

**MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
January 9, 2018**

PRESENT: Board of Education: Z. Ellis, J. Schumacher, S. Marchese, J. Brodrick, M. Vanderwert, J. Foster, M. Xiong (arrived at 4:41)

SEAB: E. Rypa, A. Jibicho

Staff: Superintendent Gothard, C. Baker, N. Cameron, M. McBride, H. Kilgore, M. Hoerth, T. Battle, A. Collins, R. Currier, M. Gilbert, J. Turner, E. Agbamu, K. Wilcox-Harris, L. Cathey, L. Sayles-Adams, J. Engen, M. Schrul, M. Dols Klingel, G. Ghery, T. Berres, S. Walsh, S. Dahlke

SEAB Members: A. Muumin, Z. Vue, T. Henry, S. Henry, A. Steiner-Manning, R. Schulz, T. Htoo, D. Hall, M. Omar, M. Raymond, A. Hoffman

Other: T. Lonetree, J. Nathan, J. Nathan, A. Neilson, J. Heigle, J. Kopp, J. Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. AGENDA

A. Superintendent's Update

Superintendent Gothard started the meeting with a welcome to new board member, Marny Xiong. There will be a farewell ceremony for Chue Vue following the Committee of the Board Meeting.

A Listen & Learn session was held at Highland Park Middle and Senior High, where about 70 students shared their vision for not only their school, but also SPPS. Their speaking points involved extracurricular activities, sports, among other issues and experiences they encounter each day. Our students are incredible in their commitments and their pursuit of excellence, and they need support to continue. It was overall a great meeting with goals to accomplish and how to move forward while keeping the focus on the needs of our students.

He also provided a recap on the Inauguration Ceremony for Melvin Carter, Mayor of Saint Paul, who is a graduate of SPPS. It was held at Central High School and was a successful event. It was great to watch the community engage in meaningful ways, and to come together to celebrate our new mayor and our city. He also thanked everyone who helped in the event.

Superintendent Gothard also provided clarity to questions asked on the Enrollment Report presented at the December 19th Board of Education Meeting. When we analyze state funded enrollment, we showed an increase of 88 students from 16-17 to preliminary 17-18. This number is important because it is certified to the state for revenue. Our number of students was more than 500 more than our projections, meaning that we are tracking to receive more than what was approved for the budget in June, and will be revised at an upcoming meeting. These are important numbers in terms of revenue from the state in both actual and plans. When PreK and early special education students are removed, the result is a -202 students. Typically we have not used that number in reporting. There are two reports – one is K-12 only, and the other would include other factors. It's important we use the number to state for revenue, as well as looking at other indicators of where the district is meeting those factors. There are different indicators within the district. These trends are important for planning and ensuring we communicate clearly

with our community in terms of budget, planning, and revenue, but also where we have room to grow.

B. SEAB Presentation – “Expanded Student Voice”

SEAB Members presented research and findings from their project, “A District-Wide Structure for Authentic Student Voice” to propose an expanded model of authentic student voice for Saint Paul Public Schools, and to ensure the concerns of students are heard by creating a new structure of student engagement.

- Project Research Models
 - Building survey to all SPPS principals
 - 22/54 building leaders responded
 - 7 Expert Interviews
 - 11 Focus Groups with 200 students (elementary through secondary)
- SEAB Values
 - Inclusivity, Authenticity, Collaboration, Shared Power, and Consistent Structure
- A video on SEAB’s vision to revolutionize the way we work together was shown.
- SEAB’s impacts to date include changes in discourse, practice, and policy.
- Intended Impacts of an Expanded Structure
 - In focus groups, students predicted that the impacts of authentic student partnerships in all schools would include:
 - More leadership opportunities
 - Stronger sense of community
 - More role models
 - Safer, more welcoming environment
- Student focus groups and expert interviews both agreed that components of student voice are inclusiveness, shared power, engagement, safe spaces, and being authentic.
 - Inclusive: amplify all voices; all are invited; free of judgement, diversity
 - Shared Power: students know their truth; everyone’s expertise is at the table; everyone is a powerful problem solver
 - Engaging: everyone is a leader and mentor of one another; work is meaningful and fun
 - Safe space: a space to speak your truth, multiple truths are seen and valued; respect towards one another
 - Authentic: consistent; there is follow through on the part of staff; everyone is a leader good communication
- Expanded Structure: Building leaders said they need:
 - Staff, Time, Resources (training and support), Flexibility, and Consistency
 - 50% - Building leaders who have an existing structure or group
 - 27% - Working on it
 - 14% - Interested
 - 9% - May not be interested
- Visuals of SPPS Students Voice Structure Today compared to the Proposed Structure of Student Voice were presented.
- Structural Goals and Resources Needed
 - Increase student voice (consistency)
 - Shared values, staff time, training supports and funding to support
 - Mechanism for students to meet during school
 - Increase District-Wide Connectedness
 - Dedicated staff time
 - District-wide “Summer Summit”
 - Increase Communication
 - Dedicated staff time
 - Website
- Ideas on Embedding Student Voice
 - Component of strategic plan

- Seen as a key aspect of SPPS' equity work
- Included in School Improvement Plans
- Ideas from others

