

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

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Via Telephonic Phone and Video Conference
Available Streaming Online at www.spps.org/boe**

**October 26, 2020
5:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

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

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; Cedrick Baker, Chief of Staff; Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer; Dave Watkins, Chief of Schools; 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; and Sarah Dahlke, Secretary to the Board

III. 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 Marchese.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Permission to Accept a CARES Subaward from the City of Saint Paul

BF 32248 Request for Permission to Accept a CARES Subaward from the City of Saint Paul

Superintendent Gothard noted the CARES funding from the City of Saint Paul to further our work in technology services. Staff then shared more information about how this money will be spent and how it came to be. This is a great opportunity and partnering with the City and building upon our relationship with LibraryGo to ensure students are receiving equitable access to distance learning in SPPS. We had originally applied for a partnership grant with Friends of St. Paul Library, and there was a high demand for those grants, and did not pan out. We worked with our city partners to come up with this opportunity to use 500,000 from CARES funding to support distance learning, including about 1000 codes for families to upgrade from hot spots to internet essentials, or broadband in their household for a 10-month period and opportunities to expand. Also, headsets for students, and earbuds for older students, as well as stylus, including a stylus crayon for our younger learners, and stylus pens for older students. We also have programming through our CTE pathways where devices are needed beyond the scope of an iPad, and able to purchase about 140 laptops that students can use during DL, and brought back to the school as mobile labs for students in CTE work. All connects with SPPS Achieves with equitable access and career pathways. Thanks to the City of Saint Paul and Representative Kaohly Her, and Catherine Pinkert, the Director of Libraries, and our grants team and technology services team and other partners in this work.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Marchese expressed appreciation to the City for allocating this CARES act funding and will be helpful to students and families and appreciate their assistance in support for our students.
- Director Ellis thanked the team and will make a huge difference for students to have wifi and more connectivity because it is important for better access.
- Director Brodrick thanked Mr. Ott and the City. He is grateful for the CARES Act.
- When we get help from the Federal government, and there are hoops to jump through, are we free from that and are things going smoothly? Are there obstacles to access these funds? Response: Since it is CARES funding, it's a subaward from the City and will require special reporting to the State and City, but there is a special coding to report when we receive a subaward of CARES funding. We will be able to do that very similar to other federal funds, and working with the grants office to take care of that. We currently don't see any issues for those purchases as soon as possible.
- Director Vue requested information on the timeframe for students to receive these supplies, and delivery to students. Response: We had hoped to align this with other materials packages, and with complications, we will be getting these in as quickly as possible, getting unpackaged, and to the schools for delivery as with other materials. The Grants team and Finance have pushed this through and quick turnaround time with the City for them to make their action steps immediately following the action tonight.
- We know the items we need, and are working to determine the process to spend monies appropriately to align to government guidelines. Chief Schrul provided further details on the timeline. As long as the City approves the application after tonight, the procurement will start immediately. Delivery will be dependent on the goods and availability, but turnaround can be within a day or two for the order, and will turn those orders and get them out by our procurement team. It's about packaging that and then deliver to the team. Hopefully within a couple weeks we should have these materials, and the connections rolled out with the technology team. Materials should be here within a couple weeks.
- Director Allen thanked the team for this work and appreciated the intentionality of enchanting the technology and what students need to focus into their work. Interested in advanced classes in

needing a laptop. Response: It is amazing through Project Lead the Way and other CTE classes, it varies from architecture, and advanced programming like app development. Laptops are needed for these courses, and the next level of tool to be robust, including computer programming. Most other courses like photography and video editing, the iPads work great.

- Director Allen also noted the tiny house program and youth building small homes and how it needs to expand.
- Director Kopp also thanked SPPS and the City. These grants and funding - there are a lot of hoops and work.
- Question about the spend by date, since it's a subaward, what does our spend by date look like? Response: The timeline is coming up quickly in November, and this approval and to the City and turnaround quickly is where we are at. It does need to be spent by December 1. Idrissa Davis has also been a key partner in technology and Comcast to ensure our families are connected.
- Director Foster thanked the District and City. She noted the comment about equity and equity is becoming very politicized, and this is very tangible, when talking about learning loss and academic digressing for students who may not have access. This is a united front to show what we can do to ensure there is equity in this community, and this is a real and tangible way to show this. Look forward to the ongoing work.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked Mr. Ott. This is another partnership opportunity to wrap our arms around each other with kids at the center.

