

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

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

**May 7, 2024
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Ward.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: U. Ward, H. Henderson, E. Valliant, J. Vue, C. Franco

Y. Carrillo arrived at 4:33 p.m.

C. Allen arrived at 4:34 p.m.

Staff: J. Jonassen, S. Dahlke, S. Gray Akyea, T. Parent, T. Sager, K. Thao, L. Olson, A. Speed, J. Williams, A. Collins, E. Wacker, S. Braithwaite, J. Danielson, K. Morris, S. Schmitt de Caranza, H. Nistler, N. Páez, M. McHenry, K. Kimani, D. Simms, B. Schmidt, D. Abrams, E. Moline, C. Green, D. Payne, D. Moser, P. Pratt-Cook, Y. Vang

Community: M. Wall, J. Thein, N. Yang, S. Brown, N. Chang

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Ward moved approval of the Order of the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Henderson. It passed by acclaim.

4. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT BOARD (SEAB) ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff from the Youth Leadership Initiative then presented information on the SEAB Assessment and recommendations. Chair Henderson provided a brief recap and timeline of their work as well as information about staff as well.

The background information included information on the overview of the process, guiding questions, and overview of stakeholders. The summary of findings included information about the impact, success factors, and literature review. The presentation also included information about recommendations and next steps.

Key questions asked within the discovery phase included:

- What was the value of SEAB?

- What could be the value of connecting student leader groups to SEAB?
- How can SEAB be further strengthened?

The findings of each were also shared.

The models and best practices within youth development practices, youth engagement, collaboration, and youth advisory models were also discussed.

An overview of the recommendations was presented, and included:

- Get grounded in SEAB's mission, vision, and intentions
- Build a deliberate structure that ensures youth are heard, contributions are valued, and voices influence meaningful action
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities and expectations
- House SEAB under the Board of Education
- Establish clear lines of communication and accountability between SEAB and the Board
- Develop and implement authentic youth engagement trainings for Board and relevant staff

Further information was then provided on each of the recommendations.

Next steps and timeline were also reviewed, and include:

- Phase 1: Pre-Launch
 - June-July 2024
 - Develop annual budget for SEAB
 - Determine roles and responsibilities
 - July-August 2024
 - Review key activities and develop timeline for implementation plan
 - August-October 2024
 - Design and develop orientation curriculum and structure for regular SEAB meetings
 - October-November 2024
 - Develop recruitment plan for SEAB
 - Determine responsibilities of SEAB facilitator
- Phase 2: Launch
 - November 2024-January 2025
 - Hire part-time facilitator
 - Develop training materials for Board
 - January-March 2025
 - Onboard facilitator around vision, structure, and culture of SEAB
 - March-May 2025
 - Facilitator reviews SEAB curriculum
 - SEAB launches!
 - Recruit students for SEAB Fall 2025
 - Fall 2025
 - SEAB and Board orientation
 - SEAB regular meetings begin

