

**MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
September 1, 2009**

PRESENT: Board of Education: Kazoua Kong-Thao, Elona Street-Stewart, John Brodrick, Anne Carroll

Absent: Tom Goldstein, Keith Hardy

Staff: Interim Superintendent Kelly, Valeria Silva, Kathy Denman-Wilke, Luz Maria Serrano, Joe Raasch, Jeremiah Ellis, Christine Wroblewski, Michelle Walker, Richard Valerga, Nancy Stachel, Jill Cacy, Hitesh Haria, John Bobolink, Michael Baumann, Michelle Biermann

Other: Greg Patterson, Doug Belden, Andy Mosca, Dave Nystrom, Ron Schultz, Pat Welch, Julie Downwind, Felicia Weedie

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:47 p.m.

II. AGENDA

- Administrative Response to the American Indian Education Parent Committee Resolution
- Approval of Recommended Capital Bonding Projects
- Large Scale System Change (LSSC) Discussion -- School Choice
- Standing Item: School & Program Changes -- AYP Implications for 2009-10 and 2010-11 School Improvement Plans
- Standing Item: Policy Update (no report)
- Standing Item: Superintendent Transition
- Work Session

1. Administrative Response to the American Indian Education Parent Committee Resolution

Administration presented their response which incorporated the original Resolution of Concurrence as presented to the Board in May, 2009. Once the Board accepts the Administrative response both the response and the original Resolution of Concurrence 2008-2009 will be forwarded to the Minnesota Department of Education as required.

The Resolution offered recommendations in five areas and administration responded to those as follows:

• **Align Resource Allocation to District Priorities: American Indian Studies (AIS) Program**

In the resolution the Parent Committee requested:

- The continued funding of the American Indian Studies (AIS) Program
- That the AIS budget and program management be within either the Office of Professional Development, as a separate program from Indian Education, or continue in another district department.
- That a future discussion takes place on the possibility of a K-8 program or another option for meeting articulation within the schools.

Administration responded for FY 2009-10, the District has created a new separate budget for the American Indian Studies Program. The budget amount fully funds the 5 FTE's (4 teachers and 1 EA), supplies and marketing. Administratively the new budget falls under the Office of Academics.

As part of the Large Scale System Changes (LSSC), the articulation of culture and language programs has been identified as an area for further study. A discussion of the last recommendation with the Indian Education Parent Committee and the Chief of Schools will be scheduled. In addition, the District will meet with the American Indian School principal and the American Indian Studies principals to explore the possibility of a K-8 program or another option for meeting articulation within the schools. These discussions will seek ways to strengthen the AIS language program which studies have indicated increases academic performance. Appropriate curriculum and space will be reviewed to ensure that the American Indian Magnet building could accommodate a rigorous and viable pre-K – 8 school program. Findings will be reported by mid-year 2009-10.

- **Ensure High Academic Achievement for All Students – Increase American Indian Student Attendance**

The Parent Committee requested:

- Continuation and monitoring of the Attendance Letter and template for the next two years to determine the impact of the strategy on American Indian attendance and
- An update on the District's work surrounding attendance and truancy goals, especially as it pertains to American Indian students.

Administration stated the district will continue to direct all principals, with a higher percentage of American Indian students who have attendance issues, to include specific attendance goals for American Indian Students within the report template created last year. Support will be provided by the Office of Accountability. The District goal is to decrease the number of absences with 11 or more days by 10% in the coming year. The School and Program Audits Department will support the Indian Education Program by:

- Directing identified schools to provide a specific plan for how they intend to address the attendance issue and continue to provide schools with a report template to facilitate the process. The report template will be provided earlier in the school year which will allow schools to monitor attendance throughout the year and include in the subsequent end-of-year report.
- Collecting and monitoring the plans, and

- **American Indian Suspensions**

In this area the Parent Committee requested:

- An updated report of American Indian student suspension offenses
- Input into the development of K-12 classroom behavior model and Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
- How the district intends to address the seriousness of the current suspension data.

Administration indicated it takes the suspension data very seriously and will continue to focus on further reductions. The complete report of American Indian student suspensions was provided along with a summary report. This year the District began the first phase of the work in this area by information gathering, meeting with principals, students and parent groups. In February the Task Force on Classroom Management began meeting weekly. Input was sought from the Indian Education Parent Committee on February 19, 2009. In addition, an individual meeting was conducted with the Supervisor of Indian Education who was also a part of additional meetings. The Classroom Management System is identified as a PreK-12 initiative and will continue with implementation next year with a focus on the inclusion of cultural proficiency in addressing student behavior. There is a need for the Parent Committee to serve in an advisory role while the system is implemented. The Rights and Responsibilities Handbook was also redesigned to be more user-friendly and should allow greater understanding for both students and parents.

