

**MEETING MINUTES  
COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING  
December 5, 2017**

PRESENT: Board of Education: Z. Ellis, J. Schumacher, S. Marchese, J. Brodrick, M. Vanderwert, J. Foster (arrived at 5:26), C. Vue (arrived at 4:47 p.m.)

SEAB: Amina Muumin, Amanda Hoffman

Staff: Superintendent Gothard, M. McBride, H. Kilgore, M. Hoerth, S. Braitwaithe, P. Holm, K. Randall, T. Battle, A. Collins, M. Patal, C. Turnbull, G.S. Moua, M. Vang, A. Paulson, Y. Vang, R. Tellie, L. Erickson, K. Randall, H. Ott, I. Davis, N. Cameron, T. Parent, M. Gilbert, J. Turner, E. Agbamu, K. Wilcox-Harris, C. Baker, L. Cathey, T. Stewart-Downey, J. Statum-Allen, L. Sayles-Adams, J. Engen, M. Schrul, M. Dols Klingel, G. Ghere, S. Dahlke

Other: P. Grafstrom, M. Staloch, M. Lochungru, K. McCauley, T. Breker, S. Powers, J. Kopp, J. Verges, T. Lonetree

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m.

**II. AGENDA**

**A. Superintendent's Update**

Superintendent Gothard thanked the Transportation department and the Facilities department in helping to ensure students, staff, and families were safe due to the weather.

He also shared an update on his transition and thanked everyone for their support. To date, he has visited 50 schools and is always learning more about our schools, students, and community. The best research and learning about the district is interacting with students and staff in schools, and talking with the community. He will be providing a high-level overview at an upcoming Board of Education meeting that will set the stage for a more expansive review at the January meeting. He did share some themes:

- Students are excited to be at school with high levels of engagement.
- Proud of teacher and staff support of students; there is a high-level of people who care and want our students to achieve success
- In terms of twenty first century learnings, our facilities are a work in progress. Teachers are being creative in flexible learning areas and being creative in terms of student choice in where they sit in rooms, and staff who pull together ideas. One question asked is if this affects student engagement, and there is research that shows it does matter. It brings learnings and findings to move forward in designing and implementing new learning spaces as part of the FMP.
- Our staff are pulled in many directions to meet the needs of students. We have created a menu of support, and made progress to address root causes. We are trying to go deeper and prevent, and teach students how to self-regulate and advocate for themselves, and ways to prevent and allow them to stay engaged. They are able to Attend, Engage, and Achieve in our schools. Our staff and community partners are helping us to achieve this every day.

- There are 1,500 students in PreK classrooms, and after visiting several classrooms, there are many differences from the start of the year to now. PreK students are progressing in routines, rituals, expectations, and self-direction. It is a wonderful program for our kids and we are excited for staff to grow their best practices in PreK. It is a wonderful goal for us.
- Leadership matters. The leadership is vastly experienced, and we have a lot to build on. We need to implement great practices, building norms, and collaborate and standardize. We need a systematic approach for the best of our kids and the community.
- Student voice is important, and will be incorporated into AMSD's Reimagine Minnesota Conference. It is a two-year plan that will incorporate student voice, as we all learn, grow, and remain committed and continue to be inspired by the potential in SPPS.

#### B. SEAB Update

SEAB is currently working on a couple of projects, and the largest is organizing student engagement organizations within the schools. They are drawing inspiration from pre-existing structures, such as the student mentoring project at Johnson, as well as SEAB. It is interesting to see that even though the students attend different schools, they all share similar concerns of similar experiences.

#### QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Is the goal to eventually set up a similar program like Johnson's or miniature versions of SEAB at each of the secondary schools? Answer: SEAB is going deeper than that. They are starting with secondary and middle schools, with expansion into some elementary schools.
- What are some of the initial observations? Answer: It has been a successful program at Johnson, and it has brought positive change to the school, and SEAB wants to see that same positive change at all schools.
- A recap of the Johnson program was noted. Students involved are those that are interested in making the school a better place and are also interested in mentoring other students. They are involved in mini-training sessions; these students are then available to other students for support, mentoring, and questions in the halls and classrooms. They strive to make the school more of a community-structure.
- Do they wear badges, or how do students know they can go to them for support? Answer: SEAB will check and communicate that information to the Board.

