

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota

COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING

Via Telephonic and Video Conference; Available via Live Stream at www.spps.org/boe

January 5, 2021

Immediately following the Annual Meeting at 4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chair Foster.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: Z. Ellis, J. Foster, J. Brodrick, C. Allen, J. Kopp, S. Marchese
J. Vue joined shortly after roll call was conducted.

SEAB: K. Ali

Staff: Superintendent Gothard; Chuck Long, General Counsel; Cedrick Baker, Chief of Staff; Dave Watkins, Chief of Schools; Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer; Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer; Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer; Stacey Gray Akyea, Director, Research, Evaluation & Assessment; Kenyatta McCarty, Executive Director, Human Resources; Kevin Burns, Director of Communications; Sarah Dahlke, Secretary to the Board

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Foster moved approval of the Order of the Agenda, with one change - to move the Audit Report Year Ended June 30, 2020 to precede the Superintendent's Announcements. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Ellis	Yes
Director Foster	Yes
Director Brodrick	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Kopp	Yes
Director Marchese	Yes

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent reported on the decision made before Winter Break and welcomes everyone to 2021. He is excited about our future and great things to benefit students of SPPS - that is our priority and our mission to provide the best education. He noted that distance learning is not the ideal method of education, and provided a recap of events, timelines, acknowledgement of staff to make DL meaningful and effective, safety protocols developed and COVID-19 plans online. He also noted the case rate increase in fall and winter, and provided information on the determination of MDH's case rate data used in the State's Safe Learning Guidelines. He also noted his communication with superintendents across the state and country, and learning plans for districts both in the metro, state, and nationally. He provided more information on the case rates, beginning on October 29th through current, and the ebb and flow of those numbers. He noted the upcoming data for January 7th, to report December 13-26, and expected to be at or below 50, when they were incredibly higher earlier the season. It is far better than data from October and November. It also became clear in communities near and far that case rates are not being driven by in-person instruction with low instances at the elementary level. On December 16th, the Governor announced modifications to the Safe Learning Plan to prioritize in-person learning for our youngest learners, and more information on the timeline and decisions of SPPS were provided. He noted contact with SPFE leadership during COVID response. SPPS leadership and SPFE met last night and plan to meet later this week. He noted the MOU with SPFE and that the Governor and his leadership team have called for additional details in the Safe Learning Plan. We will step in to support our building leaders and staff. He chose to announce the February 1 in-person start date for students before Winter Break and allow for time to isolate after Winter Break and planning. To continue to see the downward slope in cases in the county, and work to get closer to vaccinations for education staff. He has advocated for educators to be priority and partnered with the County to administer vaccinations at a school site. Once administered, all safety protocols will remain. He acknowledged the concerns from stakeholders about return to in-person learning. He shared that there is not one single course of action that will satisfy everyone, and we will not all agree - except on one thing which is to keep kids first, always, and proceeding safely and thoughtfully. Thanks to everyone, and pledge to earn the trust of the community every day. He noted the website with information, and ready to do this safely and remain committed to in-person return for our youngest learners. He thanked the Board for their support as we serve the students, families, and staff of the Saint Paul Public Schools Community.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Ellis noted the communications from students and stakeholders. Know the February 1 date is out there, but what would change or make us change that date? Concerns and fear during this time, and the vaccinations were noted, and what would make us shift that date, with the access to the vaccines not available to everyone in a timeframe to re-open schools in some semblance of functionality for students, families and staff? Response: Ask team to provide update on vaccinations, and have been working with the County, and everyone consuming great deal of information - get enough vaccines in the state, distributed to 1A and 1B, including education staff. There's a lot of work to be done, and details to be worked out on availability and access. We cannot mandate folks to take it, and in a District our size, it could take some time to vaccinate those eligible and interested. We want to prioritize those as well participating in in-person learning. We have coordination to do, and hope to have additional updates by the BOE meeting.
- In relation to the February 1 date, we did move it to consider the very angst that we are hearing and provide more time. In December when we made the decision, it was 6.5 and 8.5 weeks and longer than in July when we received the Safe Learning Plan. We did want to provide additional time for factors. Things that could impact that date include a change in the state guidelines, if MDH or other officials observe a concern and work with us, and look at our local context. We are working hard as possible during this time for equipment, protocols, and staff able to report to conduct in-person

learning and we learn more and more each day. With the extra time, we feel confident with the February 1st date for grades PreK-2.