- **Increase American Indian Student Achievement**

The Parent Committee requested an indication as to how schools with low American Indian student achievement are addressing the academic needs of American Indian students. They indicated they would like to see this combined in the attendance letter if possible.

Administration stated it is looking carefully at the identification of the critical outcomes and academic needs of American Indian students and evaluating the best structure to better support those outcomes. The structures will include the district-wide Response to Intervention (RTI) system and professional learning around cultural proficiency. The School and Program Audits Department will add student achievement data into the attendance letter for schools receiving the attendance letter template. Special Education will continue to offer state reimbursement for Indian Education social worker positions for the 2009-10 school year.

- **The District's Curriculum must be more inclusive of American Indian history, language, people and cultures.**

The Parent Committee requested that (1) some accountability system be put in place to assure that teachers are actually teaching the new anchor lessons along with more principal support in pursuing these courses and (2) increased awareness of Professional Development opportunities in culturally responsive teaching and anchor lessons available to staff.

With regard to the first issue, administration stated it was their expectation that all anchor lessons posted on the district curriculum website in the Social Studies section will be taught. Anchor lessons are required and have been crafted as a core part of the curriculum in the courses in which they are placed. They articulate important content standards and contain detailed process and pedagogy information. Current district-level curriculum staffs, at the Center for Professional Development, continue to clarify and tighten curriculum direction in support of teaching these (and other) content anchors. District curriculum staff will continue to craft curriculum utilizing web and technology tools that will make it easier and more efficient for principals to support and monitor implementation of required lessons.

In addition, the district has launched the process for creating a system of common, required end-of-course assessments. These assessments will include topics covered in anchor lessons in all content areas.

Relative to the second item, district-wide cultural competency professional development programs are in the process of implementation. Professional development calendars for 2009-10 include four district-wide content-specific curriculum conferences to support teachers in preparation of anchor lessons across content areas. Anchor lessons pertaining to American Indian topics will be core to discussions with all district social studies teachers during opening workshop week in August, 2009 and on the curriculum conference dates at an additional three meetings.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- There was some discussion on suspension rates. Administration indicated American Indian suspensions were reduced by 28% since 2006.
- A committee member stated they appreciated the goals for attendance. However, in looking at the data it seems the senior high is doing better than the elementary. Concern was expressed that, since good habits start early, focusing on elementary attendance would be beneficial in establishing future attendance habits.
- Appreciation was expressed that everyone would be receiving the cultural proficiency training and operating off the same message.
- A concern was expressed regarding the academic support piece for the schools who have few American Indian students and the fact students don't show up in the data and so might

be missed in the development of the SCIP plans. Administration responded that a new piece has been added to the data collection (NWEA) which is an assessment tool giving information on where a student is three times during the year. This will help in making parents more aware of where their student is relative to achievement and where help might be necessary. Additional reading and writing materials are also being implemented (MONDO); these have built in assessments which teachers will be required to track. PALS was implemented last year for grades Pre-K - 2 which provides another assessment for comparing student progress. The parent committee was asked to assist in disseminating information to parents on these tools so they can track their child's progress.

