

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

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

**June 15, 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, B. Chan, D. Watkins, M. Doud, A. Collins, J. Turner, M. Schrul, S. Carlstrom, C. Anderson, K. Randall, H. Kilgore, S. Koppen, M. Pope, S. Grey Akyea

Equity Committee: P. Nayer, A. Yang, W. Hill, B. Lozenski, H. Dyan, M. Xiong, P. Richardson, T. Parker, L. Scott, S. Hussein, N. Paez

Public: J. Verges, T. Lonetree

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 Allen. It passed by acclaim.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Gothard began the meeting by welcoming everyone, and providing an update on the 2021 graduation ceremonies, which were held in-person with families and friends, and thanked staff for their work, including planning for scenarios based on guidelines. He thanked principals and grad coordinators. He also congratulated the historic Class of 2021.

He went on to provide an update on the support of the Board for him and his Administration through the COVID-19 Pandemic, including the Resolution in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and it's alignment with the Safe Learning Plan. The resolution was necessary to provide flexibility in both the guidelines and the impact of COVID on the community. Last week, the case rate for Ramsey County was the lowest it has been since July 30th, and believe it will continue to trend down. At the next Regular Meeting on June 22, 2021, he no longer believes it will be necessary to renew this resolution.

He also provided a brief update on the work around Critical Ethnic Studies in SPPS, and details on the pilot program set to begin in the Fall of 2021. He requested that if there are questions, to submit them in writing, so that the team can discuss and provide responses, including questions around potential policy changes, which can be shared in the Policy Work Group. He provided details on the development cohort, including staff on the team, and their charge in developing the learning outcomes, syllabus, and standard, as well as expectations for students and families.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Further details were requested on the timeline to determine the schedule and timing requirement, and information was provided on the upcoming course guide.
- More information was requested on the policy change discussion, and the role of the Policy Work Group in that process.
- Further discussion also included the evaluation of the class, and to ensure all are represented.
- Further questions also included follow-up around the framework and immigration and emigration unit.
- Board members also requested further information around the closing of schools due to excessive heat last week, including to talk through situations like this going forward, and virtual learning on iPads, and use of e-learning days in situations such as this. Superintendent Gothard noted that for next school year, there will be a general announcement, with the maximum 5 days of e-learning allowed. There were also additional questions on the lead time for families.

VI. EQUITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Ms. Myla Pope to introduce the Equity Committee, and shared the history of the committee, which began with a resolution approved by the Board in August 2019 and to gather community input and direction for the District to move forward in an equitable way, and addressing inequities. The tri-chair structure was noted, as well as the process through COVID and into virtual meetings.

Within the presentation, the formation and membership was reviewed. The charge of the committee was discussed - identifying and examining disparities impacting SPPS students, staff, families and community, and bringing forth adaptive and actionable recommendations for addressing district inequities. The process and review of monthly meetings was also provided; as well as the process for this presentation. Themes reflected across the four groups include Access, Discipline, Personalized Learning, and practices and policies.

Group members then shared their identified inequities.

Group A shared their first inequity of "In Saint Paul Public School District, there is a lack of belonging and "othering" being experienced by students of color, especially Black males." Requests for information relating to this inequity were also shared. The group then provided details on their second inequity of "In Saint Paul Public Schools there is a frustration level for parents and students whose home language is not represented in the elements of the IEP process." Requests for information relating to this statement were also discussed. Recommendations were also provided.

Group B shared their first inequity of "In Saint Paul Public Schools there is a lack of representation of educators of color. Also, racial and cultural awareness development is necessary for all educators."

Requests for information on this inequity were also shared. Their second identified inequity included the statement that “In Saint Paul Public Schools students of color experience disproportionately reactive and subjective discipline measures while observing preferential treatment being given to white students.” Recommendations to address this inequity were provided.

Group C then shared their first inequity of “In the Saint Paul Public Schools there is an ingrained belief reflected in many practices and procedures that there is only one path to success and that belief has a negative impact on BIPOC students and families.” Requests for information related to this identified inequity was also reviewed. Recommendations were also provided.