- Director Vue appreciated the explanation of the reasoning for the February 1 date. His concern is around engagement with community. In the time we do have, what opportunities are there for community to give input, and if possible, accommodate some of their ideas or concerns. Response: Some of the input received has been the continuation of how students are achieving during distance learning, and is important information to consider. We did have a staged, phase-in plan around hybrid, but to the shift to in-person it came unexpectedly from the Governor and Commissioner because they believe it is safe. The key engagement is information to families to understand if they want to stay in virtual learning, or in-person learning. The majority of our engagement efforts since the beginning of distance learning have centered on three major categories - distance learning and experiences in DL in effort to prepare for summer and fall; it switched to the comfort level of returning in the fall; and the third was return in-person, we are taking a pause, but are gathering ways to engage families and students around the various ways we are now providing services and supports. We are solidifying what we want to know, communicate, and perspectives from families, and that communications are actionable, and to ensure that we don't add stress or anxiety by questions asked, and chiseling down to what is important to ask families right now, in this critical time with VLS and School Choice. We will be engaging perspectives, and just closed the window on secondary student survey and asking experiences during DL and their perspectives and courses they enjoyed or didn't, as well as focus groups, and begin the next level of engagement.
 - It sounds like we are on the cusp of framing the questions to ask in the upcoming surveys. At what point will they launch? Response: Timing is important, and will come back with the answer, with many things not solidified and not ask too early or too late. We can come back with more information. Timeliness is of the essence.
- Director Allen expressed her concerns with returning to school, and appreciated the numbers breakdown and to see the decline, but believe decline is happening because of the distancing in our communities. Concerns with bringing many different people into the buildings, and concerned about everyone, and not be the factor that contributes to the pandemic. Concerns, and watching the vaccination priority, and those eager to can vaccines can receive them, but that is not happening yet. Concerned about students returning to the building, and hope to do it in an extremely safe way, with a communication and plan to be shared with the community. There is a fear of this disease, and concerned about families sending their students to a building, and concerned for community.
- Director Kopp thanked her colleagues for their thoughtful questions. She also thanked the community who has been calling and emailing and their fears, excitement and and concerns. We have been unsettled for many months, and all feel that pressure and tension with new decisions. Also acknowledge we have found a way together to come together to ensure all's definition of safety is acknowledged and heard and working toward all feeling good about coming back. None of this is easy and no one is winning, and grateful for everyone who continues to stay engaged. The role of the Board is communication to community and to fill in the gaps with community. Interested to continue to fill in that gap that is compassionate, enough details to understand but not overwhelm, and confident can continue to do that. Appreciate all giving their best and all for our students, and work to do together with committed members to do that work together.
- With the Virtual Learning School, some feel that with the announcement and decision time in this Friday, folks are feeling compressed by that. Is there any way to extend that deadline to ensure there is enough communication and one last push for options for families? Response: Chief Turner provided more details. We discussed this as well, and we are going to have a deeper look. The max number of days it could be extended is 24 hours. There is a significant amount of work to align schedules with teachers in-person or teachers with accommodations, and each time there is a

significant change, we need to realign all schedules. We worked backwards and worked with SPFE members for a reasonable amount of time with access to students, and the further we push that date back, we will not be able to provide teachers with that list of students for initial communication and relationship building for students. We did get a small surge of students over the Winter Break, and a number of families did elect to VLS. The deadline is Friday, and can work with the team to do a last minute additional electronic communication. Another reason for the delay is the complexity of the moving pieces in a district our size. Based on the Safe School Learning Plan, we do need to allow families the option to opt-in to VLS from in-person.