- Clarification was made about the concern that if there are fewer than 20 students they don't show up in the SCIP cells and are missed. The Superintendent responded that as the new goals are moving all children to proficiency, the emphasis will be on an individual look at each child. Students in need of assistance in attaining proficiency will be identified individually by school so that schools can concentrate on moving them forward toward proficiency.
- The Chief Accountability Office stated that, while on the aggregate report for a school the American Indian students would not be identified if fewer than 20; the principal has access to the scores for every student enrolled in the school and typically will do a query about all of their students even if it doesn't show up in the aggregate report. With the new 10% goals, this includes every student, every sub-group and every grade level so no student should be missed.
- The American Indian Program staff were asked how often they communicated with the Parent Committee on data. They stated that data was reviewed pretty much at every meeting and because there are a number of new members, training is being provided in various areas as well. Additionally, mid-year feedback on the resolution items is sought from parents. The template letter has been a very successful tool in bringing American Indian students to the attention of school administration for additional work.
- Relative to reporting back to the Board on the extent to which administration thinks that the issues have been addressed, what kind of tracking is done to catch the problem areas which might not be working as successfully as expected? Is the process moving more toward providing solutions rather than catching problems? Response: There will be more regular reporting from administration on how well things are going throughout the year as requested by the Board at an earlier meeting. A method for reporting this is being explored at this time.
- Committee members were asked, what, as a parent, would be their expectation for advancing their child's achievement from the teacher and in the SCIP plan? Response: For the most part the initiatives and SCIP plans are very broad and general and address all students. It is a matter, in the areas of attendance or support, of having something in the SCIP plan so the students aren't overlooked as they are not counted within the sub-cells. Don't focus only on making AYP; hopefully the focus on each student this year will cover addressing the individual problems (attendance, achievement) of each student and no one will be forgotten.
- Is there any way, in schools with small populations of a student group, of capturing resources and best practices to be sure the teachers have those to support their instructional efforts? Response: When the template letter is sent out the MCA II data and attendance data are consulted, the letter is then sent to the school alerting them of the students involved and suggesting initiatives for the students with a follow-up scheduled. Materials on best practices are supplied with the letter to help facilitate work with the individual students. These materials have been developed by the American Indian Community Work Group and the American Indian Education Team and include practices used at the American Indian Magnet which have brought good results.
- It was noted that the National Indian Education Association has requested information on promoting the inclusion and dissemination of native student data and information in its work with their campaign for high school equity. It was suggested SPPS participate in this campaign because the schools NIEA has identified have approximately 50% native

populations and are in Washington, New Mexico or California. There are no urban districts represented. St. Paul, by having such an active Indian Education Program and a strategic plan that through the resolution process addresses Indian education on an annual basis, needs to be sure its information is included because there are few districts that have a significant urban Indian population where the distribution of responsibility is as foundational as it is in SPPS.

- Discussion occurred on what was shown on the social studies website relative to the anchor lessons and administration was asked to ensure that the most current and accurate information was posted on that site.
- Teachers are being approached directly in the implementation of the lessons with a modeling of the lessons in the classroom.
- The monitoring of the resolution findings was the biggest concern of the committee – is it being monitored, who is doing it, how is it being monitored and then getting the information back as to whether it is working or not and what adjustments need to be made. These issues seem to have been addressed but continued communication with administration and having direct contact with the individuals accountable are vital to success.
- The Committee asked that the Chief of Schools meet directly with the committee on the AIS program at their October meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Kong-Thao moved that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education accept the Administrative Response to the American Indian Education Parent Committee Resolution of Concurrence 2008-2009. Motion seconded by Ms. Carroll.

Motion passed.

2. Approval of Recommended Capital Bonding Projects

The Superintendent stated this report represents the culmination of a year of hard work on the part of Operations, the Capital Expenditure Advisory Committee (CEAC) and the Academics and Operations Committee (AOC). The new process has resulted in in-depth communication and conversation around where the District should go with capital expenditures and a joint recommendation from CEAC and AOC on capital expenditures for 09-10.

The Chief Operations Officer provided background on the recommendations noting that in May, 2009 the Board approved that the 2008-2009 school year be used to redesign the capital bonding process. In February, 2009, the Facilities Conditions and Educational Adequacy Study (FCA/EAA) was completed. In June, 2009 building administrators submitted their priority ranking lists from FCA/EAA data along with one additional capital proposal to Facilities Planning. From June to August, 2009 the Capital Expenditure Advisory Committee and the Academic and Operations Committee met independently to review data and then determined a joint recommendation for the allocation of capital funds. The new process combines data-driven decisions with site-based priorities. The overall recommendation includes:

Capital Bonds Available	\$23,000,000
(\$8 million carried over from 08-09; \$15 million in bonds to be issued in 09-10)	
District-wide Projects	7,500,000
• Technology Infrastructure Projects	3,250,000
• DDC Controls	4,000,000
• Access Control/Cameras/Lighting	250,000
“Top 3” Priorities by Site	\$8,796,628
Recommended “Single” Proposals	2,323,950
Contingency (10%)	2,300,000
Project Management (Salaries)	700,000
LSSC/Programmatic Changes	1,000,000
Miscellaneous Projects	379,422

The funds have been distributed equitably in line with district priorities.

District-wide Projects – updating systems to provide more efficiency.

