MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Jeanelle Foster, Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: J. Brodrick, J. Vue, C. Allen, J. Kopp, S. Marchese, Z. Ellis, J. Foster

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; Cedrick Baker, Chief of Staff; Dave Watkins, Chief of Schools; Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer; Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer; Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer; Stacey Gray Akyea, Director, Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment; Kenyatta McCarty, Executive Director of Human Resources; Kevin Burns, Director of Communications; Kaying Thao, Administrator to the Board; Kalid Ali, SEAB Member; Sarah Dahlke, Secretary to the Board

II. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Foster moved approval of the Order of the Main Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Brodrick.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

Superintendent Gothard updated the Board and community on a new direction for education in Minnesota present before the state budget, and priorities for Minnesota schools for the next biennium. There was a
press conference, and will continue to look at the plan. An initial comment is the initial similarities and parallels of SPSS Achieves and shell of the MN Due North Plan. The second good news is that SPPS has been able to schedule around 200 staff in SPPS to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Over the weekend, we received there would be 15,000 doses prioritized to the 7-county metro region with a site in the metro, and SPPS has received more than 2,000 doses of the vaccine we are working to distribute and the pilot program has been moved to the Excel Center for this week. As staff prepare for the return of students, and coordinating to ensure staff has access to those doses. It’s good news to go from 200 to 2,000.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

● Board members expressed their gratitude and looking forward to going forward with this plan. It is good news, and excited to see the plan for the roll out. Appreciate this has happened and great development for staff and students and hopefully begins to address access, and encourage and support with the State to move this forward. Both developments positive and excited to move forward with them. This is encouraging, and also hope that more doses are coming sooner and faster.

● Superintendent Gothard noted we are ready and partner with the State on technology, and we continue to learn together.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution Approving Online Learning Program Application and Limiting Enrollment in School District Online Learning Program

Superintendent Gothard introduced Executive Director Hans Ott. He reminded the Board and community that this plan was in place in October 2019, before the pandemic hit, and hope that last Spring to get approval to begin, but we delayed. The resolution mentioned as part of his report is further support to move in this direction. As part of state statute approving the establishment of the online school, it requires board approval we are ready for this application, and ability to declare our attendance and enrollment areas. Mr. Ott reviewed the plan for grades and supplemental learning, and enrollment areas as noted in the resolution.

BF 32321 Resolution Approving Online Learning Program Application and Limiting Enrollment in School District Online Learning Program

RESOLUTION APPROVING ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM APPLICATION AND LIMITING ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL DISTRICT ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the mission of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is to inspire students to think critically, pursue their dreams, and change the world; and

WHEREAS, Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education adopted the district strategic plan, SPPS Achieves, which sets goals for student achievement, guides decision-making and focuses efforts on long-term outcome; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Public Schools wishes to offer a variety of educational program options to meet the many and varied learning needs of its students; and
WHEREAS, pursuant to the State of Minnesota’s Online Learning Options Act, Minnesota Statute § 124D.095, a public school district may submit an application to and be approved by the Minnesota Department of Education to provide online learning courses as an “online learning provider”; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education wishes to seek approval for the School District as an “full-time online learning provider” and intends to establish a full-time online learning program, “SPPS Online School” beginning with the 2021-2022 school year offering a comprehensive program for students in grades 9 through 11, and grades 9 through 12 in the 2022-2023 school year, as well as a supplemental program for students in Kindergarten through grade 12; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 124D.095, Subd. 3(d), the Board of Education may limit enrollment in its online learning program by adopting by resolution specific standards for accepting and rejecting students’ applications; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that enrollment in the SPPS Online School should be limited to: a) students residing within the boundaries of Saint Paul Public Schools and, b) students residing in school districts whose boundaries adjoin those of Saint Paul Public Schools;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the School Board does hereby approve the application to the Minnesota Department of Education School District to become a “full-time online learning provider” beginning with the 2021-2022 school year offering a comprehensive program for students in grades 9 through 11, and grades 9 through 12 in 2022-2023 as well as supplemental program for students in Kindergarten through grade 12; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that enrollment in the School District’s online learning program shall be limited to: a) students residing within the boundaries of Saint Paul Public Schools and b) students residing in school districts whose boundaries adjoin those of Saint Paul Public Schools.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:
● Board members expressed clarity on the vote on the resolution at this meeting.
● Superintendent Gothard added thanks to Executive Director Ott and the team. We will continue to keep the Board and community involved in this process as we move forward.