- That additional time can make a difference, and the last bit shared is important that families can opt-in, and part of the worry is the deciding. There are families excited to send their students back, and the comfort of knowing that they can change that, isn't very clear, but there is so much information, it's difficult to keep track, and that extra cushion of time after Winter Break, and that little bit of time at the end is important and communicates to families we are understanding where they are and doing all possible to support them.
- Director Marchese appreciated the updates and questions.
- With the Virtual Learning School, and if a family decides they want to go back to in-person learning, what is the opportunity and window of time to do that? Families are concerned about their students losing the connect to their teachers. Response: It is not as easy to go from virtual to in-person - there are a few additional considerations. A family can always request, and may not be able to honor 100% initially. In person, once we do class roster and enrollment and alignment to contractual class size, and feel they need to go to a particular school we may not be able to accommodate that. If the family has flexibility about schools, we may be able to accommodate that. If a family is set on their student attending a particular school, we would ask the family to work with us and have their name added to a waiting list, and once there is an opening, we will call. Make request, go on waiting list, and monitor that and notification. In person factors are based on busing, teachers, and food service, and items to provide in alignment with Safe Learning Plan and intricacies based around numbers and space for students in a classroom or lunch room. That will take more time and attention, but is available to families and ask that families be flexible and patient. These will likely be protocols into the next school year as well. We will need to carefully monitor numbers to implement the plan safely and looking ahead to plan the next school year as well.
- It's important to re-emphasize this is dynamic, and families are not locked into VLS or in-person. It may take some time, and child would still be able to attend virtual learning. That's important. Wonder if operationally about a date or dates or interval for families to focus instead of a rolling process would be helpful - such as quarter or semester breaks? Response: Yes - we have discussed that there would be a published date to encourage families at that time to make a selection to go in-person in the Spring.
- If a family is in VLS and want to go in-person but their child's school is full, they don't lose the option of being in that school for the following year? Response: Correct - we will work together in the fall to maintain seats, similarly to when families leave the country and return. In 21-22 families will not lose their child's spot in school preference.
- Appreciate the thought and deliberation and comments. It's important for community members to remember we are not dealing with perfect options for everyone, and from the email communications, there have been pointed comments in the work around this, and important to recognize that we have not heard anyone be cavalier or unconcerned about the safety of our students and staff and important and seriousness of this disease and impact on the choices of our families and lives. Important to keep in that spirit all acting in good faith and offer options to work for families. This District has been very deliberate in how it is moving forward with protecting the well-being of our families, and also spent many times documenting the impact of distance learning on our students. There are many

people virtual learning works for, and many for whom it is not working. We need to recognize the impact distance learning is having - careful how we are doing it, thoughtful about options for family choice. This is for every individual to determine, and the job of the District is to be deliberate in how we do that, and there may be changes along the way. Health will be top of mind, and also recognize folks acting in good faith. Decision is being driven not by pressure or outside interest, have not heard that. From a board member, this District is acting in good faith in what we are trying to do and with the Superintendent and his team, and need to operate in that space.

- Director Ellis also asked about additional staff readiness surveys for in person learning. Response: As we have been moving forward, one of the questions asked to staff is readiness to return to in-person to gauge their readiness or comfortability to move into an in-person model. We have not done additional surveys for in-person specifically, we have continued to move forward, and last survey was for secondary staff, and out of that, a little over 800 surveys sent out, and 160 said not comfortable coming back in person. Also shared with staff if they have concerns or needed to not come back to the buildings, that there are pathways for ADA accommodations or executive order accommodations, and that information has been provided ongoing for staff.

V. AUDIT REPORT YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

Superintendent Gothard then introduced Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer and Arleen Schilling, Controller to introduce Jackie Huegel and Aaron Nielson from MMKR to present the audit report for the year ended June 30, 2020. This was unlike no other year in conducting an audit, and impressed with our team and MMKR for the data needed.

