

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota

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

September 10, 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, E. Valliant, J. Vue, C. Franco, Y. Carrillo,
H. Henderson arrived at 4:35 p.m.
C. Allen is absent

Staff: Superintendent Thein, C. Long, S. Gray Akyea, T. Parent, T. Sager, K. Thao, L. Olson, E. Wacker, J. Danielson, S. Schmitt de Caranza, H. Nistler, N. Páez, M. McHenry, K. Kimani, B. Schmidt, C. Green, D. Moser, P. Pratt-Cook, C. Anderson, J. Grathwol, J. Pettigrew, A. Vreeland, B. Bergstrom, J. Elling, A. Rios Dessalet, L. Hart, M. Grill, S. Maldonado

Community: M. Ruber

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 Valliant. It passed by acclaim.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you very much vice, here I just want to highlight, we've just had finished a fabulous start school year and I'd like to publicly thank the Mayor Carter for joining me and welcoming kids back to school and also thank you to our students for showing up and being enthusiastic and starting the year in a great way, also to our staff for giving everything they could to make the students feel welcome and appreciated and also to their families for supporting SPPS. It was a great start of the year and hopefully, we'll have many more days like that.

5. Naming of Harding Baseball Field and Atrium

Superintendent Thein welcomed Chief J. Tuner and the Harding Dedication Committee to present the presentation.

Within the presentation were details about:

- Rename purpose
- Public participation
- Committee work and support
- Recommendation – Board action

The full presentation can found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Good evening, my name is Lillian Hart and I'm here to represent the community members, former students and staff members that all hope to see the Harding atrium renamed for our own Minnesota teacher of the year Michael Houston. As an East Side resident, former student and current colleague of Mr. Houston's. I feel uniquely qualified to speak on his dedication commitment and contributions to the St. Paul Public Schools community, which are vast and lasting for the last 21 years. His reach has extended beyond the classroom to execute the hardest job of all inspiring future educators, he has inspired multiple students to become the kind of people who want to continue his legacy by returning to St. Paul to teach and speaking with other former students turn St. Paul educators, we all agree that we would not be where we are today without his influence and support. I'd like to read an excerpt from a support letter that comes from Dr. Robert Kruger at Concordia University that details the kind of educator and community member that Mr. Houston is when we needed an instructor for an evening section of our math course for prospective elementary teachers. Michael was ready to accept the challenge. This is a tough class to teach because the students assume the math should be easy since they are preparing to teach elementary students. Of course, we are teaching the deeper theory of the foundations of elementary mathematics. Observing him teach this class was fun. His easygoing style, along with his practice. Nope, you are not giving up classroom attitude led the students on a journey to a taste of success and mathematics some for the first time. He later goes on to say. I wanted to discuss his motivation for entering the teaching profession. What Michael said stuck with me. He strives to be a role model for students. Especially for those growing up in a single parent home like he did. He wants all students to know they are loved and that they can be successful, but it won't always be easy. This is exactly the kind of role model. We would like to see memorialized, not simply for his accomplishments, but for his passion. Thank you.
- Evening. I'm Matthew Grill speaking as part of the hearing community, both as a current teacher and an alumni. I was had the honor of playing for coach Kiemel while I was in high school and then continuing to be able to thrive under his tutelage at playing amateur baseball with him and I'm coming today, hoping or presenting his case for naming the Harding baseball field after him, I think in Athletics we very often think that success on the field dictates an honor such as this, and if that were the case Kiemel come out, certainly deserve this honor he was the Harding varsity baseball coach for 38 years. Coaching multiple teams to conference championships being named the St. Paul Public Schools baseball coach of the year numerous times and helping guide the lives of over a 1000 players that he saw in those years. He is the currently has the most wins of any baseball coach in the history of SPPS with over 400 wins. He himself is a very decorated athlete, very decorated baseball. He graduated from Harding high school, where he was a 3 time varsity letter winner, then he went to play at Luther college, where he was 4 time varsity letter winner, including becoming an all-conference college baseball player. He then played a year of baseball in the Chicago Cubs organization before returning home to Harding high school. If that were all there was baseball coach again, I think that would be enough to warrant this honor but that isn't the reason that I believed he should have this field named after him. I'm one of 6 different players that had played for him that then went on to coach either at SPPS or colleges in the area and it was coaches' way of teaching us that it was okay to fail. Baseball is a game of failure. If you fail 7 out of 10 times you're one of the most successful baseball players in any league, and he taught us that failure is okay, as long as it's leading us to work harder and succeed in the next game. It's okay if we don't do it perfectly now. If it's improving us later in the words of wonderful desirous recommendations from Keith statement, who is a former player and

the current head baseball coach at Augsburg University and he said, for many of us coach Kiemel was more than just a coach. He was a mentor a leader and a role model. He instilled us the values of hard work, perseverance and sportsmanship, which have carried us through life's challenges both on and off the field. His passion for the game, and unwavering dedication to the students of Harding high school have left a mark on our community. So, thank you for considering this request. I sincerely hope you'll see the merit in recognizing coach Tim Kiemel's extraordinary contributions by naming the Harding baseball field after him.

