

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
June 4, 2013

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Ms. Seeba, Ms. O'Connell, Mr. Brodrick, Ms. Street-Stewart, Ms. Carroll, Ms. Doran, Superintendent Silva, Mr. Lalla, General Counsel and Ms. Polsfuss, Assistant Clerk

Mr. Hardy arrived at 4:09 p.m.

ABSENT: Ms. Doran

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Ms. Street-Stewart moved the Board approved the order of the agenda for the special meeting on non-renewals. Ms. Seeba seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with the following roll call vote:

Ms. Seeba	Yes
Mr. Hardy	Absent
Ms. O'Connell	Yes
Mr. Brodrick	Yes
Ms. Street-Stewart	Yes
Ms. Carroll	Yes
Ms. Doran	Absent

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Action on Non-Renewal of Probationary Teachers

This year there were a total of 36 employees recommended for non-renewal. (35 Teachers and 1 Assistant Principal). Of the 35 teachers, 9 chose to resign prior to their recommendation for non-renewal going to the Superintendent. The Assistant Principal candidate held tenure rights back to a teaching position and has subsequently taken a new position for next year. Three of the non-renewals were due to licensure issues the remaining were for performance.

The purpose of June 4, 2013 special board meeting was to ask for Board approval for the non-renewal of the probationary teachers. The Data Privacy Act prevents discussion of individual data, thus only summary data was provided. MN Statute 122A.41 (cities of the first class) applies to Saint Paul Public Schools. This law defines the probationary period as the first three (3) years of consecutive employment. During the probationary period, any annual teaching contract may or may not be renewed, for any reason. Subd. 4 (b) states "a probationary teacher is deemed to have been reemployed for the ensuing school year, unless the school board gives written notice before July 1 of the termination of employment." Therefore, all non-renewed teachers must be notified prior to July 1.

The probationary period is a time for the District and the employee to determine if the employment relationship is meeting their expectations. Even though SPPS may non-renew for any reason, common reasons include:

- License (not fully licensed for the position which they hold)
- Performance - not meeting expectations (effective instruction, classroom management, team work/professional behavior).
- Budget – vacancies are fewer than needed to place current staff.
- Some combination or other relevant reasons (training)

All teachers recommended for non-renewal are notified in writing and given the option to meet with their Assistant Superintendent to discuss the reasons for the non-renewal. Assistant Superintendents then make their recommendations to the Superintendent. This year, like last year, probationary teachers recommended for non-renewal were given the option to resign their employment prior to their Assistant Superintendent making their recommendation to the Superintendent.

This year 10 (of which seven resigned) probationary teachers recommended for non-renewal were supported through the Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR). These teachers worked with a PAR-consulting teacher who provided significant coaching and mentoring during the school year. Both the PAR consultant and the principal evaluated these teachers and the PAR consultant made a recommendation for non-renewal to the PAR Board. The PAR Board then provided recommendations to the Superintendent.

Teachers not served by PAR receive a minimum of two observations, which are reviewed with the teacher and are provided assistance if not meeting standards of effective teaching. Supports include mentors and professional development.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- A Board member expressed appreciation for the on-going adjustments to the process, observations, evaluation, PAR participation, mentors, etc. All reflect SPPS's commitment to excellence.
- There was discussion regarding personnel at Bridgeview.
- When the non-renewals come to the Superintendent for nonrenewal, do the assistant superintendents present the information? Does she go through each non-renewal? Response: No, the Superintendent has been working with the people at the sites and has input from the Assistant Superintendents and the principals so she is aware of the various situations. When PAR does not recommend renewal, the Superintendent is notified immediately along with SPFT. The whole reason for all the observations, professional development and mentoring is to ensure SPPS is keeping the right teachers in front of students and if a probationary teacher is not meeting standards of effective teaching the non-renewal process is brought into play.
- 36 people are being non-renewed and nine chose to resign prior to the recommendation going to the Superintendent. Is that correct? Response: Yes, that is correct.
- What is the total number of probationary teachers? Response: 756. This year the total non-renewals represent the lowest percentage in the last seven years. Various comparative numbers were provided.
- Do these overall numbers reflect SPPS doing its best to nurture as many as possible? Response: Yes. The job of education is getting more difficult overall, demands are changing and almost all educational systems are operating somewhat behind the times. SPPS is in the forefront in the state in having had its principals conducting over 11,000 observations in the classrooms this year. Administrators are much more aware of what is happening in classroom than five years ago. The SPPS retention rate for teachers is very good, in the higher 90%. This means teachers are choosing to stay in the system.
- The teachers not certified by PAR, what is the process? Response: Principals know they must have done one observation of all of their teachers by the end of November and another later on. Informal check-ins are also done along with the two formal observations.

Coaches in the schools or from the Center provide support for teachers in need of it. Principals know what is happening in their schools and what teacher performance is.

- What were the demographics of the non-renewed teachers? Response: Of the 26 non-PAR, there was one Asian, one Black and four Hispanic; the remainder were Caucasian.
- How many were Special Ed? Response: Five.
- If these teachers are not notified by July 1 they become tenured? Response: Yes, if they are in their third year.
- Why the June 11 date then, what is the action required of the Board? Response: June 11 represents the last day teachers are in the schools. The action required of the Board is to approve the list of non-renewals. Then, HR can notify the individuals of their non-renewal prior to June 30.
- Is there a different process for Special Ed teachers, especially those in highly specialized programs? Response: The Executive Director of Special Education is involved as well as Special Ed supervisors and the school principals. Administration also encourages input from all who have done observations in the classrooms. Principals hold responsibility for all of their teachers, including Special Ed, EL, etc.
- How important is it to get all probationary teachers in the PAR program? Response: According to the last contract, the District is committed to have all teachers hired part of PAR between year 1 and 3. Some teachers may choose not to participate in PAR. Each PAR-consulting teacher was assigned to 17 teachers this year and they are asking to go down to 15 next year. PAR is expensive but a good investment. Becoming a PAR advisors does sometimes take the best teachers out of the classroom. Special Ed is hoping to add two PAR advisors to deal with probationary special ed staff.
- Is there similar support for EL teachers? Response: SPPS is at a plateau with EL so it is not hiring as many as in the past, it is able to maintain at this point. Support for EL is similar to that given classroom teachers. There are three PAR who are EL certified.

MOTION: Mr. Hardy moved the Board of Education approved the non-renewal of the teachers as recommended by administration. The motion was seconded by Ms. Street-Stewart.

The motion was approved with the following roll call vote:

Ms. Seeba	Yes
Mr. Hardy	Yes
Ms. O'Connell	Yes
Mr. Brodrick	Yes
Ms. Street-Stewart	Yes
Ms. Carroll	Yes

The Board offered its goodbyes and its thanks to the Executive Director of HR, Mr. Caskey, on his last day with SPPS.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Carroll moved the meeting adjourn, seconded by Ms. Seeba,

The motion was approved with the following roll call vote:

Ms. Seeba	Yes
Mr. Hardy	Yes
Ms. O'Connell	Yes
Mr. Brodrick	Yes
Ms. Street-Stewart	Yes
Ms. Carroll	Yes

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 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
Marilyn Polsfuss
Assistant Clerk, St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education