- 44% of schools ranked direct data controls (DDC) as a priority. This will provide a reduction in operating costs with a 7-8 year payback.
- Technology infrastructure projects include new wiring, controls, switches and equipment. VoIP will allow for messaging, collaboration, internal dialing, announcements, etc. This will put VoIP in 60% of the schools.
- Access control, cameras, site lighting will complete security projects.

Top 3 priorities by site takes site input into consideration. The priorities were determined by the sites using FCA/EAA data. All sites had the opportunity to submit the ranking form. All schools which submitted top 3 priorities are having those priorities addressed. Top projects requested by schools include such things as: fixed projectors and Smartboards; marker boards and tack boards; card key access systems; additional electrical outlets in classrooms; teacher storage and cubbies; public address equipment; dedicated drop-off areas; additional data ports in learning areas; auditorium improvements and playground/playfield improvements.

\$25 million worth of **single project proposals** (52 proposals) were received; \$15 million were to add square footage or were deferred maintenance (these are handled through alternative bonds); all other projects totaled \$10 million. The single projects total was limited to 10% of the overall capital bonding or \$2.3 million. The single proposals were judged on the following criteria: (1) what will close the achievement gap; (2) what gives the most benefit to the most students (consistency/standardization); and (3) decreases operating costs. With a few exceptions all projects valued under \$250,000 were recommended for approval. These include such things as minor repairs/remodels; temperature and lighting controls; site improvements and student storage. Two major projects were received which were recommended for approval: a kitchen remodel (originally requested three years ago) at Cherokee Heights and the installation of artificial turf at Harding to provide for increased use. Installation of this artificial turf will provide savings on the maintenance budget. In all, 26 of the 52 “single proposals” which were submitted were recommended.

Next steps in the new process include the Board’s review at the 9/1 COB meeting and approval of the recommended expenditures at the 9/22 Board meeting. On 9/23 Operations will begin the planning and design of the multitude of capital projects and inform building administrators of the capital projects that will occur at each site. In November the Board will be asked to approve the sale of \$15 million of capital bonds; which, if approved, will be sold in December. While moving forward with the projects a feedback mechanism will be finalized and sent to the sites; feedback will be collected and analyzed and the process modified if necessary.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- On what basis were the priorities made and did any sites not submit their priorities and what happened in that case? Response: Each school was given a list of their site’s deficiencies; they made the choice with their site councils as to what priorities they required. No basis was given for site choices on the top 3 priorities, the sites established their criteria. It was assumed it would have something to do with the mission, vision and strategic plan. There were seven sites that did not submit their priorities (two are scheduled for closure and one is a non-academic site). These sites will receive the “district-wide” improvements.
- On the single projects – these are not among the FCA/EAA priorities? No.. Then how did Cherokee Heights’ kitchen not end up as a priority? Response: For the FCA/EAA studies the condition of the actual facility was looked at; they did not look specifically at what the condition of the equipment was from a food service perspective. They looked at the overall, general condition of the sites.

- Are there other “sleeping needs” out there where there might be major equipment issues? Response: That is a possibility from a capital perspective.
- Concern was expressed about the schools who did not submit their specific requests. This is not about that they didn’t; but administration needs to make sure these schools are not otherwise under-represented; under-served and that their students are not particularly needy and are not being hurt by the failure of administrators or site councils to submit a response. This cross check must be done. Kids should not be punished by failure to comply with this process. Response: This was addressed with the Executive Directors who followed up with the schools. Kids will not be hurt. The CEAC Chair stated that within the committee they were mystified by this lack of response and it was discussed. Unless the building did not need anything, kids got hurt because the site administration did not follow the protocol. The Board requested that formal documentation show and be examinable for the four schools which did not submit their priorities showing a specific reason why none of the capital priorities identified in FCA /EAA were important enough to be addressed in this cycle. If the needs really are there, then someone needs to step in and make sure they happen even if the site administration/council doesn’t.
- The turf at Harding, will this bring all schools up to par? What is the status of the fields? Response: There are a few schools that still do not have artificial turf – Arlington, Como and Highland. Are there plans to address this? Response: The current capital bonding process will address this through priorities requested by the sites as a single proposal request.
- How did the process of arriving at a joint recommendation from CEAC and AOC work? Did CEAC feel they had adequate input in coming up with the recommendation? Response: From the administration perspective the AOC discussed where it needed to go with the projects in terms of ranking and what were the different possibilities. Both CEAC and AOC had various opportunities to slice and dice the data provided for consideration. Having the opportunity to look at the data in different ways helped as the determinations were made. CEAC responded that much of the agreement on projects was a “happy coincidence” so there needs to be some additional thought on how the model works when coincidence does not put the two groups on the same track. CEAC wanted a model that was data driven. They wanted input from the sites, ranking of the FCA/EAA data lists. The new process is objective and most, if not all, of the politics has been taken out of it. In future it would be desirable to have a joint meeting between CEAC and AOC before the recommendation is presented to the Board.
- What mechanisms are available to make sure that information on this process and the improvements provided become common information and reflects well on the schools for participating? Response: Some of the automatic processes already in place contribute to aligning information which is provided to families and better serves them. Some of these include the Back to School Guide, the SPPS website and more information on the facilities and how they support achievement.

