

**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**

**September 14, 2020
5:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Jeanelle Foster, Vice Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; 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; K. Thao, Board Administrator; 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 Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Gothard began the meeting with a recap of the items, including memorandums with SPFE in opening the school year, as well as a brief presentation around financial levy information.

Executive Director McCarty then provided more details on the below memorandums. The MLL MOU was a part of the bargaining in the past year for additional FTEs based on student ratios for caseloads for MLL teachers. In looking at the number and going into COVID, we knew there would be changes to this MOU and allow us to move forward in this school year. We settled with 10 FTEs to compensate for overages, and worked through it with SPFE over the course of the summer.

Further information on Distance Learning was also shared, and including details on the distance learning model of synchronous versus asynchronous, and EAs and SCSP staff, as well as information regarding improvement plans and TD&E for staff. It is more specified for Distance Learning.

A summary of the MOU with Teamsters was also shared.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:

- Director Vue noted questions around the timeline by which it was put together for the District and Union. Response: This did take quite a bit of time for DL 2.0. We started the conversation mid-late July to go through items to finalize for the Fall. Some of the items were existing, so they were being clear about the shifts in how we are providing instruction for students. We tried to meet weekly to go through this document. We spent a lot of time on item J which was lengthy - to be broad enough to address different school settings, but specific enough about how students will receive instruction. It was an area to look at language and ensure our intent matched the interpretation. We will be negotiating hybrid, and spending devoted time to focus on the MOU completion well in advance of the District moving to a hybrid model.
- Director Allen noted the evaluation of tenured teachers and requested clarification. Response: It is involving TD&E for all tenured teachers. The tenured teachers this year will not be doing a summative evaluation, but all other components. We have new software called PowerSchool that is going into effect, and as we move forward staff will have a chance to utilize that, learn, and navigate through it. Next Fall, we will be back to our once every three year evaluation rotation to have their summative evaluation by their building administrators.
- Director Kopp requested further information on the distance learning MOU. There is no requirement for synchronous instruction for academic content instruction? Response: The intent is that there is there would be regular synchronous and asynchronous opportunities, with synchronous including academic and SEL connections. Dr. Gothard also provided details on the previous iterations and sametime scheduled learning. He wanted us to try to provide regular, frequent structure for our students' days and weeks. We continue to learn and gather feedback to ensure it is meaningful and every opportunity to account for specialized schedules, and also ensure being clear about expectations around supports, teachers are available. Reports note that sametime learnings do not work for all students, and not all students can make them for a variety of reasons. We want to ensure we are identifying a concern to support, and to be possible for students to show up at the same time. It is about finding a balance and other creative opportunities and being clear and trying to support. He made a commitment to improve from the Spring, and support staff to do their very best in delivering that.
 - Director Kopp noted this is incredibly complex and appreciated the flexibility for schools. Also know that can create opportunities for parents to compare, which can be frustrating, but hoping to learn from different place and identify what is working. She also shared that in thinking about appreciate office hours and availability and making connections, and thinking about the student who won't reach out if not in relational space with peers and teacher, and interested to see how that develops, and thinking about different types of learning, and their struggles, or not

remembering. We will continue to evolve and get better, and think about all learners and age groups. Are we informally going to ask educators to self-report and their perceptions about success or student success to gauge if there are some things working better than others, and ways to identify that? Response: There was a lot of good will and shared agreement about conversation to treat teachers as professionals and their judgement, and also agreed upon regular instruction. In scheduling, principals have gathered to review them, and offered feedback from Admin and teachers, and looking for ideas for what teachers are seeking. Grade levels have also come together for consistency. As a nod to the professionalism, teachers and principals are working through that with families.