Three reports were shared with the Board, including Annual Financial Statements, Special Purpose Report, and Management Report.

Included in the presentation was information on the role of the auditors; audit results with an unmodified opinion on basic financial statements and internal controls and compliance reports; a review of the general education aid - basic formula allowance at 2%; state-wide fund balances; general fund financial position; adjusted ADM and pupil units served and change in students served; other governmental funds; and district-wide statement of net position. The full presentation and Financial Statement Report can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Board members thanked the Finance team and MMKR for the report, and the hard work during this tumultuous year. Thanks for helpful assistance and information provided.
- Director Vue requested further information on the timeline of the audit. Response: Our preliminary audit work began in June 2020, and requests, which goes into July. The food service program changed drastically, and with the inventory, during this year. The primary field work is completed mid-September, and into October and November to wrap-up information. Then about a month to prepare the report. The meeting mentioned was to share the results and review the presentation in December. The majority of the audit work in early September to October. The financial statements do take a bit of time, and this is the culmination of the audit with this presentation to the Board.
- Superintendent Gothard thanked Chief Schrul, Ms. Schilling, and the MMKR team for their work during this unprecedented year and this good audit report. There are always ways to improve, but in these circumstances, proud of efforts and report tonight.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Director Foster moved acceptance of the Audit Report Year Ended June 30, 2020. The motion was seconded by Director Ellis.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Ellis	Yes
Director Foster	Yes
Director Brodrick	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Kopp	Yes
Director Marchese	Yes

VI. SPPS ETHNIC STUDIES UPDATE

Superintendent Gothard then introduced staff to present an update on Ethnic Studies in SPPS, and included Craig Anderson, Rebecca Biel, and Moakong Vang to provide more information. He noted his personal experience in leading districts. He believes in all kids and he can make a difference. All families want their children to succeed. Our staff have been asking for strategies that stick. He provided a quote by Dr. Ibram Kendi about racial inequities. He noted the 2018 study in the strategic plan and the data showed that Black student achievement is lowest in our district and consistently in MN. He noted SPPS' racial equity policy and culturally relevant instruction and curriculum, and assessments. We spent the 2018-19 school year researching and project planning for work and in 2019, included in our SPPS Achieves plan and devoted an entire strategic initiative to this effort. Our Academics and Division of Schools teams are leading this work with Zaretta Hammond's work on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain for PreK-12. SPPS Achieves was created to do this work to inspire a culture of student achieves in SPPS and that Black and Brown children can and will learn at the same level as their peers regardless of race. Elated when members of SEAB brought the proposal in the Spring of 2018 graduation requirement separate from social studies electives, and the timeline was reviewed, including the stakeholder committee and determined the components for the course. In the summer of 2020, leadership determined that Ethnic Studies course will be a graduation requirement in SY22, and established an Ethnic Studies department, and specialist to lead the department and course development, and created a steering committee to provide strategic input. Members of the committee were reviewed.

Zaretta Hammond's work in Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain was reviewed, as well as SPPS Achieves strategic focus area of Effective and Culturally Relevant Instruction. A graph showing the intersectionality of Strategic Initiative 3a, Ready for Rigor Framework, and Equity Policy in relation to SPPS Critical Ethnic Studies was also shown.

A review of where we've been and timeline of Ethnic Studies was also shared, beginning in Spring 2018 with the SEAB proposal for an ethnic studies graduation requirement separate from Social Studies ethnic studies electives, through research in 2018-2019, alignment with the strategic plan, Fall 2019 planning, the stakeholder committee in Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 was also discussed.

Mouakong Vue, Ethnic Studies Specialist, was also introduced, including his background and his work in this area.

SPPS Critical Ethnic Studies development and implementation was also shared. A Critical Ethnic Studies timeline was shown, including planning and development in SY20-21, Phase 1 of initial implementation elective at participating high schools in SY21-22; and Phase 2 of full implementation of graduation requirement for sophomores in SY22-23. Further details on this timeline were also presented. Planning and development details were also included, and provided details on the Steering Committee and the Course Development Committee.