MOTION: Ms Carroll moved the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education approve the recommendations for capital projects as proposed with thanks to the Capital Expenditure Advisory Committee, the Academics and Operations Committee, the schools and staff for their involvement in the process. Mr. Brodrick seconded the motion.

Motion passed.

3. Large Scale System Change (LSSC) Discussion -- School Choice

The Superintendent indicated this was a continuation of the discussion on LSSC. Rightsizing and consolidation have been discussed with some actions having been taken in this area; discussion on some of the contractual issues have been deferred to the appropriate negotiation tables; the one big issue remaining is school choice. This issue has been under consideration in the district over an extended period of time and is being brought forward again as it is an issue which does need to be addressed. SPPS has a tradition of honoring and valuing choice

which is not something to back away from or change significantly without discussion from all of the communities. A committee has been developed internally to begin the review process and initial thoughts will be presented as an introduction; a deeper discussion between the Board and administration will be necessary to come to an in-depth understanding of the issue and possible alternatives/options.

The Chief of Community Relations Officer and the Director of Student Placement were called on to begin the review of the subject of school choice with a review of actions taken to date.

- In May 2009 it was recommended a three-region model of school choice be adopted.
 - Within each region, specific school programs (TBD) would be duplicated, and the district would maintain seven citywide magnets that families could attend from anywhere in Saint Paul. The recommended citywide schools were Central Senior High School, Open School, Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet, L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion, Crossroads Science and Montessori, Four Seasons A+ Elementary, and the American Indian Magnet School.
 - Complexity was addressed by reducing levels of preferences from 14 to 7.
 - With this 3-region model, the district is estimated to save between \$1.1 million and \$2.2 million in transportation costs annually.
- In June the Board took action to “hold” final action on a revised school choice model until April 2010 and directed administration to bring forward a final proposal about the School Choice model by April 2010 for implementation in fall 2011. This was postponing, not eliminating, the discussion on school choice. The additional time allows for deeper analysis and research regarding effects on desegregation, program articulation and replication, and possible reconfiguration of middle grades prior to final action on a new choice model. Administration will prepare a year-long calendar of benchmarks regarding refinement of the school choice proposal, which will include a project plan, community engagement opportunities and updates to the Board of Education between September 2009 and April 2010.
- Feedback Themes from the 2008-09 fall and spring LSSC engagement (community, staff and Board) process included:
 - Concerns about equity between the regions regarding school choice and the quality of programming replicated in each region.
 - Concerns regarding capacity for secondary students on the Eastside.
 - Concern about the high potential for segregation with the three-region model.
 - The implications of a loss of choice for families.
 - Concerns for how students/families will be affected by these recommendations.
 - A desire to see more details/information about specific city-wide options including Adams and Expo.
- Administration follow-up in Summer 2009
 - Preliminary Project Team formed to talk through recommendations
 - A Federal technical assistance grant for a voluntary student assignment planning process was applied for.
 - There was a review of the gaps from previous school choice change processes
- There is a great deal of history around the school choice recommendation processes and it is recognized SPPS has a very complex and complicated choice system. Opportunities for improvement to the process included a review from 2008-09 and previous rounds of School Choice analysis. Some improvements suggested were:
 - To work from the Board of Education’s Vision and Direction for school choice
 - Seeking clarity between Board and Administration on desired goals, criteria (weighted) and outcomes related to changes in SPPS School Choice model
 - Obtaining additional data to inform the process (market research regarding why parents choose specific schools, leave schools, return)

The intention of the presentation was to start the Board thinking about the subject and to consider a longer meeting involving the senior leadership team in a collaborative discussion

regarding the direction of school choice. It would include such things as: the development of a LSSC II school choice process that is transparent and well defined with a determination of outcomes and objectives