MOTION: Director Foster moved that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to accept a subaward from the City of Saint Paul to provide technical support to distance learning; to accept subaward; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents. The motion was seconded by Director Allen.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

B. Request to Award Contract for PeopleSoft 9.2 Upgrade Implementation Services

BF 32249 Request to Award Contract for PeopleSoft 9.2 Upgrade Implementation Services

Superintendent Gothard noted this is a large contract item, and shared a few details on this item. This is a situation where we have become so good at taking what is available and customizing for our needs, including finance. Anytime we look to change or innovate, or provide updates, it takes a very specific customization to do that. We are learning with PeopleSoft 9.1, it isn't possible to do this anymore to operate as a 21st century organization. This has been a long time coming, and happy with the timing, and need to look at how we are supporting from a user standpoint, and consumer in how folks interact with SPPS. This is a timely and necessary upgrade for SPPS. Chief of Finance Marie Schrul then provided additional details. This is a request to award a contract for PeopleSoft 9.2 for implementation services. She then provided background information on this system. The last upgrade was in 2013. In April 2020, we published a request for proposal to seek vendor proposal for the upgrade and consulting

services. They are specific to assist with the upgrade. This is a planned item in the FY21 budget, and in priority based budgeting. This upgrade does allow to provide continued system report, tax updates, implementing the automated timekeeping, and benefits and recruiting. Executive Director Kenyatta McCarty also provided additional information. One of the goals in HR was to increase our efficiency using technology, and amazing capabilities possible through the job application process, or the ability to do application through devices, and that will make us competitive with other districts. Recruitment is one of the challenges we have, and this will help to be more efficient. There are also other capabilities for more efficient work.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Marchese thanked the team for their work.
- Director Ellis noted questions about the upgrades and in the budget for FY21 and have been planning. We were making changes and because of the pandemic and tracking information? Response: One of the items during this time quickly shifted to be able to determine a way for staff to send timecards, and there is behind the scenes work of the team every pay period, but may look automated to staff. We were able to do something that looked like an electronic timecard and has allowed staff to become accustomed to the process. Yes, the pandemic did force us to make those changes sooner.
- Will there be a PeopleSoft 9.3, and will there be an additional cost later? Response: 9.2 is it as far as numerical designations of PeopleSoft. When we did the contract, there was a 5 year contract with Oracle and our price is locked in for at least 2 more years. We will continue to get upgrades and PUMS at no charge, and the price for the annual subscription will stay the same for at least 2 more years.
- Director Brodrick noted that this is something we need to do, but explain more about the necessity to do this and how much more money does this impact our budget? Response: The impact on the district's budget, and we know this project will be a year long implementation. We have been planning ahead, and part of that was in the priority based budgeting process, and knew part of the year would overlap and set aside funding for almost half the project for FY21. A project this size will cost for the implementation - we already have the software and the system. Assisting the district with the expertise to provide the assistance in HR and Finance to upgrade from 9.1 to 9.2, and is the services, which is approximately \$2,000,000 in implementation services in providing that assistance. The reason why this project is necessary, along with the main points previously mentioned, there are customizations in 9.1 and the current system we have, we need to get continued support, and that 9.1 is currently outdated. The District is upgrading to 9.2, we have etax updates, and those are required as a District to get our tax updates to provide essential human resources data. Also, there are additional feature in 9.2 with recruiting and benefits, and providing more essential services. On the Finance side of procurement, project costing, accounts payable, and additional features there. It's important to always look at the business process and through this, and look at 2013 and 8 years later, and the business processes and what has changed, and change where we need to change, and customizations. This is a \$2M project, and have been planning for it and is in the budget.
- Director Marchese noted in being the perennial fiscal watchdog, and the responses make him feel confident in this move for SPPS.
- Director Vue noted some services by 9.2, and wanting to know how Elire will work with our departments in consulting, and what they are providing. Response: They provide the technical expertise. SPPS has a staff of 4 to manage the PeopleSoft system. They have experience and background in PeopleSoft and dive into our specific needs, and implementing new features and functionality.

