

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

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102**

**March 8, 2022
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by Vice Chair Kopp.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: J. Kopp, J. Vue, J. Foster, C. Allen, Z. Ellis, H. Henderson, U. Ward

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; C. Long, M. Langworthy, J. Turner, A. Collins, B. Chan, M. Doud, K. McCarty, K. Thao, C. Baker, K. Wilcox-Harris, M. Schrul, S. Gray Akyea, K. Burns, Y. Vang, E. Agbamu, A. Schilling, K. Kimani, B. Natala, J. Vollmer, L. Olson, K. Eckblad, S. Hussein, S. Dahlke, J. Robinson

Public: M. Lehner, C Lehner, J. Pettey, J. Verges, S. Albrecht, M. Albrecht,

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Kopp moved approval of the Order of the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Foster. It passed by acclaim.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Gothard began the meeting by welcoming everyone. He went on to share details on thanks and gratitude to the team involved in negotiating the SPFE contract and reaching the tentative contract. He thanked the Board for meeting and gathering to provide guidance. To our educators and staff, this negotiation is how our organization comes together to collaborate on important issues. We learn about each other, ways to improve the district, and how to collectively address our challenges. Our discussions have been met with appreciation. The work has just begun. He thanked the Board, staff, especially Executive Director McCarty and his Executive team.

V. SPPS INVESTMENT REPORT

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed staff from the Finance Team to introduce partners from Wells Fargo for the presentation of the Investment Report. Staff provided details on the OPEB Trust and investment review, as well as the OPEB Trust and market updates.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The Board requested further details on the OPEB trust and the large fund in 2015.
- More details were also requested on the equity market in the future, including current trends in the market involving energy costs, the economy, and interest rates.
- Director Ward noted that in looking at the investment report, and how our values align with the world, one item discussed is divesting in fossil fuels, or setting policies that prevent from investing in companies with a certain amount of investment in fossil fuels. The expansion of divesting from private prisons was also noted. The District's policies were shared, and more details were provided by our partners at Wells Fargo. There was then further discussion on this topic, including details on the ways to move away from investments in fossil fuels, including short-term and long-term planning and investments thresholds in companies, as well as timing. The transition is more about the Board deciding on the investment in business that have portfolios with fossil fuels and the investment threshold of those businesses. We may also look at how they define their investments. Future steps may be to look into how the University of Minnesota invests.

VI. REVIEW OF RESOLUTION ADOPTING A SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESOLUTION REGARDING THE USE OF MASKS IN ALL SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTINGS

Superintendent Gothard then introduced this topic as a follow-up from the Special Meeting on Saturday, March 5, 2022. He provided details on the framing of changing the mask mandate resolution, with potential changes to take place as early as Wednesday, March 9, 2022. He noted that he heard concerns and wanted to ensure the Board has the information necessary and feels comfortable with this direction.

Mary Langworthy then provided a presentation similar to the one from Saturday's meeting. Superintendent Gothard then noted that this resolution will be brought before the Board at the Regular Meeting on March 22 for a couple reasons - to give more time with data requested, and also to ensure the community had an opportunity to provide input. He also noted that Administration will be looking for direction from the Board, and the next opportunity to review will be after the next marking period, but are bringing before the Board right now based on the changing guidelines from the CDC. He also shared that he has heard from the Board the possibility of changes following Spring Break.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- In thinking back to Thanksgiving and Winter Break, how soon may we see a surge following Spring Break? Response: We may see an influx of cases right away, with some developing symptoms on the earlier side of Spring Break, and some test positive at the end of Break. Symptoms can appear anywhere between 2 weeks to a month later. Onsite testing on Tuesdays was also noted.
- Discussion was also noted on the rationale behind not masking in medium case rates. This guidance is from the CDC, and the correlation with large community spread which is also seen in the school settings, as well as the hospitalization rate which also factors into the case rate level.
- Questions were also centered around engagement with staff, students, and families, including surveys, and how to support families.
- More information was also requested on homebound instruction and how that looks for students and families.