Updates were also shared including the MN state standards for social studies in the revision process; MPS implementation for an ethnic studies graduation requirement is on same timeline as SPPS; and graduation requirement process led by Division of Academics.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Brodrick questioned what will the students be taught in this class? What do we see to be the body of knowledge and facts? What are the generalizations or deeper thinking skills involved? What will be the social studies skills learned in constructive and creative thinking. What will the class look like? Response: We are constructing the course, and the committee is working on. Hoping to continuously update the Board as we do the work. The work from the stakeholder group, and it will be thematic course, and not moving from group to group. The course construction committee is currently working on with input from the steering committee.
 - He went on to note that at this point, we don't have a conceptualization about this class? That is disappointing to talking about this for years. Have not seen anything with eagerness and optimism whether this class will be something for students to benefit from and required to take.
 - One of the things learned this year, particularly during this pandemic, it has forced him to really think about the terrible ordeal that all of us have gone through in the past 10 months, and reminded him by many things he has seen and experienced in the community, and have learned that we are all in this together - humanity. Wondering what we are going to be doing in this course to do that kind of building and effort to find commonalities amongst many diverse students and parents and neighborhoods. Think we have universal values, virtues and skills that can be taught in an Ethnic Studies course, and something to appeal to all cultures. What he has seen bring us together in the past 10 months is not our differences, but our commonalities. He noted the Golden Rule across all cultures. Hope that we don't miss that part of an Ethnic Studies course - saw in goals is attempt to talk only about differences. Want to see us building us together.
- Director Vue noted questions about the timeline - when do we expect to make a decision of when and if it will be a required course, and how will we frame that language to parents and students expected to take this course? Response: We do have Board policy around graduation requirements, and looking at that, and will bring back to the Board soe recommendations or interface to discuss what it may look like to add and cleaning up language within the policy. It will need to go through the full process with readings, and it will be longer, but plenty of time between now and 22-23, and graduating class of 2025 to have it in place, and work in tandem with course.
 - Further clarification was requested on the policy, with the Council of the Great City Schools having examples and from across the country to make it fit our time and this course, and the Board working to ensure we have a well-rounded education for all students, including critical ethnic studies.
 - Further clarification was requested on the alignment with the schedule. Response: Because OTL doesn't do all the policy work and others to collaborate, we will work with everyone, the

Board, and Superintendent on the revisions, and that timing may take a bit longer, or may align with the schedule set forth too. We do have protocols and procedure to change the policy to be a course if the Board wishes to be so.