- Folks are still wondering, what was shared helps that teachers are talking with each other. It can feel very remote as a parent, and to lift that and show to families that there is collaboration, it is reassuring, and thanks for sharing and bringing to community. Also grateful the spirit of negotiations was positive to grow together.
- Director Marchese noted questions and observations.
- Want there to be clarity on the start of negotiations with SPFE and how long the process too. Response: This MOU began in the Spring when first in distance learning, and making modifications. In mid-July we started to go into the details, and also waiting for word from the Governor. Once we received those guidelines, we met 1-2x per week for 60-90 minutes. There was one week with Admin Academy where we were unable to meet. We finalized the overview on the 9th of September with both parties agreeable to the language changes, and were comfortable sharing with all.
- This was September 9th that is was finalized and the start of the semester, and crux of the concerns and information for families. That is difficult for families when there was discernment for the model for their children, and options. Worry about this in terms of expectations of experience that families were expecting, with full gratitude to working through this in real time. This is heightened because of the uncertainty with families and caregivers. Troubling that it came down to that - as an observations, meant that families contacted by various folks who were unclear. This isn't prescriptive as to what teachers are supposed to do - it is left to the judgement of the teachers, and hope they will use the best judgement for students. Need to address the process moving forward, and discussing for hybrid teaching and in-person and next models. If there is no communication to parents and community about where things are, it does not will trust at this time. It is something that speaks to Administration and SPFE as something to be done to bring the community more information. There is a perception of not being transparent that may sometimes be there, and do not want to deplete from folks' goodwill to that during this time when there is a lot of communication around this issue.
- These are not typically held in a public venue similar to contract bargaining in the start? Response: That is correct.
- Concerns about possibility to make public members ot observe, or updated information around this? Recognize it's not negotiating the main agreement, but when start to negotiating main agreement, it starts in public, and goes to private if mediation. Start with public conversation. If going to have teh District and Union expressing their beliefs, think there is a need to have community aware and be able to observe when those are happening. This is ultimately the District and Union coming to an agreement, but want to avoid folks filling in the gaps, and want that to be reflecting accurate information. Right now, folks are making decisions int his different environment, and owe our community an enhanced level of transparency. It needs to be done in a way that builds trust, and recognize that SPFE also needs to be in agreement, and there are stakeholders directly involved and those choices impact the choices of others. He noted that there have been concerns expressed to board members, and hope that superintendent updated to inform about sessions and updates provided in public format for the ability to understand what is happening to build trust.

- We received an official letter from SPFE On August 3rd to begin negotiating this MOU. From that time forward, there has not been an off time. In terms of when we come together, the expectations were shared, and others held leftover from the spring, with the notion it had to be better, and look at everything. We can work on joint statements to come out from it, but gearing towards moving us forward. Superintendent will go back to the team and express that, and expectations for hybrid already started, and will not accept this to be a holdout for this transition, including this tight timeframe.
- Director Marchese also noted the expectations of board members, and speaking to level of concern and places board members in difficult positions, in not knowing all the details, it would be inappropriate to speak on the topic without all the knowledge to represent the content and context in discussions they are not involved. We want those most knowledgeable to be communicating accurate information. Request to be transparent for community to listen to the discussions. Chief Turner also noted the public accountability and the public relations and perceptions of those conversations between the District and Union. The changes and impact of a public meeting was also noted to the discussions and conversations. Our community members and parents are yearning for information, and should do what is possible to make that happen.
- Director Brodrick echoed Director Marchese's concerns, with the continued dilemma of the Board to be voices for the community, and expect to voice concerns of the Community to the District, and not necessarily expect to be the voice of the District to the Community. Do find selves in difficult role and position in terms of communication. Dilemma of school board members.
- One of the items mentioned is that the MOU is for SY20-21, does this MOU continue with the hybrid MOU? How does a transition of shift affect this MOU? Response: It is a yes-and, because right now our district is in distance learning only, and as we move into hybrid, there may be some schools that may be hybrid and some still distance learning. The hybrid MOU may take components of this existing MOU that may go forward, or situation where some staff only doing distance learning still following that MOU, and others following the hybrid MOU depending on the model.
- How does this overlap with the timeline of the two upcoming dates of potential transition? Response: Both parties are bringing the documents to their respective leaders to review. Our goal is to immediately start on conversations for the hybrid MOU, understanding that September 25th is the deadline. We do have dates to start having conversations. We talked about devoting specific time for that to discuss items and language to review. Both parties will be bringing language. We are very clear on the September 25th date. We are moving towards what was presented with hybrid, using metrics and numbers. Our efforts have turned towards planning for a hybrid schedule, all the while implementing Distance Learning 2.0.
- Director Ellis noted that it is important those two dates are out in community - September 25th and October 14th. What we're sharing with families and more information they have is helpful in planning. The many different schools we have, distance learning looks different for each of our families, and the information may not align with what we know from school buildings, including what comes next, and the metrics to guide those decisions. It all feels very gray. At what point are we going to be talking about the District in what hybrid means, and how those pieces come together in MOUs and schedules, and staffing. We need to be thoughtful with the folks we need to take with us as we move forward. Response: We have been presenting the hybrid schedule for weeks, based on the guidelines from MDE and MDH. We need to be assured we have the detailed resources to do that, and what we are continuing to do down to the school, student, and family level. The 25th and 14th are the dates of the decision to get details settled.
 - Further communication and clarification around those dates is important. Following MEA break and start of 2nd quarter would be the dates that students are back in buildings in hybrid. Also important that one isn't stopping because another model is starting.