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Administration was instructed to provide a summary of the school choice discussion so that all board members are speaking from the same page and the absent members are aware of what was discussed on the subject at this meeting.
- A suggestion was made that, as the Board considers LSSC and School Choice, it also think about the process of building a mission and vision statement as the current one is three-four years old and by the end of the changes being considered/made there may be a need for a new iteration. Board member response. Until the mission and vision are driven all the way through or until such time as the Board determines that the mission and vision are really not what is meant, it should not be re-examined.
- This discussion has to be rooted in what the Board knows is its mission and the Board's expectations of the District.
- There is some urgency in having the discussion and moving through implementation of recommendations and the Board is essential in making that happen.
- A couple items from previous discussions which were never resolved were: (1) Choice as means versus an end. (The consensus seemed to be "choice as means not an end") and (2) to never forget the end as the means evolve.
- What problems does the current choice system solve, which were intentional and which were unintentional? It has successfully met the needs of a lot of things it was not originally intended to and these are now part of the expectations around choice.
- What problems does it cause (planned and unplanned) – within the context of what has it solved/met (planned/unplanned)?
- One of the challenges with the ideas put forth last fall is there didn't seem to be a line of connection between the ideas put forth and the problems being solved or needs being met. There was not a connection between the understood in advance and the unintended consequences. This should be considered as part of the framework in the next round of discussion.
- The hope was expressed that the discussion would not start from where it left off. The initial conversation should be away from the details of what was put forth earlier and back up to the higher level thinking of "what are we trying to accomplish?"
- An opinion was expressed about being deeply troubled by the cost (to peoples' lives, opportunities for kids, equity and fairness) of the proposed changes compared to the net hard dollar cost savings – just can't reconcile this.
- In looking at choice at a "higher thinking level" – there must be various studies out there. Is there opportunity to look at the best, the most promising practices out there that have worked and could be adapted? If it is happening and working, what pieces can be brought into St. Paul to move toward success? Is there opportunity to focus on areas of success within the district – what program, effort really makes a difference? Look at practices and what is working; look at innovation and successful ends. Look at the bigger pictures of what SPPS will look like in the future and then work back to achieve that end.
- Change does not come without cost and choice may fall in that category. The District can't go back to not having choice. There may be things which can be done with the choice system by tweaking it to help and to eliminate some of the damage which may or may not have been done by the choice system.
- The belief was expressed that choice system, to a greater or lesser degree, did create schools labeled winners and losers. Can the choice system be kept and somehow allow for concentration on the schools so they can better achieve and not compete for kids?
- What are the financial implications by school of the current system? This should be provided to bring all Board members current in their understanding (with summary level data).
- The demographic changes to the district and how has that affected the choice system?

- There have been some school districts that have created policies around transportation, student activities and staff in buildings and “purchasing” those things. Does the district governance structure allow this to become an option for schools or will it create greater disparities or does it solve certain issues for certain school sites?
- Need to consider ways to address disparities, create efficiencies and effectiveness and ways individual schools might address that.
- What might parents be willing to pay? What could be sustained over time around: activity fees, transportation, etc?
- There must be a district-wide discussion and more colloquial discussion relative to parent’s desires/needs.
- On enrollment, need to consider the SPPS district and the external components impacting it (charter schools, home schooling, etc.) and how that impacts school choice.
- Look at supports which are in place: businesses, foundations, the media, the chambers, the various stakeholders, etc. How does that impact the kind of choices that could be looked at? What kinds of innovations need to be in place? Can SPPS sustain its partnerships?
- As part of the facilitated conversation there should be a “Values” conversation – that is foundational to the overall discussion.
- The concept of asset based; whatever is done should be attractive, appealing and exciting and the best for the kids in both the short and long term. It should be visionary (it doesn’t all have to be in place tomorrow); it should be an evolving process based on a sustainable process. It should be flexible and able to respond to changes over time but grounded in values. It MUST be sustainable over time and address changes which occur over time. This means criteria must be developed.
- Because the district has information now it has not had in the past, where will there be a discussion about what goes in what building – look at buildings as assets, capital assets for the district. How can the conversation be balanced where there is an honest look at buildings and how best to utilize them, what best fits what programs? If choice is really going to be looked at in terms of district values and making sure there is educational equity, this will need to be addressed. The district needs to stop creating the impression to the community that the school district is only about school buildings. Families need to feel a connection around stability that keeps kids in school, but they need to be disconnected from the notion that the only place where education occurs is in “X building” or in a building at all. Education is moving much more toward other exciting areas for disbursement; how can that be built into a sustainable model.
- There was a reiteration of the themes heard:
 - A statement informative to board members in this conversation but also for those who are absent.
 - Committed to having the district-wide discussion
 - Need to be honest about some of the hard questions which will arise
 - Need to find a way to manage the discussion so people can hear it and respond to get the necessary information
 - The feedback will be used to help frame the discussion with the facilitator (there are clearly several hours’ worth of discussion on what has been presented).
- The conversation needs to be managed in such a way that it allows for open and honest discussion without alarming or causing panic among any of the stakeholders. It needs to be communicated clearly that this is a discussion to gather information which will be utilized to achieve an end which has not yet been defined. It needs to be broad.
- In planning this there will be a need to keep tracking the progress of the conversation; what it touches on, what is explored and eliminated. Keep a record of everything considered; create an evolutionary record/process for the discussion (particularly in view of a new superintendent being hired).
- The work which has gone before is of value; it helps frame the conversation.
- Look at what other districts have been doing.