The full presentation and report can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carillo noted a few questions, including areas to move away from to ensure SEAB is sustainable for future years, and behavior changes for the Board and staff to ensure its success. Response: When we think about success for SEAB, our mindset, behaviors, and transparency need to align and SEAB members and board members need to show up in the space in these ways. They need to be willing to collaborate, and young people need to be invited to the table and to be clear about the invitation. There needs to be demonstrated commitment to change. SEAB members need to feel like they are not being tokenized or not taken seriously. Training is also important.
- Were models in other urban school districts considered? What is their investment, failures, and successes? Response: We did look at other districts in Chicago, California, Oregon, and Kentucky, and there are vastly different models across districts. One way to avoid tokenizing is for a group of students to engage in this work as opposed to one student. Some spoke about not enough structure in place, and to create a culture where adults, including principals and board members, are invested in youth voice, and they are not manipulated or tokenized, as well as involving elementary school students. There needs to be a pipeline for building groups across the models where students come together as a board-level student group, with more representation across schools and more voices being heard. Within the YLI organization, students were also asked if their districts have a youth advisory, and many of them were unsure, so YLI staff commended SPPS for their work in a youth advisory board.
- Director Henderson noted the differences in the goal of SEAB to either advocate or inform, and sometimes asking students to do both. Response: With the alumni interviewed, they were interested in advocating and informing as long as it was agreed upon to hear what they had to say. Expectations also need to be clear in each area in order to be clear and transparent. There is also a balance between the two, as well as with the facilitator holding the space, and with the Board, facilitator and young people in decision-making.
- Director Valliant noted a comment about the feedback about representation of schools. It's important to be representative of our schools, and to be clear on the spectrum, including school, gender, racial and ethnic background, economic class, and also not only those students succeeding in school, but also the students often overlooked, as they are the students who typically have a lot to say as well.
- Director Franco requested further information on the recommendation for the transition from a part-time facilitator to a full-time facilitator. Response: Feedback included that a dedicated staff member will help SEAB with one full time staff to train, support, and help them plan. The thought is this will be a slow, gradual process with a part-time facilitator at first, and then gradually a full-time facilitator, and maybe an AmeriCorps or intern volunteer to build capacity. It was challenging when there was one single leader, and they then left.
 - Director Valliant noted that typically in leadership programs, there needs to be at least one full-time facilitator because it requires a lot of work, and if we want to prioritize the work of our young people, we need to demonstrate the importance of a facilitator.
 - YLI staff also noted that alumni have shared that they would like to come back to support, and SEAB is programming, where there is a team, curriculum, and work of young people, and there are logistics to make it all work, which is a lot that one person would carry.
- He also requested information on the recommendation for compensation structure for SEAB members. Response: There were many different responses and stakeholders were asked for feedback. It was determined that the stipend amount and amount of work being done were not equitable. The stoles were a positive feature and students enjoyed the recognition, but also to consider other ways to be recognized, including a celebration at the end of the year, or certificate showing the number of hours.

- Director Henderson noted that helpful information would also include the compensation structure for other youth advisory boards.
- Director Valliant noted her personal experience with her children attending YLI and their positive experiences and work of the organization.
- Director Vue noted questions about the work of the independent consultant, as well as initial thoughts around launching SEAB in the Fall. It was noted that with the current capacity of staff, it would be difficult to juggle the different responsibilities, and another internal or external individual would be helpful to restart SEAB.

5. FY25 BUDGET UPDATE

Staff then presented the FY25 Budget Update. Included with the presentation were:

- Examples of school and department budget allocations
- Human Resources updates
- Budget progress and recent updates
- Financial outlook and use of fund balance
- Timeline and important dates in the FY25 budget process

Examples of allocations were provided for an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school, as well as Schools and Learning department, and Administration and Operations department.

Within the Human Resources Update, information was provided on staff reductions and process.

In the Budget Outlook and Next Steps portion, the budget reduction target process was discussed with descriptions of reductions and savings, reduction amount, shortfall running total and the date. Updates to the FY25 budget since April 3 were noted. The deficit and financial outside, including factors that could improve the FY25 financial outlook were discussed, with the final note that the district plans to use some of its fund balance to prevent further reductions for FY25, with further details about the fund balance at 5.07% with the estimated FY25 deficit spend of \$37M, and the estimated FY25 ending fund balance of \$36.4M.

The FY25 budget timeline was also reviewed, as well as important upcoming dates and FY25 budget updates to the Board.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Vue requested information on allocations for schools. Response: There are specific ratios that are identified, and with projected enrollment from REA, they are then built outward from the contractual agreements. Split classrooms are also taken into consideration. Everything is driven by the projected enrollment and there is an economy of scale for buildings, and there may also be flexibility with additional discretionary dollars.
- Director Ward requested more details on the reasoning for why a waiting list doesn't necessarily allocate more staff to a building. Response: It is like a one-way valve. We are looking at those currently on the waiting list and where they currently reside. We are looking at the totality of the district and where students are joining. Student Placement does a wonderful job to maximize the waiting list. It's not an easy and clean process for moving staff when students move from one building to another, and it's about looking at the waiting lists to determine from where to where those students are looking to move. Buildings are looking to build their enrollment, and it is not as

simple as opening or adding additional sections in buildings if there is physical space. The priority moving process was also noted, as was reviewed at the previous Regular meeting. If a school has 18 students on the waiting list for K, then Student Placement will work to fill another section, as well as opportunities over the summer to add to that section. We also look to see if students are moving from outside the district or moving internally. The timing of the wait list was also discussed, with the key months of December, January, and February when there is open enrollment and recruitment occurring.