- Superintendent Gothard thanked the team, and reports on MOUs and negotiations, and collaboration between expertise, governance and student achievement.

A. Memorandum of Agreement Regarding: EL Teacher Caseload

BF 32184 Memorandum of Agreement Regarding: EL Teacher Caseload

MOTION: Director Foster moved approval of the Memorandum of Agreement Regarding: EL Teacher Caseload. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

B. Memorandum of Understanding Between Saint Paul Public Schools and Saint Paul Federation of Educators Licensed Staff/Teachers, Educational Assistants, and School and Community Service Professionals

BF 32185 Memorandum of Understanding Between Saint Paul Public Schools and Saint Paul Federation of Educators Licensed Staff/Teachers, Educational Assistants, and School and Community Service Professionals

MOTION: Director Foster moved approval of the Memorandum of Understanding Between Saint Paul Public Schools and Saint Paul Federation of Educators Licensed Staff/Teachers, Educational Assistants, and School and Community Service Professionals. The motion was seconded by Director Marchese.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

C. School Finance and Levy 101

Chief Financial Officer, Marie Schrul, then provided a finance and levy background to the Board of Education, and to provide framework and schedule for levy certification. Information presented included finance and property tax basics, levy impacts, the levy process, levy timing, and levy categories. The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee meeting on September 28th was noted, with the City, County, and SPPS enrollment figures.
- Enrollment will be a determining factor within levy, and information on that impact. Response: Enrollment, there are formulas within the levy, and examples were provided, including the referendum by per pupil. In our enrollment impact continues to change, we have accounted for the enrollment changes in the projections for the levy. There will be levy adjustments on a per pupil basis. If there is an increase with the virtual or hybrid scenarios, there would be a levy adjustment to increase the referendum funding. It could change either way. The referendum is one of the largest per pupil impacts to our levy, with other smaller impacts.
- How do the changes to property taxes, which impacts the referendum, impact the levy and the District? Response: The property tax payments still pending or waiting to be collected - we received our May payment and just shy of \$2M short on payments anticipated for the first half for property taxes. The County offered a payment plan to those qualified. We can still collect on those, and the County is working on the October collections. We can still collect, and the County will fund for the second half. Right now, it is unknown for the second half of property tax collections until October. The first half of the year was pretty solid. We need to be mindful of the impacts with COVID. The District is in a state where we do have funding and have to mindfully plan with our resources, and if there are impacts, we will need to come back to the Board, and have that plan in place for the revenue collection.
- For the areas to monitor, are those areas monitored by board members to determine the ceiling? Response: Those are areas Finance will monitor, and give recommendations to monitor through December for impacts. Recommendations will be brought to the Board for an initial ceiling, and continue to refine the numbers with enrollment and data from the State. There may be additional information showing on those reports with the updated data. We will continue to monitor enrollment, and highlights for items to note and the Board to be aware of that are higher level areas to be mindful of, and continue to watch, even after the certification of the levy in December. Mindset of planning for the future and action plans if there are changes.
- Clarification on the impacts to the ceiling.
- It seems that a lot of the factors are things that SPPS is subject to - is there anything to do as a District to get ahead of the numbers? Response: There is a fine line between property tax levy, and we are subject to market conditions, with property tax base, referendum based on market value and enrollment, and indicators and calculations and factors that are external forces to plan ahead for and be mindful. There are areas, such as enrollment to try to plan for, and try to be mindful including in bond refundings to save the District. There are ways to mitigate the levy and long term costs, and will push to the Board when possible.
- There was clarification on the commercial property and their taxes, which is based on their property value, similar to a residential or apartments and the value of the overall property. Director Allen noted concerns about a substantial piece of property in the Midway, and protected number around the civil unrest and the businesses that have closed down? Response: We will be receiving more information and will be added to future presentations, and the lack of soccer games, and the businesses along University.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked Chief Schrul for her work and the team to work with community partners and governmental partners.

Superintendent Gothard also noted that the Special Education memorandum will be brought to the Board at a future meeting, and at the September 8th meeting, there were updates to the MOU, and thanked the team for their work as well.

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 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