Group D also shared their first identified inequity of “Current curriculum in SPPS is detrimentally impacting BIPOC communities. The curriculum, Pre-K-12, does not effectively reflect multi-lingual and BIPOC students, lacks relevance or meaningfulness, and does not lend itself to building positive self-identities.” Recommendations were also provided in relation to this inequity. They also shared their second inequity of “Retention of highly qualified teachers is necessary for creating and maintaining positive climate and culture in our schools.” Recommendations were also provided for this inequity.

Next steps were also discussed, including the revision of the charter, member selection, and structure.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Board members requested further information on the next iteration and next steps for the committee. Ms. Pope provided more details, including potential work groups focused on each inequity statement and recommended process, and action work groups to meet in partnership and collaborate. It will be a completely new group of members.
- What support is needed from the Board to succeed in these tasks? What roadblocks are foreseen? Response: Just to know the Board is supporting this work is great. We cannot do this work in isolation, but needs to be done in collaboration and community.
- How can we get moving on this work for next year? Response: We will need to comb through the recommendation, and we are still under the MN Department of Human Rights for disproportionality and suspensions, and we have the data and are working on that. A lot of the work is currently underway too. We will prioritize based on the recommendations and share with the community and the Board.
 - Board members also noted the hats and hoods practice within buildings, and the effects of the practice of banning hats and hoods for students on them.
- A board member appreciated the open-ended questions for surveys and further discussion around branching that idea out. Response: Within action steps, there is vulnerability to ask open-ended questions and to become a vehicle for teachers to understand unconscious bias in PBIS work, and examine it, and bring questions for authentic feedback because we are all here for our students. We need to be prepared for honest answers, and it is brave to ask broad questions.
- A board member appreciated the work of the Equity Committee in naming inequities, saying them, and then working on recommendations to correct them - it is not about being politically correct or watering down the approach. We need to say it, name it, label it, and work to correct it. Everyone has a part to play in this work and in the greater community. She thanked everyone for their work to move this forward, and hopes and expects to continue to challenge each other. The role of education is student outcomes, and adults need to claim that. She also appreciated the work of student voice in this process and committee.

- A board member noted his experience with the committee, and was able to witness the developing camaraderie and fellowship.
- How are we able to use the gained experience from participants and carry it forward to the next committee? Response: One of the hopes was to onboard the new committee with this current committees, and there were challenges with time, but we do foresee opportunities to do that. The next committee will move forward with help from the current members with onboarding in that process. The collectivism was noted, and we need to create an environment needed to do this work, and be intentional and mindful in collaboration to ensure that happens.

VII. FY22 BUDGET UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then introduced Chief Schrul to present the FY22 Budget Update, and noted the additional large sums of funds to be spent appropriately and applying it to our work from the ESSER and ARP programs. The Finance Team was thanked for their work in compiling this budget together and working with schools and programs.

Within the presentation, the mission of SPPS was provided, as well as the budget process and timeline, including the ongoing, priority-based budget process for the 2021-22 budget. Financial details on the FY22 revenue projection in the General Fund were provided. Details on the alignment of the budget to confirm instructional and operational priorities for SPPS Achieves and response to COVID-19 were also shared. FY22 resource allocations within the General Fund were reviewed. FY22 proposed budget expenditures within the total FY22 proposed budget of \$908.3M were shared. The FY22 budget and staffing timeline were reviewed, as well as FY22 staffing impacts (as of 6/4/21). Within the strategies into proactive and evaluate results to improve resource allocations through presenting a multi-year financial plan, assessing program effectiveness using transparent metrics, and aligning resources with priorities of programs offered and workforce planning were detailed. An overall timeline of the FY21-22 budget development was also shared, with the final FY22 budget presented for adoption at the June 22 Regular Meeting.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Board members requested clarification on staff in SPED and MLL. Response: They are within the teacher titles, which includes all licensed staff.
- There was also further clarification requested on the data from the Virtual Hiring Fair. Response: We extended offers to 54 candidates on that same day, and interviewed 150 candidates. Others were added to the candidate pool for buildings also.
- More information on Teachers on Call, the district's substitute teacher partner, was requested. We are currently working with them on our needs, and they are also supporting with filling summer program positions. Our fill rates in SPPS are greater than those in other district.s
- Further information was also requested on job-embedded professional development for teachers. Nine schools received the allocation, and it is doubling the prep time for teachers with specialists added to accommodate that prep time. There are two 15-minute blocks each week that will allow for two additional prep times for teachers to collaborate. In aggregate, there will be 66 additional opportunities for teachers to dialogue. Information on the inclusion of the Equity Committee recommendations was also requested in this professional development. Board members express concerns about this area because it is a lot of money for teachers to bounce ideas off each other, and need professional development to ensure teachers are up to par with culturally relevant materials and ensuring equity and engagement with all students. It was noted that this will give us time as a system