- Director Carrillo noted an information request on the current enrollment status and compared to where we are currently, and if we are on track to gain, lose, or stay the same based on projections.
- Chief Turner also noted that there are many different choices for parents, and some may apply to their home school, a magnet, and a charter or private school, and may be waiting on all of them. Other than a private school where a deposit is required, there is not a change penalty. We cannot allocate staffing based on a parent's intentions, and historical data is important. Principals can plan based on intentions, but staffing allocations cannot. Chief Collins also noted the current context of enrollment, and the new EL students to the district, and the context of bigger programs, including space, and the right space with the right number of sections at the right time. With the additional staff and additional EL students, we need to ensure there is room and other ratios as well, such as wraparound services to ensure their success and think about it holistically.
- Are there any other factors outside historical data that contribute to the projections for next year? Response: Our official projections are based on two methodologies – the birth methodology which looks at the number of students born in the city and then again four years later, known as the survival cohort. Another methodology looks at the historical patterns in the district, and the demographic shifts in the region and patterns. We do not project for PreK though. We also look at the pathways and 5th to 6th grade, as well as 8th to 9th graders at the beginning of each year.
- Director Franco requested information on the budget impacts to programs when school allocations are based on enrollment. Response: Our revenue is generated by enrollment. Athletics has its own formulaic calculation. Another component is Schools and Learning, and there are direct investments in that area as well. The categorical funds is another driver, including Achievement and Integration, MLL, Special Education, compensatory funds, and others, and those depend on the students at the building. There are also contractual obligations related to staffing and those are also based on the students. The economy of scale model was also noted and the centralized efforts for sites, in areas such as curriculum.
- Director Valliant requested further details on FTEs.
- There were also concerns noted around the potential issues of the decrease to custodial services. Administration noted that schools will remain clean, and staff are working on plans. Buildings may close earlier, which will impact permits, and staff may be allocated more sites that are one complex. We are also asking folks to do their part to ensure our buildings are clean. Breakfast-to-go will remain at sites, as it is important for students.
- Director Valliant also noted questions around recruitment efforts, specifically for teachers of color, and newer teachers. Response: This budget will negatively impact our ability to recruit high-quality candidates. Because we had a larger amount of ARP funds, we will be impacted by this decrease. Other districts are also in reduction mode, while not to the same extent. We will be focusing our recruitment efforts for teachers in high-need licensure areas, such as special education. Last year, we were able to offer major hiring bonuses, and there is also media attention about our budget reductions and the uncertainty of those teachers who may want to apply to SPPS. We have been advertising that there is still a need and that we are still hiring in those areas of need, and will continue.

- Director Henderson requested information on the Senate’s supplemental omnibus bill, and the Medicaid shift included, and the impact on allocations. Administration noted that medical assistance typically is allocated within the following year.
- Questions were also asked about the funding gap and the final number. Response: We do believe the \$37M is close to the final figure.
- For the fund balance to cover part of the deficit, what will remain? Response: It will be about 5.07%, which funds about 18 days. In recent years, we have been hovering around 10%, and by using the fund balance, it will be brought to a level that is still compliant with board policy.
- Board members also requested information about the \$37M and the programmatic impacts. Response: It will be used to continue to fund ongoing programming options. Details were also provided on the contractual obligations and operational costs for fund our schools.
- Director Franco requested information on the number of FTEs and open positions, as well as service impacts and programmatic impacts to students based on the budget figured. He hopes to understand comparatively school allocations last year to this year, and would like to know this information before voting on the budget, in order to be informed about these changes and impacts. Administration noted it is a zero-sum budget because in order to allocate additional dollars to a school or department, there must be a decrease in another school or budget. Director Franco noted he would like information on the tangible reductions so that when community asks questions, board members are informed. Director Allen noted a similar request and in the format from negotiations sessions a few years ago about positions in a similar layout of information from this year to last. Additional discussion followed on this information request. Director Franco noted he requests information to show where reductions are occurring.
- Director Ward noted that the spending cuts are extreme, but the fund balance usage will continue those services that we need to do. Administration also noted that there are statutory obligations, as well as those that our families enjoy and need, but not legally required.