- Want to ensure in alignment in the policy framed with making the decision it is a required course - we need policy to fall back on if a required course, and inform students and families. Response: Appreciate the support and look forward to seeing the first steps into that.
- Director Allen requested information if the Ethnic Studies Specialist position replace the Culturally Relevant Instruction position, or still hiring for that position as well? Response: No - the former Culturally Responsive Teaching staff member took another position, and during the pandemic, was a difficulty time to onboard a new staff member, and put a pause on hiring that position. As we go through priority based budgeting and strategic plan, and have more information on that. 3A in SPPS Achieves in incredibly important.
- She also noted questions around the course development committee. She noted LGBTQ in the committee, and requested information if LGBTQ studies are included in Ethnic Studies. Response: For the term “Critical Ethnic Studies” is how students are critically assessing their intersectionality and their identity and looking at the world around them. More details were provided on the perspective brought to the committee. We want to ensure we are keeping students at the center, and how they are able to enter as their authentic selves and their world around them.
 - Director Allen noted she does not want to try to stretch it - with a lot of cultures within the course. Implementing Ethnic Studies in PreK-12, and a subject such as LGBTQ aligns with other subjects, and teaching inclusiveness, and allow the natural to happen, and perhaps in middle and high school years. It falls in line with other classes, not in the cultural way of cultures in society. We don't want to put other issues ahead of topics that need to be addressed also. Careful about this because it will be important in how students see themselves in the world, which is ingrained in generational and cultural learnings. She noted her personal experience in this topic as well.
- Director Kopp thanked everyone for the presentation. As the parent of a 2026 graduate, this is very cool and fun to watch as a former teacher in development of curriculum. Know the Ethnic Studies journey has been long, and trying to bring this to a graduation requirement. Is there a model or aspirational look for this course- nationally, globally - of what we'd like to model this after? Response: It will be thematic, and explore concepts. We are looking at models to the course construction committee, and districts that have implemented this, and looked at best practices and what has worked. A week on a different group is not a best practice that has worked in other districts. Working with in course development is framework and models from various school districts - Oakland Unified, Boston, San Francisco, that fit well with Ethnic Studies. Also some pedagogy in terms of how this will be taught and look like - some of the work in CRT work with Zaretta Hammond aligns with Ethnic Studies. A curriculum may look different depending on the students, and ensure our curriculum developed is reflection and responsive to communities served. We hope that this course promoted healing and coalition for our buildings and SPPS.
- Will there be an interest or focus in bringing in local history and making it Saint Paul specific and cultural identity in Saint Paul to make it very relevant for students? Response: In getting to human geography and concept of place and where you are affects role, place, and events around you. Yes, and place is geographic concept of what it means to be where you are. Community experts be a possibility and into the class, such as artists, cultural preservers, to bring into the classroom and share their wealth of knowledge is the forefront of the course development cohort and valued and incorporated into the work we do.
- Thanks so much and enthusiasm is contagious and excited to see where this work goes next.
- Director Marchese thanked the team for their work and appreciated the momentum, and the Board has been clear in seeing this adopted as soon as possible and appreciate moving forward.

- Clarification on the timing around the policy and like to know the specific Board action to take to formally what it needs to be as a graduation requirement and set as our curriculum. Response: We have a local policy to guide how we meet the graduation requirements, and will need to be a change to that. There are a number of credits, and ways they are divided - some mandated by the State and some electives. There is reference to a CTW credit, and one parallel that districts do modify their graduation requirements for emerging trends or community feedback and engagement, and this fits in that category. We have our graduation requirements in policy, and procedures. Further details were provided on the CTE requirement - this similarly will require the Board to direct Administration to add a specific requirement in addition to what is required by the State. That will be brought to the Board at a later date, and want the mandate to help drive the development of the course, and with the Board's directive and opportunity to put this down in writing, we can continue more enthusiasm, input and engage more families and educators. We had to look at where we could swap out an existing graduation requirement, and that within the Human Geography requirement, so not putting too many additional requirements on our SPPS graduates.
- Will this come through the Policy Work Group, or presented at a Board meeting? Response: We expect to look at the existing policy, and if a change is needed, it would go through the three-reading process. If it is a procedural piece, then we won't need to go through the policy reading but defer to legal counsel for the next steps. Either way, there will be a Board action to direct Administration to look at policy or the procedures. Even if we find there isn't a policy to be changed and more procedural, we are still able to bring this to the Policy Work Group, and there may need work within the PWG for the three-reading process. Either way, an update can be provided through PWG.
- When will that happen? What is the target date for that action? Response: Right now there are other policies in priority to be the three-reading process. At earliest, it will be the end of the school year with a timeframe and window for this to happen, but with the other policies currently being updated, the earliest this one may come before the PWG is early-Spring.
 - Ask because the question isn't "whether" and answered that as a Board, but what specifically to direct on, and hope to expedite this as much as possible. Think that this will not be a controversial conversation with the Board, but an opportunity to present to the community, many of whom have been asking for this in addition to the Board, and hope to do it sooner rather than later so that we can have a clear statement in our policy. Like to see us have this on the agenda at a definite time to represent the community. Response: We can commit to working with staff on the specific date for the recommendation to come to the Policy Work Group and when we believe it comes to the Board for the process.
 - Appreciate the work and a lot going on, and appreciate the engagement, deliberateness in constructing the course, and want the Board to be on record in direction to staff and policy, and the more definitive the better.
- SEAB Member Ali requested more information on the likeness in being delayed if MDE's plan for social studies would change or go on a different track? Response: This Ethnic Studies course with SPPS is separate from social studies, and the work of building this course doesn't rely on MDE. As the work continues at the State for social studies doesn't affect the timeline of the creation of this course.
- Director Ellis noted the questions from board members and from families and students in the steering committee, and how we will communicate this going forward for students and families.
- Director Brodrick noted a follow-up question - agree with Director Marchese no dispute on the need for an Ethnic Studies course in SPPS. However, in talking about work of PWG as we prepare to present to the Board the possibility of using policy to reinforce the existence and make it mandatory, know will go back to original question that if we are going to make it mandatory, we will need a clear