4. Standing Item: School & Program Changes

AYP Implications for 2009-10 and 2010-11 School Improvement Plans

The Superintendent indicated that what was being focused on at this point are the Title I schools identified as “in need of improvement.” Much of what has been done in the past and what will be done is in line with guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Federal government. She noted the U.S. Department of Education has published Federal guidelines which challenge districts and states to be more aggressive in their efforts to turn around failing schools or schools with specific academic challenges. These guidelines will have significant impact for urban districts. Items under consideration state that every state must identify the bottom 5% of its Title I schools in school improvement status and target the majority of the school improvement funds to implement “robust and comprehensive” reforms to dramatically transform school culture and improve student academic outcomes.

Under the proposed guidelines, districts will be required to choose from four models of school turnaround; these are very proscriptive models. The models are: (1) the “turn around model” which requires replacement of the principal and at least 50% of the staff and adoption of new or revised instructional strategies. The new leadership needs to consider extending the school day and year; offering social services and recruiting, placing and developing highly effective teachers. (2) The “restart” model closes the school and reopens it under the management of a charter organization or educational management organization; it must admit, within the grades it serves, all former students who wish to attend. (3) The “closure” model closes the school and transfers all the students to higher performing schools in the district. (4) The “transformation” model implements a comprehensive transformation strategy that, at minimum, replaces the school leadership and develops and rewards teacher and leader effectiveness (incentives); adopts comprehensive instructional programs; extends time for students and staff and offers community-oriented services that provide operating flexibility and intensive support.

These guidelines are going through final reading and feedback in September and will then be issued. If the guidelines are adopted, the district would choose a strategy that works best for each school. However, the guidelines state that “to ensure the districts are providing a variety of strategies any district with nine or more schools in school improvement will not be allowed to use any single strategy in more than half of its schools.”

SPPS has done parts of these options already within the district so they are not new. While some of the actions taken previously have caused angst within the community and stakeholders; these guidelines are saying the district will be required to make very aggressive turnaround efforts for these schools. This will be far beyond what has been done and there will not be a lot of flexibility in the implementation. This is being kept in mind with the considerations underway for the schools currently in need to school improvement for 09-10.

The Chief of Schools reminded everyone that the discussion will not be focusing on the replication or articulation of programs at this time. The school and program changes under discussion are directly a result of Title I schools identified in need of improvement. A list of schools in need of improvement was supplied broken down by the stage in which it has been placed to clarify the discussion.

Every school on the list has to complete a School Improvement Plan because they have been identified as “in need of improvement.” The improvement plans will follow a timeline that includes school level planning, engagement with district staff, community engagement and on-going updates to the Board. The timeline was reviewed in detail.

MDE has put a hold on all school improvement grants pending the outcome on the Federal guidelines. The District needs to be sure to review the State and Federal requirements on NCLB in depth with all school communities. The communities need to be Informed and engaged regarding the requirements and options (specifically for those schools at Stage 3 or higher) relative to what would be appropriate for their schools.

Administration plans to update the Board at the October COB meeting on what the schools are contemplating. On November 10 all school improvement plans must be submitted to the District; they will be reviewed and then submitted to MDE. The District improvement plan is due to MDE on November 10.

For SY 09-10 all schools, Stage 2 or higher, will have supports put in place in the areas of: assessment, grades K-5 Reading, grades 7-12 literacy and math, student behavior and social development. These are district identified supports for schools identified as in need of improvement.