MOTION: Director Foster moved approval that the Board of Education approve the Resolution Approving Online Learning Program Application and Limiting Enrollment in School District Online Learning Program. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:
  Director Brodrick       Yes
  Director Vue           Yes
  Director Allen         Yes
  Director Kopp          Yes
  Director Marchese      Yes
  Director Ellis         Yes
  Director Foster        Yes

IV. NEW BUSINESS
A. SPPS Achieves, World’s Best Workforce, and Achievement & Integration

Superintendent Gothard then introduced staff to present on SPPS Achieves, World’s Best Workforce, and Achievement and Integration measures. The strategic alignment of these three plans was reviewed, as well as details of each plan including timeline and overview.

The goal alignment of each plan was also presented, and the alignment of the goals of each plan to the others.

The World’s Best Workforce and Achievement and Integration SY 2017-2020 results summary were presented, including meeting three of the five WBWF goals in ready for school, students career and college ready, and all students graduating; not meeting goals in two of the five WBWF goals of grade level literacy and achievement gap between groups; not meeting the three A&I goals of MCA growth, achievement gap between groups, and school choice activities.

The SPPS Achieves SY2019-20 results summary was also shown, including small decrease to no change in racial disparity index; mixed results in outcome preparation for college, career, and life; and no change in English language acquisition.

Strategic plan adjustments include address SPPS Achieves/WBWF and A&I results; build on strengths and experiences from initial two years of strategic plan; review and revise the strategic plan to take into account COVID-19; tighten the plan’s focus while bringing in other system-wide work underway.

Following review and stakeholder input, adjustments include prioritizing Phase 1 initiatives that get at fundamental ways learning takes place in SPPS in support of our mission; prioritizing initiatives that address responsible resource allocation; creating new Systemic Equity focus area, objective and initiative; addressing impact of COVID-19 and Envision SPPS within framework of strategic plan; addressing six initiatives in departmental context; also new A&I requirement; push pause on three initiatives at this time.

The SPPS Achieves Adjusted Strategic Plan was then reviewed, including focus areas and objectives.

Staff were also recognized for their work in these plans. Superintendent Gothard noted the alignment and accountability within these three plans. We have a foundation that the State’s plan is built on, and making changes to ensure the work is aligned and working with community to better the experience for current and future SPPS students.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:
- Director Brodrick noted the similarities between the State’s plan and SPPS’s plans, and watched the press conference in rolling out the Due North education plan, and listening to the media ask questions about the what and the why of our goals. He requested more concrete details on how we are going to do these things. We all know why we want to do this work - did not see enough concrete strategies with how we are going to do this work. Think we should be further along. What’s the how and when are we going to see it? Response: The area to point to is about what would make the difference in reading by 3rd grade. The team has a specific set of plans that were discussed - the strategic plan is a mighty plan written with great depth and collaboration. Dr. Wilcox-Harris noted her history in SPPS and the input into the strategic plan. Like any continuous improvement plan, it need to improve and those goals that are not being met - that is a critical added piece of our strategic plan in those focus areas. We have seen progress and celebrating reading improvement for 3rd graders and 10th
graders making gains at the small group instruction at the elementary level, and sall workshop model. We know aspects, have plan, and work underway. Some work was halted. All staff will say the best PD is through the relationship between the teachers and peer learning. It has to be that relational trust, and foster that by setting up PLCs and coaching, and investing in materials to help teachers. It will turn us towards effective instruction and define it - students reading at grade level, staff who look like our students and are licensed staff.