- Will they be providing a team to work with our team? Response: Yes, there will be a team with both HCM and a Finance side of members. Each will more geared specific to areas of the application - such as AR, AP, and benefits, and the resources we need for each areas of PeopleSoft.
- Director Allen noted questions about feedback from those using this system the most? Response: We currently have the majority of paraprofessionals using timesheet e-form. It has been really helpful to be able to use that and learned a lot with what we need to be doing and set up electronic timekeeping and workflow behind it. As part of implementing the electronic timesheet and implement going forward, we do start with small groups and feedback from staff to ensure we are hitting all the needs from every angle, and not only convenient for one group of folks. We are compiling data as we go and as we continue to implement our electronic timekeeping.
- Director Kopp noted questions about the start date of the project, and anticipated launch date? Or rolled out in stages? Response: The original start date was in June, and anticipating to start in November knowing still need to go through contractual signing, and anticipating a little longer than a year, and not hit at year end or payroll processing, or step on the fiscal year rollover, and looking at February 2022 to go live. Unfortunately we can't roll out in phases with both HCM and Finance - they need to stay together and at the same time.
- Superintendent thanked the team and a major project across departments, but will impact all staff across the district. Look forward to a 21st century approach to the functions.

MOTION: Director Foster moved that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to award the contract to the best value vendor proposal, Elire, Inc, for the scope of work for the upgrade to PeopleSoft 9.2 for SPPS at a cost not to exceed \$1,999,290. The motion was seconded by Director Brodrick and Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

C. Assistant Director - Title IX, Family Engagement and Community Partnerships

BF 32250 Assistant Director - Title IX, Family Engagement and Community Partnerships

Chief Baker then led the Board through the rationale for change in title, and aligns us with state law and our workforce to ensure we are doing this to the best of our abilities and skills of our staff. He started by grounding the Title IX, which is gender-based, sex-based discriminations, and generally handled in Equal Opportunity Office, and new regulations from US Department of Education that provided more insight and parameters around who could or could not participate in those investigations, and needed to adhere to 3 areas:

- Must highlight a Title IX coordinator
- Needed a decision maker (separate)
- Needed a staff member to hear appeals (separate)

Megan Sheppard would be the contact for that work, but the regulations changed who could do what role, and some could not be held by the same person. It made most sense for Ms. Sheppard to be the