6. POLICY UPDATE

- a. Policy 501.02: Student Vehicle Use: Parking on School Premises, Patrols, Inspections, and Searches

Laurie Olson, Director of Safety and Emergency Management, then presented this proposed policy. The rationale for the proposal of this policy was reviewed, as well as an overview of the proposed policy, including a general statement, definitions, student use, student parking, patrols, inspections, and searches, directives and guidelines.

Next steps were also reviewed, and the draft of the proposed policy was included within the BoardBook.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Valliant requested details on the rationale for an overdue book being listed as “contraband.” Response: This is a template policy, and that can be stricken from the policy. The definition of “contraband” was also reviewed.
- Director Allen requested further information on the inspections and searches by school officials in violation of law and/or school policies.
- Director Valliant also noted questions about the definition of lookalike alcoholic beverages or controlled substances. Response: The lookalikes within this proposed policy refer to firearms. For

most of the alcohol or controlled substance incidents, they are internally handled. The one exception is opiates, which can be deadly. We come from a place of care and concern for our students. The lookalike definition will be clearly defined in the policy.

- Director Valliant also requested information on the clarification of “reasonable suspicion.”
- Ms. Olson also provided details on the work of the SSLs, and their expertise with students, and protocols to connect with an assistant manager to review the incident and procedures. Our SSLs have strong relationships with students, and after an incident, they repair the relationship with the student for them to understand the actions, and that they are from a place of care and concern.
- Director Allen noted that she trusts Ms. Olson and her team, but questions how this work will continue in the future.
- Director Vue noted the role of students in the policy and vehicle searches.
- Overall, the Board agreed to move this policy to the three-reading process with a few changes.

b. Policy 509: Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with IEPs from School Grounds

Ms. Olson also presented the proposal of this policy. The rationale for the proposal was discussed, as it is required per statute. Within the overview, details were provided on the purpose and general statement. Changes in the district once this policy were also shared, including that nothing will change. Historically, we have been following these procedures, and the proposed policy is based on statute requirements. The approval of this policy will not result in an increased presence of law enforcement in our schools. Details were also provided about how this policy will look in practice. Questions from the Policy Work Group were also shared, as well as information to those questions, which included:

- Is it up to the building administrator to choose when to remove?
- Is there training involved around discretion in calling law enforcement and getting to a point of removal?
- Is there data that shows how often we call law enforcement?

Next steps were also reviewed, and the draft of the proposed policy was included within the BoardBook.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The origin of the proposed policy was discussed.
- Board members noted concern about reasonable force included within the proposed policy. Administration noted is the intent to protect students and ensure we are adhering to the student’s IEP. SPPS has always done well with engaging with students in crisis, but there are concerns in the state, which led to the statute passed in the 2023 legislative session.
- Administration noted the role of SSLs and their training in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. They are trained to treat everyone respectfully and through de-escalation to ensure students are safe. This policy is less about police in our schools, as students in crisis are typically referred to EMS, not police, and for transportation, a social worker or trusted adult supports the transportation home.
- It was noted that every school district must adopt a policy on this topic, and the wording and language can be modified.
- General Counsel noted this policy is taken directly from the MSBA model policy and definitions of reasonable force.
- Board members noted hesitation around this policy.

- Administration noted that this policy is due to statute, and we are not changing the ways in which we operate. We already meet the requirements of the statute by the ways we work in SPPS.
- Director Allen noted a recommendation to include the utilization of the crisis team. Response: That is work we currently do with the standard response procedures, including the engagement of the safety team, including our SSLs.
- Can data be presented more often than quarterly? Response: Yes. For the calls to police for 2022-2023 there were 432 calls and 5 arrests. While 432 still feels like a lot, there are 68 programs across the district with 30,000 students. It was also offered that many are domestic or abuse related calls. Each call was student related.
- Director Valliant noted questions about a similar policy for students without an IEP. Response: There is a standard response protocol that is followed, and for students with IEPs, there is a plan to safety intervene with them, including NVCI, which is used as a districtwide model for all students.
- Director Franco requested further information on the procedures within SEM.
- Overall, the Board agreed that this policy needs to be revisited by the Policy Work Group with input from board members.

