment about the public notice of school closures during today's public hearing and the Board of Education's plan tomorrow (December 1, 2021) to vote on the overall comprehensive Envision SPPS plan. Chief Turner noted concerns about enrollment and sustainability for the district overall.

## **SLIDE: Next Steps**

### **Tuesday, November 30:**

- Public comments on Envision SPPS recommendations to the Board of Education (BOE)

### **Wednesday, December 1:**

- BOE will review impact of modified recommendations put forth by the Board at the Nov. 29 BOE Special Session in areas of:
  - Enrollment
  - Program impact
  - Sustainability
- BOE will vote on recommendations

## **V. PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Chair Foster turned the floor over to Vice Chair Vue who led the Public Testimony portion of the meeting.

Vice Chair Vue noted the Board of Education would now hear from parties requesting to give testimony for and against the proposal. He invited those providing public comment to hand their written testimony to Ombudsperson Abrams, who would be assisting them at the podium. He also mentioned the option to email or send your testimony to the Board Secretary.

Vice Chair Vue asked audience members to remain quiet during the public hearing so all may hear and advised speakers that any complaint or issue related to personnel must be made in writing. For their own legal protection and the legal rights of staff, he also advised speakers to please not include identifiers of Saint Paul Public School employees such as names, job titles, grades taught, or work location.

Vice Chair Vue then reviewed the speaker protocols, including the three minutes time limit per speaker and that speakers were asked to complete statements within that time frame. He also noted that for those using an interpreter, a total of 5 minutes would be allotted for testimony and interpretation.

Vice Chair Vue then reviewed expectations regarding participant conduct, including the request to practice social distancing and wear a mask at all times. Finally, he advised speakers to begin by stating their name only and that no additional information, such as address, was necessary.

Vice Chair Vue then called the first three speakers forward to the podium to begin public testimony.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Foster concluded the public hearing by reviewing the future meeting schedule and how to access Board of Education meeting information and livestream links online at [www.spps.org/boe](http://www.spps.org/boe) or by calling our Board Secretary at 612-434-1105.

Chair Foster noted the Board of Education would vote on the Envision SPPS plan during a Special Envision SPPS meeting on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 6:05 p.m.

**Chair Foster then moved approval of adjournment. The motion was seconded by Director Brodrick.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Vue	Yes
Director Foster	Yes
Director Brodrick	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Kopp	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes
Director Ellis	Yes

The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

The public hearing adjourned at 8:51 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:

Brian Hammer

Secretary to the Board (Interim), St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education