- Director Brodrick also noted that at the press conference were two bright young high school students, and one student asked for an expression of actionable and measurable steps. He requested more concrete actionable and measurable steps.

- Director Vue noted that in the summary of SPPS Achieves, and the mention of increases and decreases to the benchmarks - what was the goal that started? With the impact of COVID and aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, do we revisit those goals based on the impact of those two major events? Response: The goals that we are looking at are 5-year student outcomes and can provide the metrics with the baseline and goals. We built in 5 year goals with a 5 year strategic plan implemented over 3 years, to give 2 years for full implementation and actualize the results. After this year, it is the recommendation to look at how far we have gone and revise as necessary. The goals are attainable as well as aspirational. In revision of the goals in the future, if revised, our recommendation would continue to be aspirational and attainable, and even more important in social and cultural climate. The baseline and targets will be provided and more details were provided. We have specific and aggressive goals, and there were details provided for the hiring of more teachers of color specifically and the impact of those strategies.

- Director Allen noted questions about “racially isolated schools” and some examples of why that is problematic as opposed to community schools. Response: Because at times a racially identified school, for example at one school, there may not be enough white students enrolled in the school, and their efforts to invite, showcase, and attract white families. Our identification of schools is really a part of the whole historical piece around desegregation and the data that students in integrated environments do better academically than students in situations. The idea of racially identifiable schools is to ensure the population of the school itself is representative of the community and integrated program. The legislation that was references is the legislation for A&I focused and based on in desegregation of largely Black and white segregated spaces. That legislation is somewhat dated and pre-dates multicultural education, current efforts of racial diversity and social justice, interconnection of ethnicity, linguistic diversity and family diversity. It is built on somewhat a dated assumption that students that are in concentrated racially areas do poorer - it definitely is challenge for us as SPPS because we value our ethnic, linguistic, racial, and family diversity. We actually have created education spaces like magnet schools that would draw particular ethnicities like dual immersion schools and see as pride offering the possibility and chances for students to be educated in spaces where they feel the most comfortable. We continue toe ensure none of spaces are suffering because of any sort of overlooking in that space, because that space is homogenous - racially and ethnically. We have tried to balance what we know is dated, but somewhat pertinent and balance in a district that is racially isolated district because we have everyone - when we talk about diversity and pride we don't call ourselves racially isolated. It is a balance and will continue but does not overshadow our pride in who we educate and what we call ourselves.

- What is the factor that allows integration schools that “better education for all students”. What is the variable that changes? Response: The research is still out, but many point o educational standing of the family and educational experience of instructors in instructional pedagogy circle, some say expectations of the instructors and administrators and adults that make the difference. It depends, and not all would agree or say it is true. It does vary and many times come to resources.
She values community and knows in a place in Saint Paul where disparities lie across the board, and one thing to survive is community, and when we start moving students, it starts to break up the community around the school that they need to be supported. Any student should be able to attend any school, and concerns around integrating schools and moving students for the purpose of that particular policy and concerns around that.

The percentages for teachers to student ratios was also provided.

Do we know how many building leaders are working with staff to start to implement Zaretta Hammond’s model in the schools? Response: It is moving forward, and a few staff acknowledging the circumstance also. We all need to use the book, and until in the hands of every teacher and read it thoroughly and understands to point where constantly trying for spaces ready for rigor and independent learning. We have a 5 year roll out, and the research. Last year, we landed on this framework and purchased the text for every teacher. COVID impacted professional development, and have focused on the building leaders and 100% of building principles are going through the course designed by Zaretta Hammond and a team of SPPS teachers who have developed modules for each of the chapters and have done 1, 2, 3, and 5 - out of 8, and will be through all by May. Next year, in the school continuous improvement plan, every principal will have evidence based portion of the SCIP plan and help to monitor progress in culturally responsive spaces for students to be independent learners. Right now, we are with the leaders, and the feedback is excitement for the work of the future. We have also doubled down and purchased digital copies for every staff member also available soon.