6. 2024 AMERICAN INDIAN PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AIPAC) RESOLUTION RESPONSE

Staff and members of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee then presented the 2024 Committee Resolution Response.

An overview of the AIPAC and District partnership was reviewed, as well as the AIPAC Resolution process, and response timeline.

Details on the annual compliance were also shared, including details on these topics:

- Prior to March 1 of each year, the AIPAC must meet to discuss whether or not they concur with the educational offerings that have been extended by the district to American Indian students.
- The vote is reflected formally on documentation provided by the State OAIE.

The rationale for measured progress was also discussed including:

- Identify the systemic barriers for our students
- Reduce and remove these system barriers
- Demonstrate growth in addressing system barriers for our students
- Engage in regular check-ins to evaluate effectiveness of actions implemented to reduce and remove system barriers

The structure of the AIPAC, core team, and area leads was also shared.

The areas addressed with details, data, and recommendations include:

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Instruction
- Staffing

The District implementation of the 2024 response was also noted, with an ongoing and active process, regular check-ins, and regular reporting.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Committee members noted a few questions, including around suspensions of students, and the posting of the Indian Education Supervisor role, previously held by John Bobolink, as there are changes occurring in the district and the American Indian community needs an advocate in the district. It's also important that members of the AIPAC are on the hiring panel. Administration noted that in regard to the hiring process, they have been in collaboration with HR to post the position, and updating the job description, and with many changes in legislation, we want to find the best person for the Indian Education department, and will work with AIPAC to include a member on the hiring committee. Further details were also included on the question regarding suspensions. There was a recent statute change regarding the suspensions of students in grade 3 and younger. Administration will look into a report for suspensions for grades 4-12 and factor that into future reports and send information to the PAC. Staff from AIMS noted that there were about 368 suspensions in the prior year, and this year there were 99, which is a 300% change in data.
- Director Allen noted questions about teachers on board to make difficult decisions and de-escalations, as well as data around restorative practices. Response: Teachers do want their students in class, and also want their classes to run smoothly. We need to change the ways we do things, and we do have tough conversations with some teachers because they may not be aware of other practices. There's also a high level of respect for the administration and principal at AIMS to create a process. We are intentional about keeping schools about academics and centered around that becoming and belonging aspect. It's all about our students.
- Director Allen noted that the administration team at AIMS is demonstrating great leadership and thanked them for their work.
- Director Valliant noted questions about the data around high school students, including suspension rates. In comparing last year to date, it is the same reduction of 2%, with last year at 6% of student suspensions and this year, it is 4%. More information will also be provided if enrollment is down between 8th grade and high school in that period, as well as the loss of students between middle school and high school.
- Director Vue noted questions on the process since Superintendent Gothard is leaving the district and the ways in which to continue this important work. Response: It is a statutory requirement, and we want our students to succeed. The resolution process does include the superintendent through the Board, and the superintendent is the signatory on the resolution presented, and then it is presented to the Board. This process may be able to be changed through engagement with MDE to determine a different signatory, but the current process is the most common across the state.
 - Is there a concern because of the transition to an interim superintendent? Will it automatically be sent to the interim and his signatory? Response: Yes, and the PAC approves of that process.
 - It was also noted that in the search for an permanent superintendent, that there is awareness of the unique relationship with the AIPAC due to the political status.
- Director Vue also noted questions about the reporting and monitoring.
- Members of the AIPAC asked for support for a new location for the Indian Education office, so that it is easily accessible for families. They also noted questions about enrollment at AIMS and the impacts, as well as at what point they would receive an additional assistant principal.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Director Ward moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Carrillo seconded the motion. It passed by acclaim.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

8. WORK SESSION

The Board then conducted a work session regarding B.I.G.G: Board Initiated Goals Governance.

For clarity and to facilitate research, these minutes reflect the order of the original Agenda and not necessarily the time during the meeting the items were discussed.

Prepared and submitted by:

Sarah Dahlke, Assistant Clerk, St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education