

**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**

**April 27, 2020
5:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by Jeanelle Foster, Vice Chair

II. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: M. Xiong, C. Allen

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; Cedrick Baker, Chief of Staff; Dave Watkins, Chief of Schools; Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer; Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer; Kevin Burns, Director of Communications; Hans Ott, Executive Director, Office of Digital and Alternative Education; Craig Anderson, Executive Director, Office of Teaching and Learning; Andrew Collins, Assistant Superintendent; Kaying Thao, Administrator to the Board; 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 Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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| Director Xiong | Absent |
| Director Allen | Absent |
| Director Kopp | Yes |
| Director Marchese | Yes |
| Director Ellis | Yes |
| Director Foster | Yes |
| Director Brodrick | Absent (muted) |

III. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON CROSSROADS MONTESSORI AND CROSSROADS SCIENCE SCHOOL CALENDAR

Superintendent Gothard introduced this topic, and noted that we continue to monitor several decisions that are atypical in the circumstances of COVID-19, and the series of executive orders as it pertains to the operations and governance of the District. One is the decision around intercession dates at Crossroads Montessori and Science. He also noted the recent news of May 3 and May 4 as planning days with no student contact. There are conversations around the last day of school, but this piece will not impact that, but allow us to have school contact days through the currently scheduled intercession with Crossroads being a year-round school. The Crossroads intercession and modification document was referenced.

One of the unique programs in SPPS is Crossroads Elementary School which functions on a year-round calendar with intercession breaks spread throughout the year. Due to the planning that was necessary to launch distance learning, the calendar has looked different. Reasons for these changes include spring break, which typically Crossroads would have been in session, however staff were able to use that week to launch the distance learning platform the following Monday. Each year, by statute, we must ensure that students have 165 contact days. The challenge and opportunity is determining a way forward for 5 extra days, with the current schedule at 160 days. The concerns of parents and staff were also noted, as well as ways to keep students engaged.

The recommendation action is to take the first week of the upcoming intercession, the week of May 11th, and take those five days of intercession (intercessions are typically 3 weeks long) for student contact days. The format and engagement for teachers and students was also reviewed. With this late change, we are working with families if students are unable to attend, and proactively excusing absences and holding them harmless. In terms of communication to families, that will be very important. There has been cross-functional work to gather different perspectives, and finding 100% agreement in any situation is difficult and to put together a student centered plan that maintains our level of commitment and integrity promised to parents and families at the start of the year. Another layer of this, is that over half of the activities during intercession are ALC funded, and we don't have the authority to offer targeted services. We are working with the Department of Alternative Education, Digital Learning, and Office of Teaching and Learning for additional activities posted for students to participate during intercession. Conversations have also involved the Office of Specialized Services, and Multi-Lingual learning, and support from district staff in outreach for those additional days. More context was also provided including work days for staff as identified in the contract. Teachers will be working with leaders in OTL and across the district to allow for a guest teacher for the week, and will be shared with parents and families prior to conferences.

Superintendent Gothard noted the amount of cross-district collaboration for us to arrive at this recommendation. It is complicated, and there is not an easy solution. We do not want to overburden anyone, and will hold staff, students, and families harmless from any decision created by this discussion due to the potential of previous plans during those intercession dates.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:

- Director Marchese thanked everyone for their work in this complicated issue and to find the right way to move forward, with compromises of requests from folks who have emailed and sent feedback. Clear about the urgency for this request because it impacts the ability to have enough days in the calendar because school is already short, and being able to make them up at the back end is not an option. The expedited MOU to change the work calendar for staff in the building was also noted, with the logistics of needing to change the work calendar would add time to make this decision, given the intercession is coming up quickly.
- There will still be intercession days with intercession activities? Response: Correct, that will be part of the communication shared with families, that enrichment activities will be shared that

students can participate. There would need to be a modified work calendar, and getting 100% agreement from all parties would impact this agreement for students, and the time to get communication to all parents and families. Once this intercession concludes, there are no other days except around the 4th of July holiday and we will run out of days to make up and teach through.

- This is more complicated than people think, and there's a perception that this is a simple decision. It's complex, with many details. It is critical part of communication to show the choices and the ramifications, and a simplified version of the logistical details will be helpful for the Crossroads community to understand this issue, and to be clear with them on why it creates difficulty and can't get complete buy-in and the issues later on in the school year in making up days due to the holiday. Communication in a clear and simplified format would be helpful, and understanding the rationale.
- Board members noted confusion on this topic because it is very complex, and directed Administration to look into ways for community members to be informed on the complexity of this situation and the necessity to make this decision, and ensure teachers are aware as well.
- Director Foster also noted the complexity of this decision, and thanked the team for their details, and for being grounded in state statute and student-centeredness.
- It was also noted that we are not only trying to determine the school year and follow statute, but also look for creative ways to work together on a solution for the schedule to be supported. None of this will be perfect, but the response and communication to all stakeholders will be important as we do the very best for our students, staff, families, and community.
- Assistant Superintendent Collins recapped the recommendation - modify the previously approved board calendar for Crossroads to include that the week of May 11-May 15 will be identified as five new student contact days for students at Crossroads. Because of the changes in the calendar, students will be held harmless. The calendar change requires board approval, and the state statute requires 165 days of student contact. Those five days will be staffed by guest teachers that will be paired with classroom teachers to continue engagement with students and posting assignments for Crossroads students. Enrichment activities will also be sent, for the students' official return from intercession on June 1st.
- How many teachers will be paired with guest teachers? Response: Approximately 30 teachers.
- Director Brodrick also requested information about the different options presented by those who emailed the Board and staff, and how would doing it different affect the learning of the students, and the advantages of the different perspectives and options.

MOTION: Director Foster moved to approve the recommendation to amend the Crossroads Montessori and the Crossroads Science school calendar by adding the recommended five additional student contact days of May 11, 2020 through May 15th, 2020. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis and Director Marchese.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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| Director Xiong | Absent |
| Director Allen | Absent |
| Director Kopp | Yes |
| Director Marchese | Yes |
| Director Ellis | Yes |
| Director Foster | Yes |
| Director Brodrick | Yes |

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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|-------------------|--------|
| Director Xiong | Absent |
| Director Allen | Absent |
| Director Kopp | Yes |
| Director Marchese | Yes |
| Director Ellis | Yes |
| Director Foster | Yes |
| Director Brodrick | Yes |

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 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