

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

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

**August 17, 2021
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Vue.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: J. Vue, J. Foster, C. Allen, Y. Carrillo, Z. Ellis, J. Kopp, J. Brodrick

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; C. Long, K. Burns, K. McCarty, K. Thao, C. Baker, S. Grey Akyea, H. Kilgore, M. Doud, A. Collins, J. Turner, M. Schrul, M. Karels, S. Carlstrom, C. Anderson, E. Agbamu, Y. Vang, M. Langworthy, L. Corey, E. Wacker, J. Vollmer, W. Forbes

Public: T. Lonetree, U. Ward

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Vue 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 with a brief update on the work of the expansion of an SPSS online school program for K-8. At next week's Regular Meeting, further information will be brought forward, including to the resolution approved in January to include those grades in the eligibility for the online experience.

At the August 17th Regular Meeting, more information will also be provided regarding the proposed mask mandate brought forth at this Committee of the Board meeting, as well as other information about COVID-19 precautions in place with guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC.

VI. RESOLUTION ADOPTING A SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESOLUTION MANDATING THE USE OF MASKS IN ALL SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Superintendent Gothard then noted the draft resolution of the mandate of masks for students, staff, and visitors. With the recent surge in cases, we want to provide a safe environment for our learners. He also

noted the other safety measures, including handwashing, assigned seating, ventilation, and masks that are critical preventative measures in preventing the spread of COVID-19. He noted he is introducing this resolution based on keeping our school buildings open for all students.

The full draft of the resolution can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Board members requested information on the pros and cons of having staff provide proof of vaccination. Response: Clarification that vaccination requirements and testing are outside of the resolution. We are working to gather as much information as possible for vaccine requirements, including the how, why, and how to enforce it and work with stakeholders. There are many details to consider, and to have the Board to consider the support for it, along with work from General Counsel. To make testing required or available are different - testing was popular, but with vaccines, the testing decreased. It will be important to not discipline or put in place corrective actions, but for education for all involved.
- Another board member requested further information on mask requirements for students with identified special needs. Response: We have built into the resolution exceptions, which have been in place since last spring, for students with an IEP or ISP. Some students do have success with the face shield, which is also an option. In order to protect staff, those in direct care do have access to medical grade PPE.
- More information was requested on the concerns from staff about masks in order to control the potential threat in classrooms or facilities. There are not additional recommendations on the type of mask, but medical grade PPE for staff working with students with specialized services or in health settings, which are provided to those staff members.
- Another board member requested further information and clarification on the dates of review for the resolution, which is mentioned as the start of each academic quarter - those dates will be helpful. It was noted that we will follow the posting statues for any meeting, including special meetings at which the resolution may be reviewed. It will be reviewed every three months.
- The Board raised questions on the consequences for students who choose not to wear a mask. Response: The importance of education around this issues was reiterated, as well as the importance of relationships with students. Staff in Restorative Practices are encouraged to lean in and encourage students to wear a mask, and to care for one another and make the right decision.
- Clarification was also requested on the date that the resolution would be effective, which would be at 8:00 a.m. the following day after action on the resolution.
- Clarification was also requested that the Board will not be voting on the resolution at this meeting, but at the Regular Meeting on August 17th.
- Engagement on the process was also noted, including the communication to staff and families, and that feedback overall has been supportive. This is our opportunity to communicate the proposed resolution and why, with the opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and share public comments.

VII. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Superintendent Gothard then introduced staff to present the American Rescue Plan Needs Assessment Results, in which we engaged with a wide range of stakeholders during the 2020-21 school year to collection information and research with over 11,000 responses. He also noted the full report on www.spps.org/arp.