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- In dealing with different age groups, one of the initial thoughts around elementary schools. What is the best way to work with students of that age and to help them think about this? From your experience, would there be a lot of preparation for conversations with those students, and what are your reflections on expanding their voice? Answer: From the focus groups, we think students are very engaged and already have a voice, but it's not being heard, or loud enough, or amplified enough. With elementary students, we need to work with them to determine what they are looking for in their schools (examples: more time to interact with friends, or learning outside of classroom). Overall, if they have the idea that their voice will be heard, they may have more motivation to act upon their voice.
- In terms of structure, how do we create supports in terms of the elementary context? Student councils and structures are traditional in secondary grades. Are there or have you read about structures that might be conducive to those kinds of approaches? Answer: There are similar structures in Chicago Public Schools that mirror SEAB's vision. That would need to be further researched, however it is successful in those schools. Structures will need to be flexible and tailored. We want to work individually with building leaders and shape structure to their school so it will work best for their students. Maxfield and Chelsea Heights are working on it this year, with other schools to follow. Embedding authentic student voice in schools is important because there is a difference in a student going to school because it's a requirement, and a student who actually wants to go to school because there is a sense of community and that they belong.
- How do you hope to see the daily interactions between groups? Answer: It will rely on individual schools. We would like to look to groups like SEAB and Dare To Be Real to look to the higher-ups in their schools for ways to changes. Building leaders can also bring their ideas to SEAB, and then to the Board of Education. Facilitators will need to work closely together to accomplish this.
- From the focus groups or surveys, were there specific obstacles that people mentioned that impeded the ability for active student voice to happen? Answer: In some groups, the teacher was present in the room, which may have had an impact. Students are engaged in talking about student voice, but a teacher may be one of the problems in why their voice is not being heard. One way to overcome this is to build better connections with students and teachers. It also ties back to sharing power. In a student group, there is generally a staff member there to support that group. A structure with no hierarchy is important in these groups, as well as to have a good relation with staff to share that power.
- One of the important factors involves safe spaces. In the spaces during the focus groups, how many adults were present, and how many students were present? What was the dynamic? Answer: In some focus groups with student leadership groups, only the staff leader was present. At other focus groups in middle schools, there were no adults besides a SEAB facilitator, which helped to make those students feel more comfortable and be more authentic.

C. 2017 Audit Report

The Chief Financial Officer introduced representatives from the accounting firm, MMKR to present the final results of the FY2017 audit report.

- Three reports were shared with the Board:
 - Annual Financial Statement
 - Special Purpose Report
 - Management Report

- The role of the auditors was reviewed. The financial statements are the responsibility of the District, with the auditors issuing their opinion on the statements. Auditors also test the internal controls and compliance of the District with the Financial Statement Audit and the Minnesota State laws and regulations.
- Audit results:
 - MMKR issued an unmodified, or clean, opinion on the basic financial statements.
 - For the internal control and compliance reports, there were four comments to note.
- The General Education Aid basic formula allowed, which is the largest funding source for the District from the State of Minnesota, was reviewed. For 2018, there was a 2.0% increase.
- The state-wide unrestricted operating fund balance as a percentage of operating expenditures for SPPS versus state-wide was reviewed, with SPPS at 14.2% for FY2017. For FY2016, SPPS was at 13.0% compared to 20.7% as the state-wide average.
- The cash and investments, unrestricted fund balance, and annual expenditures of the General Fund were also presented, as well as the financial statement.
 - In 2010-2012, there have since been changes in cash flow due to how the state was metering state aid payments to school districts. At one point, they were at a 60/40 pay schedule, where the district would receive 60% in the year it was earned, and then 40% the next year. It didn't have an impact on fund balance, but did have an impact on cash flow at those times.
- The fund balance percentages were presented. Some nuances have changed in terms of the general fund, in particular the Long Term Facilities Maintenance Fund, which was previously a separate fund, but has now been largely rolled into the General Fund. For FY2017, the unassigned fund balance as a percentage of expenditures was 5.7%, which was very close to the projection of 5.8% previously presented to the Board in updates, and keeping within the 5% policy.
- The Adjusted Daily Membership and pupil units served were shown and discussed, with the percentage change in ADM and pupil units served.
 - In 2015, the legislature made a change to how they were weighting pupil units in an effort to ease the difficulties in the reporting of Minnesota school finance. School districts did not have a reduction in funding, there had to alter the formula allowance. The basic formula was adjusted to account for those pupil units. It is a reflection that is seen across all districts because of the legislative reductions, and not a reflection of SPPS.
- The other governmental funds for food service special revenue and community service special revenue funds were presented. The Food Service Special Revenue Fund financial position has improved significantly. The Community Service Special Revenue fund also saw an increase.
- A district-wide statement of net position was also presented, with the total net change in position from 2016 to 2017 being \$(45,892,000).

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Where is the happy place in terms of those numbers for special revenue funds? How do you measure the sense of security in those numbers? Answer: The rule of thumb when looking at operating funds, GFOA or ASFO will look at 5% to 10% as a general rule of thumb, or 1-2 months, which will give 8% to 17% as percentages. With the food service and special revenue funds, they also have differences in caps. The food service special revenue fund has a cap of 3 months of operations using a 9-month measurement period. It becomes concerning when the percentage is at the 33% range, because then federal funding may be reduced. MDE also recognizes that we may be accumulating resources for a one-time cap for purchases. In the past, we have also invested in cafeteria equipment.
- In looking at the \$5,711,000 for the Food Service Special Revenue Fund, how do you think about what to invest based on that number? Answer: We look at past trends and what we have been comfortable at in terms of revenue, and we also look at projections for next year

and fund balances. As we go into the next fiscal year, we also look at costs and ending fund balances, and to see the impact negotiations will have on those balances. In terms of the Community Service Special Revenue Fund, light rail affected Community Ed. for some time; it is now coming back from the hit taken a few years ago. Overall, we look at trends of students and population.

- It was also noted that within Community Service Special Revenue Fund, it is further broken down by programs. At a 25% fund balance, it starts to draw red flag. There was once cap at 25%, which is not currently in place, but if it would become a cap again, that may be one place they would look based on history.

III. ADJOURNMENT

It was motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:19 p.m. The motion passed by acclaim.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Dahlke
Assistant Clerk