For schools at Stage 2 or higher, the NWEA-MAP will be given Fall, Winter and Spring. This is a criterion-based assessment used to measure student growth in Reading and Math and will be given to students in grades 3 to 9.

For grades K-5, all schools will begin implementation of the newly adopted Mondo Reading Curriculum. District supports include Reading Intervention Support Specialists and extensive professional development support coordinated with current professional learning community work.

All secondary schools will be engaged in work with the Leadership and Learning Center and Dr. Douglas Reeves. This work includes identification of key standards, alignment of instruction and formative assessments, non-fiction writing in content areas and a focus on math. In addition, SPPS will focus on increased professional development and support of literacy instruction within all content areas.

All schools will implement the Positive School-Wide Behavior Model (PSBM). This will be supported by Executive Directors, PSBM Support Specialists and will focus efforts to decrease out-of-class time for students.

Administration provided a summary of the guidance from MDE outlining the requirements for schools in Corrective Action, Pre-Restructuring and Restructuring. At these levels of need, one of the identified actions includes extension of the length of the school day or year. Providing a full-time extended day program for schools at Stage 3 or higher will require changes to transportation and coordinated efforts with SPFT leadership to ensure high quality teachers during extended day programming.

Immediate action is required to address the need to provide a full-time extended day program for schools at Stage 3 or higher. There is an "equal treatment" law which does not allow the District to do this. District administration is consulting with the Legal Department, Transportation Department and the Title 1 Office to determine the specific actions that will be required to address this need.

The Superintendent stated there is no intention to "drop bombshells". The District intends to be sure everyone is aware of the timelines, process and where individual schools are in terms of the level of intervention needed. She again stated that business as usual is no longer an option and everyone needs to understand that this is because there will now be a "mandate to no longer do business as usual" as is evident from the MDE directives and Federal guidelines.

There is urgency to get children to proficiency; the only way the sanctions will not be imposed is if students move to proficiency or higher. Changing the achievement of students is the best way to avoid sanctions. The other critical piece is the district is facing another deficit for the coming year if enrollment doesn't increase. There will again be a need to tighten belts; school closures will have to be considered again as it will become a greater struggle for the District each year sanctions are imposed and deficits are faced. The District is being proactive in its efforts to move children to proficiency but change is coming, it will be dramatic and it will NOT be an elective process.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Is the St. Paul Federation of Teachers aware of these potential Federal guidelines? The District will work to be sure they are aware of them. Since these are Federal guidelines so they will be implemented nationwide and everyone in education will be aware of them.
- What is being done to ensure all staff in all schools on the list understand what it means and the implications to the school and staff at each stage? Response: Administration is starting with the highest need first (Stage 3 or higher) to review the State and Federal requirements with each school and then work back from there with the schools and staff.
- Administration was instructed to put the written information provided for this discussion on the website so it can be accessed easily to inform the public and staff. Response: The Title I Office keeps all updates from MDE; this can be accessed at the School and Program Link.
- The statement was made that it is important that the rank and file be informed on this so they understand that “this is not going to go away.”
- How does this affect the “Race to the Top” funds? Response: SPPS will not be in competition for those dollars if proactive actions are not taken and if changes are not made.

The Superintendent stated the school and program changes, the goals of the 10 percentage point gains are not going to go away because what does not go away for the District is the kids and their achievement which is what the end result is all about.

5. Standing Item: Policy Update

No report was made at this meeting.

6. Standing Item: Superintendent Transition

Saint Paul Public Schools search consultants reported to the Board of Education that they are making good progress in the superintendent search listening interviews with members of the community and administration. The results of the interviews will lead to the compilation of a Candidate Profile Report. In addition to the group meetings, consultants have completed phone calls to civic, business and philanthropic leaders.

The search consultants will be in Saint Paul on September 16 and 17 to continue group interviews with staff, faculty, families, community members and students. The search process is receiving a steady level of interest, enthusiasm, and commitment from community leaders who wish to see that the new superintendent will work to continue the traditions of excellence and create new avenues of success for Saint Paul Public Schools.

7. Work Session - Closed Board Meeting on Negotiations Prior to 9/22 Meeting

The consensus was that the best date would be prior to the Board Training Session on September 8 at 5:30 p.m. (This was subsequently cancelled.)

III ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:	Mr. Brodrick moved, seconded by Ms. Carroll, that the meeting adjourn.
----------------	---

Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Polsfuss
Assistant Clerk