Within the presentation, an overview was provided, as well as SPPS ARP goals. Details on assessment of needs were shared, methodology, and needs assessment results. For students, high-quality instruction was noted as a key area; strong feeling of welcome, safety, support as an individual and as a member of an ethnic/cultural/racial group and the school community; strong voice in their teaching and learning; schools have different needs. For schools, the focus areas included focus and flexibility. For staff, key areas included time; professional expectation for culturally relevant teaching and instructional practice; community building. For families, issues such as consistent safety procedures at school; high-quality, engaging teaching and learning focused on moving forward; racial/ethnic/linguistic representation; acknowledgment of the challenges facing families with school-aged children were listed as needs. ARP priorities and categories to fund were also reviewed, as well as the SPPS ARP planning timeline. Details were shared about the next steps for engagement.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Questions on extra efforts to allow for remedial work were discussed. Response: We are looking at it as taking students from where they are now to where they need to go. WINN teachers were also discussed, as building relationships with students for “What I Need Now.”
- Clarification was also requested on the needs assessment and relation to the SPPS online school, and other options for flexibility and funding for that program. Response: ARP funding is important to keep our district running. Superintendent Gothard also provided the historical background to the plans for the online school, which began in October 2019 - prior to the start of the pandemic.
- Details were also requested on the timeline for data collection, which was early spring and January 2021 to July 2021. Clarification was also requested on the methodology of the information, including surveys and questionnaires, as well as other means of information, including family forums and focus groups. Details were also requested on the WINN strategy, as well as to see how this data will be translated to the classroom.
- Questions were also raised about staffing and capacity for teachers, including those who may be teaching in the SPPS online school.
- Another board member noted that this is not new information, but what is different is how we move forward in this work with more accessible resources and engagement with families around this work. As we move forward, this Board will continue to inquire about the impacts and outcomes for students. We now have the resources to do this work, and are excited to learn from the needs assessment.
- More information on the process of the work group was requested, including staff involved, models from other districts, charter, and an action plan with timeline to assess the needs. Then there was criteria for selection and infrastructure for funding to be accounted for and spent. Then there was a determination of alignment with the strategic plan and to move forward together. The partnerships of MDE and Council of the Great City Schools were also noted.
- Details on the pace or cadence of spending were also requested.
- More information was requested on the quotes included within the presentation, which were a summary of overall thoughts and symbolic of the summary of the focus group.
- Concerns about how this high-level data will translate into actions within the classroom were also noted.
- Another board member noted a possible missed opportunity of qualitative information on families was noted, including how many students are in each family and to target those groups or students for responses.

VII. POLICY UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed staff to present the Policy Update, including updates to Policy 610.00: Field Trips.

The rationale for the updates to this policy were reviewed, and included that new policy language will clearly provide expectations and standards, better define and classify types of field trips, give authority to the District to build robust procedures, and address potential legal concerns. The five categories of field trips were then reviewed, which is also clearly stated within the policy. Links to the current policy, and proposed policy were also shared.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Clarification was requested on the process of this policy, and that it is in its initial review by the Board. The Policy Work Group has reviewed this policy and there were questions on non-sanctioned and extended field trips, and breaking them into categories and understanding the differences of each.
- Details were requested on defining non-sanctioned field trips with community partners or contractors. More information was also provided on international travel and working with pre-selected vendors and questions around liability and students in foreign countries. Clarification was also requisition on the non-sanctioned nature of international trips.
- Questions were also raised on the opportunities for students in non-sanctioned field trips that are approved in advance, and questions around excused or unexcused absences in those cases, as well as language referring to that within the policy in cross-references or legal references.
- Overall, the Board approved moving this policy update to the three-reading process.

VII. SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Vice Chair Vue then provided the 2021 Evaluation Summary for Superintendent Joe Gothard.

The Saint Paul School Board has completed an evaluation summary of the last twelve months for Superintendent Joe Gothard. Overall, the board finds the Superintendent to be effective in his role with notable successes and areas for improvement. Board members continue to appreciate his leadership during challenging times and acknowledge continuing work in areas of student outcomes, communications, and building a culture of trust. The Board used the Minnesota School Board Association's Superintendent Standards-Based Evaluation for this year's evaluation, choosing to focus on standards evaluated last year (September 2020) to identify progress over time. These standards are related to Operations, District Communications, Teaching and Learning, and Ethical Leadership and Equity, with a rating scale ranging from ineffective, to developing, to effective, to highly effective. The ratings of participating board members have been averaged meaning individual Board members' ratings may be higher or lower than the stated rating. The Board once again included a special standard of Leadership in Challenging Times, presented as a narrative summary. The Board also asked the Superintendent to provide reflections on the implementation of the district's strategic plan, SPPS Achieves.

The Board would like to offer the following observations as it considers the overall performance of the Superintendent.

Considering the superintendent's reflection on implementation of the district's strategic plan, the Board members note with appreciation the inclusion of a systemic equity initiative in SPPS Achieves within the last year and recognize that some parts of the strategic plan were paused as we oriented ourselves to a new educational landscape. With that said, the Board expects Superintendent Gothard to revisit paused initiatives to discover how they may continue in SPPS Achieves. The Board is encouraged by the alignment of SPPS Achieves with SPPS Builds and Envision SPPS and expects to hear more about how it aligns with Priority-Based Budgeting. The Board is also looking forward to continued communication regarding how these frameworks are connected to one another and district decision-making.