#### C. Council of the Great City Schools Fall Conference Recap

Three Board members and Superintendent Gothard attended the Fall Conference in October 2017 in Cleveland, Ohio and they shared a recap of their experiences at the event. Mike Casserly was honored for his 40 years of service. Dr. Darian Driver of the Milwaukee School District shared her message and impassioned life in education and its meaningfulness to her. It set the tone for an informative conference. There was high-level information sessions where attendees learned more on how to be the change in urban district reform and improvement with successful strategies in high schools and the creation of social-emotional learning opportunities. Bill Gates' presentation was inspiring. One session featured three new superintendents of urban districts, including Nashville, Kansas City and Pittsburgh which provided insight on entry plans and alignment, as well as collaboration. They shared their experiences in enrollment issues, and their insight in keeping positive experiences shared with the public. The Career Pathways session focused on the collegiate experiences in other districts. Another Board Member noted that it was a great experience to provide a national context for the work of the district and an opportunity for cross-pollination for other areas of the country. Some of the sessions focused on advanced courses in equity and career pathways for students. Some districts encourage students to start to think about their college and career pathways in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to plant the seeds for their post-secondary options. It encourages them to be self-aware and knowledgeable. Another Board Member discussed the session which featured Van Jones, as well as the discussion-based sessions within the

conference. A presentation on supporting inclusive practice for students with disabilities was informational. She noted the pride in the work of SEAB alum Mischa and SEAB coordinator Shaun Walsh and their presentation at the conference.

#### D. Human Resources Transactions Overview

The Executive Director of Human Resources presented an overview of the definitions and processes within Human Resources Transactions. It was noted that an Administrative Leave is not a confirmation of wrongdoing, but a pause in the action in order to take a snapshot of the situation, gather information, and make an informed decision on the next steps. Next, the further steps in the process after administrative leave were presented. Administrative leave occurs before a formal investigation. The formal investigation allows us to answer questions. Suspensions without pay are listed by initials of the employee only to protect the privacy of the employee. A discharge may occur if there was a terminable offense. Retirement and resignations are voluntary. A termination is involuntary, such as non-renewals, deemed to resign, not timely return after leave of absence, or expired work permit. Suspension without pay is something that also happens during an investigation and a consequence of disciplinary action. There is a predetermined date at which point that person will return to work with conditions.

In terms of job evaluations, SPSS uses the Quantitative Evaluation System, with twelve factors (ten are common to all job and two are managerial-focused.) There is a job profile questionnaire, with incumbent and direct supervisor discussions. It focuses on substantial responsibilities. Jobs are compared to like jobs within other jobs in the department, but also other jobs within the District that are paid in a similar fashion. The evaluation focused on substantial responsibilities.

For promotions, there is typically a form for an open (established) position in the organization with an existing employee currently in a different role. The District has established a practice for calculating promotional increase amounts.

#### QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Could you provide an example of an administrative leave? Answer: If Human Resources is made aware of a situation of tension, they will separate the two parties in order to analyze the information on the actual occurrence. It is in everyone's best interest to take that pause with no blame on either side; it is an opportunity to step back and allow the due process to run its course.
- If someone were to make an accusation, what would be the first step before administrative leave? Would the basis be made on the accusation of a single person? Answer: It would depend on the severity of the accusation. If people were involved in a fight for example, there would be an administrative leave to gain answers to questions and to get to the bottom of the problem before it exacerbates. Administrative leave does not associate blame; its real purpose is to create a break in the action.
- When does an accusation cause another person to be taken out of the workplace? Answer: It could happen right away. If there was a physical occurrence, it would be the job of the consultant to enable administrative leave in order to get to the bottom of the situation.
- Because the vast majority of employees are part of a bargaining unit or labor union, who is involved before someone is terminated? Answer: We don't take any steps without having conversations with the employee and their bargaining units, and consultations with supervisors.
- The process of a lapsed teacher's license was also discussed, assuming they had been warned, how involved is that process? Answer: It happens about 6 times a year. The current language allows us to put that person on unpaid administrative leave until that person has a renewed license. We currently do not have a cap on that time period, but one of the proposals is to add a cap to that time window, and if the person does not renew their license within that time, they are deemed to resign.
- Seniority in teachers of the district was also discussed. We work to keep the best people in the jobs of the district. Teacher evaluations were then explained. Teachers in 1-3 years of teaching are probationary; there are three evaluations in the first three years. They are

evaluated on different components such as instructional, environmental learning, elements of effective instruction, and professional responsibilities. They receive feedback after each evaluation to determine the progress.