to address those needs, and the expectation for all buildings to do work embedded and in close proximity to students, who are the focus.

- Another board member noted the professional development sounds very prescriptive, and is there room for flexibility because schools are so different? Response: There will be new opportunities for collaboration over 20 sites, and we are collaborating with SPFE to identify that one-third of sessions are teacher-directed. Guidelines have been shared with administrators and a calendar has been built for staff. Principal meetings are also still being held for another opportunity to address and identify needs.
- A board member noted questions on the possibility for slight revisions that may take place between now and Tuesday's Regular Meeting based on recognized inequities or unusual situations that may appear. It was noted that there are budget revisions throughout the year for those scenarios, and the effects of the funds from the State and Federal Government that will be sent and hope for revisions to be made after July 1st. We make decisions based on budget and staffing, and there are different contingencies, and the federal funds give us flexibility to add additional staff if needed. We are also mindful of sustainability and our strategic plan for student outcomes in the lens of the budget.
- Further information was also requested on adjustments and reallocation based on ESSER funds. Overall, the General Fund has supported stabilization for the district and support through COVID in programs in schools, including personalized learning technology supports, TOSAs, and additional investment in mental health.
- The off-ramp and on-ramp of certain items was also discussed. The federal funds go through 2024, and there are a lot of requirements, including 20% dedicated to learning loss. We also need to factor in enrollment, Envision SPPS, and the state funding.
- The impact of staff on students was also noted, including if those FTEs are cut, there is an impact on students because of the relationships built. Response: We can also ensure there are practices to hold and maintain, and conversations about how that could potentially look with state and federal funds.
- Concerns were also noted about the budget in Family Engagement decreasing. Data was shared on the needs assessment and engagement work around ARP funding, including family forums, surveys, and questionnaires. Questions were also asked about when to anticipate and expect a move to a more visible model. One way is a website to support this work to show where the funding is being spent.

VII. POLICY UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then welcomed Chief Baker and General Counsel Long to present the Policy Update, including the proposed new policy of Policy 619.00 - Student Fundraising. The rationale for the proposal of this policy was shared, including that this policy would allow us to put in checks and balances for fundraising at the school building level.

The eight sections of the policy were then discussed, including purpose, general statement of policy, definitions, general requirement for general all fundraising, fundraising for curricular activities, fundraising for co-curricular and extracurricular activities, exceptions, and responsibility. A copy of the proposed policy was also shared.

Overall, the Board recommended the move of this policy to the three-reading process, with potential revisions around the language involving school stores.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Committee members acknowledged the work of Mechelle Karels in the Business Office.
- As part of the process in Policy Work Group, we did reach out to a number of administration at different levels for input as well.
- Further information was requested on if an outside organization wanted to partner with a school to run a fundraiser. That would need to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, if contracted outside to do fundraising to follow our policies and procedures. The organization would still need to follow the policies outlined by Facilities and conform with the rules set.
- Concerns about the experiences of families, especially of BIPOC students, who felt excluded by fundraisers.
- Questions about the funds by specific groups earned by the school stores were also noted, and the equity in that practice. Revisions to the draft were noted.
- Questions on the consequences for non-approved fundraising were also discussed. It is not the desire of this policy to be punitive in nature.
- A board member also asked for a general example of a problem to solve with this policy.
- Discrepancies in the fundraising of parent groups within different schools was also raised.
- Field trips, as related to this policy, will be another policy revision coming before the Board in upcoming months.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

X. WORK SESSION

Vice Chair Vue then led the Board through a discussion on the Resolution to Fully Fund Public Education.

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