The importance of buy-in from teachers to do this work in the classroom.

Data of teachers of color from October 1, 2019 when the plan was written was provided; Asian teachers: 293, 9% -- Asian students: 11,359, 31%, Target is 22% increase; Hispanic teachers: 130.2, 4% -- Hispanic students: 5,346, 14%; Target is 10% increase; Black teachers: 185.3, 6% -- Black students: 9,415, 25%, Target is 19%. There has been remarkable research about teachers of color in dreams, goals, and aspirations and the impact across the entire class. There is funding set out for it and working with the team and plans to bring to monitor. The timeline wraps up in 2023.

Where are we going to get all these teachers, and how do we balance this? How many are retiring a year? Response: Yes, we have some work to do regarding our teachers that reflect our student demographics. We are putting forth efforts and hiring a recruiter around intentional efforts to increase teacher candidate pool and administration. We are looking at recruitment and retention efforts. Over the last 5 years, there have been incremental increases and goal of 23% of teachers of color by 2023. We will be posting this position by the end of February and internal staff who have helped to grow our SUTR program also. Some of our retention efforts are taking work in our SUTR program around supporting residents as graduates with pair navigating and scaling up to support new teachers, and affinity groups, and also PD opportunities - how to help new teachers navigate and feel connected.

The other part is access to experienced teachers and high-quality teachers and licensed teachers with certain levels of tiered license - both internal and external. There were also additional details provided on the pathway program in grow your own partnerships within the district and outside, and pathway from high school through college to teaching. All 7 comprehensive high schools will be adding an education pathway with our own students and schools across the state. The other piece is community justice pathways in our high schools.

Director Kopp thanked staff for the presentation and happy to see the whole team join the meeting. Appreciate all the effort. The important of the alignment of our strategic plan, state plan, and priorities to make us more efficient and effective in student outcomes.

Appreciate the importance of having the book and using it. Excited to see that investment.

Questions around the literacy goal, and interested to know more about the support structure around early literacy and framework to help educators, and do we have an understanding of the why of our
literacy gaps, what’s missing or needed going forward? Response: Literacy team members shared information on a gap that has been remedied - phonics. There has also been a doubling down on the work around Readers and Writers Workshop and providing student opportunities for writing. We can’t focus on one without the other. Staff are leading up in this specialty area, and an explosion of brilliant ideas, and fast-moving plans, and determining what is next. Further details were provided on this team and the excitement of this team with teachers. The foundation in early learning and that 3rd grade literacy were shared, including the continuum of early learners in learning how to read and has 5 pillars associated with the science of reading. Practitioners learn those 5 pillars and a reader's workshop to meet the needs of the students on the continuum in specific groups of students, and plans for guided reading and differentiate with differentiated students - pre-emergent, emergent, early reader, and reader - and get to a point to accelerate kids using guided reading. One of the 5 pillars is phonics. The team has brought this program to SPPS and implemented it fully and happening in PreK-2, and differentiated on age, and go on to independent reading. When there are things we can’t explain, we diagnose and explain in the professional learning community and talk about class needs, and interventions for individual students and progress monitors and plans. We are one component away from a new literacy set of materials to reach standards and teach children - the mini-lesson. All those steps along the way will lead to the discovery and unfolding of reading and writing to express elves in choice and students experience. Access to the literacy plan was also noted, and readily available.