- If there is an increase in responsibility, it is weighed more heavily that if there is there an increase in workload/volume? Answer: Correct. An increase in volume is better handled with an increase in staff than by changing the job.
- How do we answer to the employee who says that they are doing too much? Answer: Then we need to ask what that is based on through job studies and finding that “sweet spot” for productivity in that area. If it is found that one person is doing too much, that department is asked to add additional resources or staff. If they are doing two jobs, that is something different.
- It was then discussed that the reasoning behind the Guiding Values were established in order to be mindful of the lowest paid group to earn a competitive wage and our commitment to be mindful to that.
- The numbers in the job evaluations were also explained further with reasoning in mental effort, consequence of error, work surroundings, and the point totals that are standard for different areas within the organization. When calculating the point total, it is to ensure that job titles are accurate with compensation flows.
- There is a standard promotions chart by bargaining unit which is associated with a promotional percentage, so that promotion will be impacted differently.

#### D. Literacy Overview

Key terms were reviewed in relation to the literacy overview and FAST assessment. Curriculum is the road map to the content standards and learning outcomes expected to be learned by each student. The instructional model refers to the evidence-based, culturally responsive and common frameworks used to instructional planning delivery, and assessment. Materials includes the physical and digital resources available to support the curriculum and instructional model.

The framework of teaching literacy was then reviews, with independent reading included through elementary, middle, and high school instructions.

The FAST assessment allows teachers to screen, to plan, and to monitor the results of their literacy framework in the classroom. It is a screener for teachers to know the literacy skills of their students and to monitor that information. The SPPS assessment plan includes screening, running records, small group work, and goal setting, and progress monitoring, with instruction happening at each step. FAST is used to support literacy vision for accelerating student achievement through assessments to support core instruction, intervention, and professional development. FAST key terms were then reviewed, along with grade level standards. The earlyReady for K-1 were reviewed, as well as aReading for 2-8, and CBM for 2-5.

What we've learned through the FAST assessment:

- Easy to administer
- Shortened testing time
- Teachers want more information and are using more of FAST
- More stakeholders wanting to see data
- Intentional use of data to plan instruction
- Buzz around assessments
- Talk about next steps

We can now use the data from FAST to:

- Use data to plan small group differentiated lesson focus
- Focus on independent reading
- Progress monitoring on a regular basis
- Aligning resources to support student needs
- Recognizing a need for more information
- Programmatic decisions, curriculum, materials and resources.

#### QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

- Is FAST only a literacy screener? Answer: No, it used for reading and math. There is also a social-emotional component of it but SPPS is currently not using that capability because there are parts we do not think are culturally sensitive. This year is focused on using FAST for reading, while math is option. However, next year, teachers will be expected to use the math component as well.
- A deeper dive into the MCA scores will be addressed once the District receives updated scores.
- Some would define school readiness as the ability to regulate emotions, explore the world freely, and trust adults. How are we assessing those fundamentals and responding to that information? Answer: With the Early Discovering Our World curriculum, which is rooted in social-emotional developments, we feel we are setting the stage for PreK and kindergarten students to help them to be self-regulated. There are also other ways schools are meeting the needs of students for social-emotional capabilities, including student voice in choice, PBIS frameworks, and other materials. Each school has its own defining characteristics and benchmarks that they have, but overall, it is incorporated through key messages, philosophy, and behavior. For student needing more help, the SAT team is called for more granular assistance.
- The goal is to use FAST for the social-emotional piece as well, once it is updated to be more culturally proficient for students. It could be used to gain a snapshot on a student and use the information for school readiness. Would the Kindergarten teacher then have access to that data? Answer: Yes, they would have access and it would be included in that student's profile.

E. PLTT Update

The Fall 2012 referendum provided funding for \$9 million annually for 2013-2021. It provides technology access for:

- Student engagement for anytime and anywhere learning
- Family participation
- Resources for teachers and community
- Data for informed decision

The goal of SPPS Personalized Learning is to transform teaching and learning at Saint Paul Public Schools to be student-centered, customizable, and technology-enriched to meet the diverse needs of all students.