- Questions were also asked about options for families regarding online school if the mask mandate is lifted. Families can inquire about online school options with Student Placement.
- Details were also requested about mask mandates at the building level - at this time with this proposal, it would not change at the building level, only districtwide. If there is an uptick in a classroom, there may be a quarantine of that particular classroom.
- Other questions centered around students testing for COVID prior to coming returning to school after Spring Break. Opportunities on vaccine clinics and partnering with the City and County on vaccines and testing were also reviewed.
- The demographics of positive test cases were also requested.
- A board member voiced concerns about removing this mandate, because one of the mitigation tactics we know is masking. Why do we keep removing things that work to prevent the spread of COVID? One of her biggest concerns is in high school lunchrooms with hundreds of students. She also noted the pattern of surges following breaks. She noted the removal of masks in other districts, but our responsibility is to keep the students of this district safe. Administration also reminded the Board that our students are only with us for 6.5 hours a day, and other hours they are in other activities in the community.
- Superintendent Gothard also noted the case rates through October to now.
- Opportunities to share information were noted, as well as next steps in this discussion.

VII. FY22 FIRST BUDGET REVISION

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer, to present the FY22 First Budget Revision.

Chief Schrul reviewed the purpose, including the presentation of information regarding the Fiscal Year 2021-22 first budget revision, as well as the agenda, including revenue changes for all funds, expenditure changes for all funds, fully financed funds, and recommended approval.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The relation of this revision with the presented future budget shortfall was discussed. This presentation is the budget revision for the current fiscal year, and updating the revenue and expenditures for the current year activity.
- What criteria is used to project enrollment? Response: We use kindergarten cohorts, and survival methods, as well as the number of births within the city. We also look at historical enrollments with the October 1 count, as well as engagement with stakeholders, Student Placement Center, and Division of Schools.
- Chair Vue encouraged adding the factors of the strike, pandemic, and school start time changes, as well as other policy changes to the enrollment projections.
- In recent years, we haven't been off more than 3%, but in the next couple years, we may be off 4-5%, but 5% is acceptable in projecting school enrollments.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Director Kopp moved approval of the FY22 First Budget Revision as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Allen. It passed by acclaim.

VIII. FY22 DECEMBER QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Chief Schrul then went on to present the FY22 December Quarterly Financial Report, including the following items for discussion - highlights of the Financial Projection Report, Financial Projection Report for the period ending December 31, 2021; and glossary of financial terms.

The full report can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Further details were requested on General Fund dollars and consistency in the format of dollar amounts within the report.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Director Kopp moved to approve the FY22 December Quarterly Financial Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis. It passed by acclaim.

IX. ENVISION SPSS UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Chief Turner to present the Envision SPSS Update. Topics included the Envision SPSS implementation overview, planning and progress monitoring, activity examples, and next steps. Videos of activities and welcome videos were also shared.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Further details were requested on the repurposing of two buildings - Galteri and JJ Hill and the timeframe for the plans. Those details will be provided at a future meeting with ECFE and Early Childhood. More details to also be shared about the buildings of Jackson and John A. Johnson.
- There are four phases, and next steps in Phase 4 - are there more than four phases then? Response: There are segments within Phase 4 - that is the final phase, but there are multiple steps that will be tracked for the first semester of Fall 2022, and may look at the whole year.
- Further details were requested on the student count and general sense of how many students move from one school to the other or based on choice. Recommendation is to wait until the official October count, with more details in November and December when it is finalized. It will be helpful to know how many students moved to the school that their program merged, or another school, or left the district.
- What is the process for once the school is closed and removing the name from the building, and the renaming process? Response: The naming process will remain the same, as that name is within our official records. Board members noted that students should still have input into the name.
- More details were requested on the number of families who didn't receive their first choice of school and how they will continue to be supported. Response: Once the Placement Office has everything uploaded there will be a final check to see if there are a significant number of students missing in that portfolio of schools, and will call families before the lottery. For any student who didn't fill out a request card, they do have a seat reserved at their new school, and did not have to do anything. There will be a letter sent to families about their child's placement, and later, a letter from the principal welcoming them and details about the open house and activities.
- Concerns about the support for the Hmong Language and Culture program were shared. Response: That school does have a lot of support from both the Division of Schools and the Middle School Model team in the Office of Teaching and Learning. It is similar to the rollout of

E-STEM in the framework and project management, as well as support from Facilities in the layout of the program in the building.

- Director Kopp thanked the team for this presentation and reminded all to stay connected and be mindful, as it was a decision by the Board and to be accountable and monitoring the progress and supporting the plan.
- Acknowledgement of the video presented by Bruce Vento Elementary to welcome new students, and acknowledgment of the work of communities.
- Interest is capturing both the successes and challenges of the plan.
- Other topics of interest include LEAP and Highwood Hills, and programs on the West Side, and other areas affected by Envision and updates and timeline.
- Superintendent Gothard noted confidence in the leadership of Chief Turner in this plan, as well as thanks to the presenters for this update.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Director Kopp moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Allen and Director Ellis seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 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