- Director Kopp noted appreciation for phonics, and reading and writing as part of independent learning.
- Director Marchese thanked staff for the presentation.
- Sense that we are learning while we are delivering under DL and in COVID, curious in thinking about changes to the plans, what we are learning about how students are learning in current environment, that is pushing the team to change, and using this opportunity to do different things than what was done before. How are we thinking about blending different modes of instruction in the strategic plan? What lessons are we learning from the current environment that will be incorporated into these plans? Response: Some of things we are looking at are the transition from a traditional classroom to a DL format, and interventions to combat those digressions in unfinished learning. We have learned that if we look at technology integration to create a traditional process of delivering instruction and personalize the learning experience for students. The pros are choice for students and allowing voice in learning and what works best. The drawback is shift in cultural learning so drastically, it was hard for families and students to adjust and will take time to the new culture of learning during COVID-19. The successes of DL environments and differentiation for learning in preference, style, and receiving information - we are anticipating that in online school for blended learning environment, and when we come back to traditional setting to incorporate strategies to leverage strategies as we come back into schools. It will take time to structure and PD to staff to do that work, and collaborating with leaders around leading instruction in different alignment.
- Wondering about clear about shortcomings of DL, and hope and beginning to think in ways in which to be helpful for particular groups of students who learn differently, or learning style, and hope to see the next generation of plan to integrate learning once processed so that it can be a part of transformational way of instructing students. We have offered voice and choice in technology and how teachers have adapted tools for students in special education, and the ability to do that. What do we take from now from DL that furthers that forward. Hear from comments in community, folks looking for different ways for children to be educated and online school, virtual learning, blended learning, project-based, learning offers other opportunities for other learning styles to be incorporated and hope to see that as laid out in the strategic plan and see evidence of it.
• Talking about increasing the proportion of teachers of color, and will have success in recruiting teachers of color for a variety of reasons, and how are we creating retention efforts, and how does it harmonize with existing contracts? Response: One of the things is looking at SUTR and trying to scale up, including PD efforts and mentoring. And a good point in looking at contracts and efforts to retain teachers of color. We do need to follow statute with limitations, and it is tenured teacher piece to look at to collaboratively have language to ensure students in our schools have licensed teachers who are ethnically diverse and similar to demographics.

• Know our teacher’s union will also speak to teacher diversity, but also opportunity for both to come to necessary agreements that demonstrate that commitment to keep teachers in our district. The results of changes in enrollment and learning environment, and those changes will affect the least senior teachers, and if we want to protect that group to nurture and sustain, we need to see that expressed in contract with our teacher’s union. Hope to see in future labor agreement for concrete action.

• One of the things difficult as parent to evaluate what their student will experience, and see strategic initiatives and specific components of the experience, a narrative or descriptive document is necessary for the qualitative experience for our students, and how it will look different - in a descriptive way. We need to tell the story about what we are trying to do, and hope descriptive work can be part of promotional materials, student recruiting, and be a part of the story of the district beyond the metric differences.

• Director Ellis noted the five schools, including Phalen that were racially identified schools in 2017. Today we have one - Phalen Lake. At the other schools, they were able to meet their achievement and integration targets. The reason Phalen Lake remained racially isolated is because the District was at 79% but students of color at Phalen Lake was 99%. They had to write specific steps and meet metrics. One was increasing the number of white parents invited to explore attending Phalen Lake to balance the integration, and did increase welcome meetings. It was about making efforts to address integration. As a result, they still remain in the new plan, that school will be racially isolated, and probably be joined by one additional - likely Jackson. The other four were Highwood Hills, Mississippi, Obama, Phalen Lake, and Riverview.

• They made a point to efforts to reach out to specific groups of families for integration, and want to be careful about calling effort versus what we’d like to see and what families choose, as opposed to trying to set it up in a way that makes it look like we’re doing the work. Hope that any family choosing SPPS wants to be here as opposed to meet criteria at a particular school. Response: The goal is written by the school with the team, and this is helpful feedback.

• She also noted SUTR and students interested in teaching, and given where we are, tensions around that career path. Wondering how we are thinking about that in how it shows up in college and career choices. How will that be felt by our students, and a potentially difficult career choice. Also for SUTR, are staff still thinking about it? Acknowledge there may be hesitations for that moving forward.