The referendum actual and budgeted numbers were then reviewed.

Referendum Actuals 2016-2017

• Equipment	\$8,850,125
• Staffing	\$545,907
• Software	\$51,896
• Professional Development	\$83,117

Referendum Budget 2017-2018

• Equipment	\$6,973,578
• Staffing	\$1,146,678
• Software	\$585,000
• Professional Development	\$160,000

The progress of implementation was also presented with exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation presented and respective steps and their progress. Examples of impact of the PLTT initiative were also presented, including a student-made video on student life and learning before iPads compared to life and learning with iPads. Real and relevant curriculum is also an impact for staff. Projects that go deeper, engage students with community on issues that impact their lives. A clip of the Central Alumni interviews was shown. Schoology supporting tailored instruction to student voice and choice. Parent engagement through access to assignments, feedback, and course communications. There are limited resources for some language programs, and the ML

department was able to help compile materials for classes. Technology is important in dual immersion programs to make connections in the community. The impact to dual language programs was also discussed, with staff from dual language programs presenting examples of assignments and videos in other languages. Examples of formative assessment and family engagement were also presented with communication between students and families on their work in the classroom, and videos of children learning different skills. It can be used to implement instruction and progress monitoring for parents. Feedback from conferences included that parents enjoy seeing what their children are learning throughout the day. Parents want to see progress through the year of their children.

The impact of the PLTT for students with special needs was also discussed. The priorities include alignment and access, develop student independence, and support all Birth to 21 staff to integrate into instruction. Infrastructure included a “one stop” for special iPad equipment and paid apps, as well as layers of integration for iPad features. Professional development includes four PD grants from Metro ECSU, an in person training on literacy and iPad accessibility features, as well as using Schoology and SeeSaw. Examples from students with learning disabilities were also presented with before and after data comparisons. Students who cannot talk due to severe speech and language disabilities are showing a 67% in augmentative communication use in 2 years. They are developing expressive language, having social interactions, answering in class, sharing information, making choices, and expressing feelings.

The impact of PLTT with our community partners was also addressed. LibraryGo allows students to access library materials.

- 42,004 student records were successfully imported into SPPL’s database and Library Go now reaches all SPPS students.
- 854 SPPS staff e-cards have been created.
- 17,000 items have been circulated; Library Go allows students to check out up to 5 physical items
- 20,000 e-books have been checked out with OverDrive and Cloud Library
- 15% increase in online homework help usage over the 2015-2016 school year.

The Districtwide data was then presented with the number of student visits to Schoology increasing to 1,375,100 in November 2017. SeeSaw data was also presented with 33,269 student items uploaded in November 2017 and 88,793 family visits to the site. Access to technology data was also discussed, including student internet access where they live.

Teacher preparation for tech integration was also shown, with the majority of teacher responding that they agree to statement involving technology integration.

The PLTT is meeting a variety of learning needs with input from students and educators. Full implementation combines many factors. The Washington Tech example was presented to show that multiple factors are combined to advance student achievement.

Next steps include using Schoology/SeeSaw with students, educators, and families to organize, document, and communicate learning; support rigorous , culturally relevant instruction by creating a SPPS digital curriculum repository; using digital tools to assess and report what students know and inform instruction; build teacher capacity to personalize learning by infusing tailored instruction, student voice and choice, and engagement in a tech-rich environment as strategies in all PD; and support principals as building leaders for personalized learning.

#### QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- Do we work with other districts with high populations in the Hmong community to find other curriculum materials? Answer: SPPS is one of the first public schools to create any Hmong curriculum. The resources we have are created by SPPS, which is both good and bad because while we are using our own, we cannot borrow materials from other districts because it does not exist yet.
- Can parents live-stream to watch from afar? Answer: Videos can be uploaded right away for parents to view. Students are driving what they are learning and what they want to show to their families.