idea of the content and purpose of the course. That is absolutely necessary before making a recommendation to the Board.

- Director Foster clarified that we are using semesters, or quarters? Response: We do use semesters. There is 1st and 2nd - half a year each.
- Clarification was explained on the thematic design, not learning about a specific group each week. That is something we don't want to do - we may miss a group or only have a couple days to focus on each. It is about bringing students together to talk about their lived experiences, and a facilitator/teacher to explain themes and leverage lived experiences of students in space that is safe to have collaborative work and do healing and understanding of each other. Zaretta Hammond says our brains are wired by our culture, and need to explore others are different and their "hardware" and a part of who they are - when we come to a common theme from our perspective and intersectionality and commonality is what students will explore to become more aware of culture and how it shows up in classroom, community, and the world. Thematic units include exploring intersectionality of own identities, and narratives told - including dominant and counter, and systems of oppression, and transformation and change. The principles of Ethnic Studies were also provided.
- Further clarification on the design of the course and semester-long course - to ensure it is not tokenizing and using class to say 'we have done it' but not delving in and red flags in meshing everything together. Response: It will be thematic vs. content-specific. For example, students may talk about their identity and be able to explore who they are and identify as. The course construction is making space and place for that type of inquiry. Personal examples were shared. It is not about being told who students are, but a place for them to explore who they seem themselves as. Also think of this course as a survey course, and describing work around standards, materials selection, etc. Other aspects of tying this together. This is designed as a survey course, and helpful to think of PreK-12 continuum, and different standards in culturally responsive work to all of the District. This is one survey course and fits within approach to want to change across the District starting with youngest learners to the time they leave us in the 12th grade.
 - In thinking about this and overall culture and opportunities, and PreK-12, thinking about in mode of middle and high school offerings, consistently thinking about continuing to talk about race and impacts and how we show up and how we show up and identify. More questions for a clearer picture around the content of the courses, and the purpose of the class.
- Superintendent Gothard thanks everyone - he heard the Board wants more details, and that this is an important requirement to consider for the class, and more important is work PreK-12 in meeting the cultural needs of students throughout their education in SPPS. It is a part of 3A, which driving SPPS Achieves. We have a lot of work ahead of us and will continue to inform the Board to build support.
- Director Marchese is interested to learn more about the content.
- SEAB Member Ali also noted a question around the requirement for 2025, but clarify that other electives, and they will still be in place, and Ethnic Studies is not pushing other electives out of the way, and to clarify confusion. Response: Absolutely - those courses will remain.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Ellis	Yes
Director Foster	Yes
Director Brodrick	Yes
Director Vue	Yes

Director Allen	Yes
Director Kopp	Yes
Director Marchese	Yes

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

VIII. WORK SESSION

Board members then discussed external committee assignments and internal committee assignments. While board members are elected to serve the District at large, board members do determine focus Areas of schools in order to be a direct link to the students, staff, families, and community within that area, as well as school event attendance. School focus Areas for 2021 were also determined.

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