Considering the standard focused on Communication and Community Relationships, the Board rates Superintendent Gothard as effective. Board members appreciate the many ways the Superintendent communicated with the SPPS community and beyond including written and verbal messages to the SPPS community, Staff and Family Forums, Community Townhalls, local and national news media engagements, and more. Superintendent Gothard was visible and reliable during times of great uncertainty and honest about the difficult realities we faced. The Board notes that the superintendent displays great skill in his personal communication. The Board urges the continued expansion of the superintendent's clear and compassionate voice into broader district communications, both in proactive and responsive ways. Moreover, the Board encourages the superintendent to continue to explore ways to add cultural relevance to community engagement by proactively attracting more talent in translation services, establishing relationships with communities that do not rely heavily on prominent media outlets, are not always vocal communities, or are still developing as stakeholders.

Considering the standard on Operations which includes Facilities, Transportation, Food Service, Technology, Maintenance, and Personnel, the Board rates Superintendent Gothard as effective. The Board acknowledges the introduction of SPPS Builds as a vital part of the strategic plan and appreciates the efforts to bring greater clarity and access to information and decisionmaking related to facilities. Board members are grateful for the leadership that encouraged operations departments to be innovative and collaborative. Among many examples was the adaptability and skill of the technology department which resulted in making the difficult task transitioning between in-person and remote learning easier. In addition, the creative use of personnel kept staff members employed and available to serve and support our students. Going forward, the Board expects the Superintendent to continue to be innovative and proactive in operations, including addressing anticipated bus driver shortages, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, and ensuring the work of the senior leadership team is more visible to our community.

Considering the standard focused on Teaching and Learning, the Board rates Superintendent Gothard as effective. The Board is appreciative and supportive of the professional development related to Zaretta Hammonds' work as described in Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain. The Board expects Superintendent Gothard to demonstrate progress towards the implementation of new practices and an evaluation of their effectiveness. The Board notes the commitment of time and talent in development of the Ethnic Studies course and looks forward to updates as the "pilot" course gets underway this coming school year, including feedback from staff and students. The Board urges the superintendent to align resources to provide teachers the tools for culturally responsive instruction, continue to foster opportunities for shared learning and collaboration between educators,

and reflect on practices that build a culture of trust with the teaching corps. Considering the standard focused on Ethical Leadership and Equity, the Board rates Superintendent Gothard as effective. The Board recognizes and appreciates his skilled, visible, and inclusive leadership. Superintendent Gothard is a highly respected leader in our community, our state, and across the country - earning praise and recognition through awards and holding seats on many committees and boards that are at the forefront of developing and implementing education policy and practice. Echoing sentiments from last year, the Board acknowledges the commitment of the Superintendent in the area of equity, but that progress still feels slow. The Board deeply appreciates hearing that Superintendent Gothard believes equity work should not be confined to one department or team, but rather is the work of each of us in the district with a systemic approach. The Board urges the superintendent to think about and create a vision for how leadership in equity flows from the superintendent's office to his team and into our schools. The Board expects Superintendent Gothard to devise a plan for accountability, alignment, and consistency of equity work in our schools, as a core foundation of the Systemic Equity Initiative in SPPS Achieves.

Considering the special standard focus on Leadership in Challenging Times, the Board once again expresses their deep gratitude for the strong, steady, and skillful leadership of Superintendent Gothard. The Board notes the successful partnerships including Ramsey County, 3M, and many others, as well as his care and support of his team through the many ups and downs of the last year. Over the course of this year, the Board's membership has changed more than once, and the Board appreciates the superintendent's ongoing attention to building relationships and being a constant during times of change. The Board is also grateful for the comprehensive materials Superintendent Gothard provided as both evidence and reflection of this last year in a highly visible leadership role. Overall, the Board concludes that Superintendent Gothard is effective in his role and expects continued growth in his leadership with the opportunities that lie ahead for Saint Paul Public Schools.

Key Areas for Growth

- 1. Demonstrate progress towards the implementation of culturally relevant instructional practices and provide an evaluation of their effectiveness and create opportunities for school staff input in implementation and evaluation*
- 2. Development of a communication framework that serves the complex demographics of our district, through messages that speak with a clear, compassionate voice*
- 3. Development of accessible framework for students, families, and staff to provide constructive feedback to district administration*
- 4. Demonstrate equity in community engagement through innovation and culturally responsive practices*

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carrillo noted that because his tenure began in April 2021, he was not involved in the evaluation nor the writing of the summary, and neither approves or disapproves.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked the Board for the review and the comments. He is humbled and honored to lead SPPS, and will continue to meet and exceed the high standards set forth by the Board. It is a huge job and he pledged his commitment to advance SPPS Achieves and the

unwavering focus on student outcomes with strong leaderships, accountability, and staff leadership, with the focus on students, and thanked the Board and community for their support.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Director Vue moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Ellis seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 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