decision maker based on her legal background, and also needed a Title IX coordinator. These are federally unfunded mandates that needed to comply in a short amount of time, and felt that Ms. Dana Abrams, our Senior Ombudsperson, to be the most appropriate person for that role. Chief Baker also noted that Ms. Abrams has worked for the district for many years, and has connected with many parents and families and supporting students. Her presence is noticed in the community, and many parents come to her with questions, and done a great job being a bridge and getting them information from different departments. We felt this was a great fit, and the timeframe for new federal regulations, and with the changes that needed to happen, with changes in OFECP, and all together, felt that Ms. Abrams would be the person for this. Our request is to approve the appointment, and think her understanding of SPPS, and her current work along with the mandated regulations now in effect and she has said yes to the coordinator position, and changes that Ms. Kilgore was planning to make it in OFECP.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Marchese noted he understands the logic behind this decision, and that Dana Abrams is a treasure to the community and our district. She has done amazing work for many years and a resource for thousands of folks in this community. She has always operated with compassion and sincerity, authenticity and diligence, and excited to see her and know will do it well and recognized with more status and compensation is well deserved.
- Director Ellis congratulated Ms. Abrams. Does that mean the current position will no longer exist in the District? Response: No way would we remove the ombudsperson work -that is something unique and wonderful to SPPS. Dana in her new role will continue to handle the really complicated cases that are tough and need her expertise. She will also serve in Title IX coordinator. We will backfill with an assistant with navigational and less complex ombudsperson cases, for no loss or any less service than typically provided. We have an existing vacancy in the office, and adjust to be able to fill that role.
- Director Ellis noted knowing Ms. Abrams in the community, and has been on an island all on her own, and hoping in this new position that she will be fully supported; and everyone to wrap around our students and families is important, and to also wrap around the folks supporting our students and families in the community. Am very excited for Ms. Abrams, but on the District to ensure we are supporting her in this role. This is something new and building upon what we already have, and ensure she is fully supported because our families need the support from those they already know and recognize.
- Director Brodrick noted that Ms. Abrams is a jewel, and he has known her for many years. He also requested further information on the ombudsperson role, knowing that Dana can help them with the difficult items. Response: Dana will continue to be the ombudsperson - she is the expert problem solver. The new person will be an assistant to her. When a parent has a concern, they call a single phone number. Parents will still call the same number, but the assistant will pick up the phone and solve the simple issues. Then we will hand off to Dana the complex cases - she has about 400 a year where she is needing to be in meetings and back and forth, and worked together on her workload so that she can still manage those complex cases, and indicated she needs someone to manage the simpler issues.
- Director Brodrick noted the history of the ombudsperson role - and that person who is in between folks with concerns and the District. Dana has done a wonderful job of fulfilling that important role. In that role, when turning folks over to that role, he has felt completely assured she understood she was to be an advocate for that concern to the District. That ombudsperson is supposed to have a certain amount of sovereignty and autonomy from the District or allowed to exercise that. When the assistant to Dana handles the original contacts with folks asking for that service, that person will need to act like Dana, and not want to see person immersed in the District - want to maintain that new person as

a true advocate for the people they are representing, and the interest of the District. Ms. Abrams has many relationships in the community, and because folks trust her, they also trust the district, which is so important. Response: We understand and agree on the autonomy of the position, and the support needed to ensure that we do our best as a department and District to ensure she is successful in this transition. The autonomy of the role will not change, and also pledged that we support her to ensure she is successful in that role.

- Director Vue requested a meeting with Ms. Abrams to further discuss her role.
- Director Allen noted she is glad Ms. Abrams is getting the assistance needed.
- Director Kopp echoed her colleagues about how wonderful Ms. Abrams is for this community, and if everyone could feel the way about the District the way folks feel after interacting with Ms. Abrams, it would be a wonderful world and a great model for all. Congratulations to Ms. Abrams.
- Director Foster noted her experience in accessing the ombudsperson resource, and workloads of staff, and speaks to support and assistance is so important. Utmost respect for Ms. Abrams for her work in this District, and respect in which she has done it and sincerity and regard to those families perspectives and values. Trust her leadership to bring in an assistant to support that role and find the right match for those to work together and continue this role to continue to support our staff, students, and families. Congratulations and look forward to this new role and being compliant.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked everyone, and happy to have Ms. Abrams with her experience and knowledge of our community, and the Federal law changing and thought through that in this pandemic, and took the recent class on Schoology and the thought and details to ensure we all follow the law and report accordingly. This is an organizational change to put community, students, and staff to have support when needed. He noted his experience in working with Ms. Abrams as an ombudsperson and the thoughtful way to approaching situations, and willing to engage and attempt to solve any problem, and her values that align with both the Superintendent and our organization, and is happy to be able to do this.
- Director Brodrick noted that he sees the role of the ombudsperson as almost direct support for the school board, as a whole and individual board members. He realized that every one of us has used the ombudsperson as a support person for us. This particular personnel move is more that affects our board work on a regular basis and has leaned on Ms. Abrams to help with conflicts.

MOTION: Director Foster moved that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to Appoint the current Senior Ombudsperson, Dana Abrams, to the position of Assistant Director of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis and Director Allen.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

V. ADJOURNMENT

Director Foster moved to adjourn the meeting; Director Ellis seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 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