• In things that we stopped, but what may be stopped? Thinking about information and data we thought we’d have versus where we are and currently have at this point, wondering how we will base what we do next on data and information we do have, and what may stop or continue? Response: We are stopping 3 initiatives - includes talent development process, community schools as a hub, and setting up community programs that support students atkey points, parent support classes, etc. Within the work around the initiative of Evaluation, commitments are also being reviewed. Within 5a, we previously looked at about 100 commitments to review for effectiveness. We did come with preliminary recommendations for things to sunset, and we are taking this year to go deeper to look at more effectiveness data. The largest was what to sustain for this year, and will be collected more quantitative data using rosters from programs. There are also related to priority budget and Envision SPPS, as we bring those closer we may be looking at larger, districtwide commitments that we have invested in that may be sunsetted as well. We may adjust resources depending on the circumstance.
As we move forward and stronger instructionally, some practices will be stopped, and see reallocation of those resources to another priority area and will be brought to the Board, revision to the budget, or strategic plan report.

- There was mention of parent support and community schools, and urge to think carefully about how we are talking about parent support because we know how important families are, and even if we need to move things around, encourage us not to think parent support or engagement is something to do less of - need to continue to do more.
- SEAB Member Ali noted questions on the percentages of teachers of color - what percentage are classroom teachers? Response: We can pull that information and can provide that information.
- There is decrease in college enrollment, but increase in graduation rates. How does the data support that for students not pursuing post-secondary education. Response: It is part of the discussion regionally and across the nation. The hypothesis is that there is some interruption in college enrollment, with our metric as the Fall after graduation. It has been interrupted due to COVID, and there may be a delay on college enrollment in the Fall particularly because of the pandemic. We may see that pick up next year or the summer.
- With efforts to retain and recruit teachers of color from our own schools, academy-based programs for high schools. How could we further that to help other schools implement those programs? Response: That is exactly the initiative within college and career readiness which is being implemented to ensure there are pathways to create a solid pathway to certain pathways. We are looking at combining community justice and education pathways, and interconnectedness, knowing disproportionality exists. Thinking of education for teachers, school social workers, school psychology. Policy and expanding pathways in each pathway - explore courses for the pathway, and moving into further education to make it a broader area. There will be more focused advising at high school, and solid foundation is key and essential. Another outcome is increased concurrent enrollment opportunities where students earn college credit which increases opportunities for college and through college.
- Director Brodrick echoed Director Marchese’s comments around “transformational” and looking back to questions about the “how” - think what we have been promised in transformational mode, and consequently will be asking how we are being transformational.
- In talking about recruiting and retention of teachers, and discussion about teacher stranding - are there some legal questions involved in having that language in a teacher contract? Response: Heard in terms of retention strategy and attract and retain teachers of color, and if faced with staff reductions. How do we look at ways in which we can support teachers bringing into the district. Not about stranding which have prescribed steps. In layoffs, there is also language to be mindful of. When talking about reductions to workforce and new teachers are impacted, where we may need to non-renew for budgets and look at staff recruited in - for example SUTR residents in that decision based on investment. We may be able to look at that and adjust for those reductions in the workforce. We can look at ways to address that for non-renewals for budget predicaments.
- Last hired may be some of our very best, diverse, and energetic teachers, and many times with layoffs, find selves with young teachers who so much represent our student population, and it has been a problem for many years in districts across the country and also litigated in the courts and discussed a lot in legislature and Congress. Think as we struggle and anguish over this desire to have a teaching staff that resembles our student population, we want to do this in a fair manner and to all our stakeholders. We do need to be concerned about legal issues.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked the many teams and authors of plans within this presentation. He heard these themes: telling our story, what are we doing and what does the community know about our work and is an opportunity for us. One of the measures is the expectations and beliefs that we have for each other and our young people and how does that look in a strategic plan. In order for
families and students to benefit from our work, there needs to be wonderful knowledge, and look for any barriers to make it more accessible and effective. Grateful for the staff for their work, and a lot of changes since 2017, but foundation built as well. Appreciation to the Board for feedback and important to show united front to change outcomes for students, and ask to hold accountable.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Director Vue moved to adjourn the meeting; Director Brodrick seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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The meeting adjourned at 7:41 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