- Are more languages being added for the homework help service through Library Go? Answer: We hope so. Currently, there is help in English and Spanish.
- Has the change in fines and fees caused a budgetary impact for the libraries? Answer: No, it has not. Students are only able to check out 5 items at a time, and we have realized that they value those 5 items and they are learning to be responsible in areas where the money aspect is not. If a student loses material, they can “read down” the fines in order to have the fines lowered while gaining a sense of enjoyment in reading.
- A Board Member noted their concern about children starting kindergarten without basic skills, and how to use the data to support parent involvement within the home in order to support their kids? Answer: Early learning focuses on reading in kindergarten, with items such as letter sounds and goal setting on what the students need. Many kindergarten teachers are sharing what they are noticing in their classrooms and teacher-created resources. Families need to be equally involved and in working with the Office of Early learning and parents of Early Learners, we can work to ensure our youngest learners are supported at home.
  - It was then noted that while literacy is important, there are other skills that lead to literacy in students and it is important to pay attention to those.
  - Learning about food and sleep are important to early learners, and many kindergarten teachers incorporate those other aspects as part of a whole background and training on educating the whole child.
- Can you provide some examples of adaptive practices for children with IEPs? Answer: In early reading, one of the adaptive practices is to not have a cut-off time and not giving the child something they will not be able to complete. We are not assessing just to assess, and will not shame them into something for which they are not ready. Special education teachers are working with students to read directions out loud to them, and will repeat direction in order for the child to understand and for them to know what they need to do.
- How do we build a model to be supported and sustained for our teachers to be individually supported to ensure that each child has what they need to succeed? Answer: The beauty of our model is that we incorporate differentiation and workshops are inherently differentiated. Workshops and small groups are grouped together by similar composites and we look at the data in order to give teachers the best tools to help them support their students.
- What is someone says, “Aren’t we rushing our little kids too much?” Answer: No, I don’t think we are. It’s a comprehensive view of our students. If we have them spend time in the digital world of learning, we know they what they are capable of or not capable of. Kids are capable 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, and we are learning what our kids need to learn together. If we look through the lens of learning and embed in that, all skills, including social-emotional, are wrapped around the child, including academics. It is about the relationship between students and teachers, and teachers know when to push their students, and make it exciting and how to get there.
- FAST is being used in all K-8 classrooms. Expo Elementary is using math, social-emotional, and the literacy components. There will be more information from this pilot program.
- What are some ways in which we assess vocabulary words; where do we make a transition to vocabulary and where does the switch come in? Answer: In FAST, there is a vocabulary component. Currently the shift is in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. A small amount of the transition occurs in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Vocabulary skills need to happen in coordination with content, and not in isolation.
- New data will be available at the end of January 2018.

F. MSBA Resolution Discussion

One of the proposed legislative resolutions involved the cross-subsidy task force, which passed 113 in favor, and 2 opposed at the MSAB Delegate Assembly. These resolutions were brought forth with the hope that every schools district in Minnesota would approve this

resolution and be brought to Washington. The resolutions will be brought before the Board at both the December 2017 and January 2018 regular meetings. MSBA is hoping to finalize the resolutions by February in order to present them in Washington.

- Board members noted that there is no reason not to do this. It's important to look at the financial impact for the district. It may be helpful to translate it into dollars per student. We may need to think about other resources, such as litigation. We need to hold the government accountable for this, and be a leader.
- It was then discussed if it would be possible for litigation to be brought forth by school boards across the country. While we cannot speak to the specific legal strategy on a national basis, if there is an appointment in moving forward, our general counsel and outside counsel would be tasked with devising a strategy to address this.
- It was noted that it is an ongoing issue in terms of a funding aspect, and we need to do what is important for all students. We need to take the funding in ways to make decisions in the best interest of all students in the district.
- It was then discussed the ways in which the information could be shared with the public and to inform them of what is happening with the cross-subsidy, with ideas such as the SEAC to share perspectives and a community forum to explain special education and its costs and funding sources.
- Advocacy will be the tool to get this topic on the agenda at the legislature. While we don't know if litigation will really solve this, we need to recommend to really speak to the legislature that they need to hold true to their original funding amount.
- Adding numbers to the resolution may help, as well as specific information for Saint Paul Public Schools. The political statement of statewide impact and the impact to SPPS may also be beneficial. Dr. Gail Ghery or Chief Schrul may be able to provide specific numbers on the dollars for cross-subsidy.
- There will be a motion to both the state legislature, as well as the federal legislature.

### **III. ADJOURNMENT**

It was motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. The motion passed by acclaim.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Dahlke  
Assistant Clerk