- I will just say it's been really heartwarming to hear and receive so much positive feedback. I think a lot of times you get a bunch of emails and you kind of think, oh, what is this and to have a bunch of people be like we really believe in this and want to see this happen. This is exciting, to honor some incredible folks like this.
- I'm really curious for folks that like currently work at Harding, what do you envision this like. At least with the students in the school, like how to really uplift whether it's the atrium or field, because that's a space that young folks go through every day, I know, Mr. Houston is still actively teaching at Harding, how do you believe that this may also help influence the culture and climate of the building by having the dedication, I think it's a great idea but I'm just really curious, what would you guys envision on that forefront?
- We talked about that in our committee work, and which is why, as a committee, we decided to let's just pause because we didn't want the traditional plaque and one of the community members says, you know what, we might want to involve the community to design and create a mural. Well, if we're going to design and create a mural, then you know we need to look to find funding in support all of that. The answer really to that is that we need to wait and see and we decided on what we want do.
- We wanted to bring on the excitement of a new school year and get the information out about the recommendation to get that approved and then the fund. It may take 6 months to do it, it depended on how involved it would be or the resource that it's going to take to do that but they definitely want to involve the school community as well as the general community.
- What is the plan then to involve the school community, how is that being rolled out?
- So, the work will lie actually in this school. They haven't asked for that support, but obviously, if they need it, we'll provide at the district level in our mind in our office administration office at the school, but they once approve, then this goal will go back to the larger body at the school and ask for it's a little bit more particular with the baseball field, because there's a very identified targeted area. I know the belief is to provide alumni players, the Athletic department there at Harding, and to your point, everyday students walk through here and we want to be able to make it extremely special, how it's seen and want everyone to feel included as well, so I think the ideal is to really provide something massive, but what that might mean, we need to wait and see if there's an interest. We could come back to support, which is an update, and so important about what the decision was. That would be something board would be interested.
- I fully believe that this would add to the culture and climate of Harding, it's a community that's really been hurting the last couple of years and I don't teach it Harding, but I have attended events that have happened since Mr. Houston won teacher of the year and just to see how the Harding community has really rallied around him and it's really kind of brought some joy back, just to kind of see how his influences really help that communities start to heal. I don't get to walk the halls every day anymore, but I used to love being at Harding and I really think that this will helping bring that back for a lot of our kids.
- I just want to say thank you, that's exactly why we wanted to wait, too is so that we could give students an opportunity because a lot of the committee work was done over the summer. I'm really excited about this. I think it's exciting to uplift members of a community in ways like this, that highlight is the best examples of who we are and celebrate things that have been accomplished.
- I don't know a coach Kiemel, I don't think I've ever met him but Mr. Houston, every time I've met him. I've come away going like, wow, like this guy's great. This sounds like a great idea to me. I do feel like I need to ask these questions just to cover my basis, which is a forced pun based on and being a baseball coach but how broadly is the larger Harding community aware of these potential decisions, and have you heard any objection from anyone?

- I haven't received anything and I will say that was It's my role try to help the committee understand and see that while it may be good for us and we may experience and know both coach Kiemel , as well as teacher Michael Houston, that there could be others out there that may not have had a good experience and may want to have an opportunity to not support this, and so we do need to take time to slow down with all our policy and our procedures with it, and I thank the committees for allowing me to do that and working with me to do that and over the last since, we started in June we officially started the conversation in May, we haven't heard, I haven't heard anything negative or received any negative feedback from the community
- One of the things that led us to do this is we felt we're an education establishment, and we should celebrate our educators when they do great thing and that would be something that everyone can celebrate the staff, the students, the community that comes in to the school and I know that we've reached out to lots of different groups during the summer, Harding had some groups, social groups that got together, we shared that information. We reached out to the baseball team, former players and things like that, so have we done it and reached every corner. We have started it and we will continue to do it until the actual awarding of the area is complete.

6. Executive Audit Summary Presentation for Saint Paul Public Schools (Draft Version)

Superintendent Thein then welcomed Tom and team to present.

Within the presentation were details about:

- Audit results year ended June 2023
- Fund balance as a percent of expenditures in the general fund
- SPPS general fund – fund balance activity
- General fund revenues
- General fund expenditures per student ADM
- New GASB implementation and upcoming changes

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Before we leave the slide, I was wondering at what point in the year is the fund balance measured, because, I'm wondering how this aligns with the budget we adopt in a given year. I'm sure we adopt the budget, and there's a certain fun balance, but then like throughout the year, or certain funds might not be spent.
- So this is measured kind of like an liability where it's just at month-end and maybe some things that have gone into the increase that'd be important to share when you're talking about how this relates to the budget is part of the reason that increased as they were kind of budgeted for positions that were left open during the year. Therefore, you have expenditures, you don't spend the head revenue allocated to that you had more students than you had budgeted for which is a positive thing but that leads to more revenue than you and budgeted for and then the American Rescue Plan dollars that kind of came in with COVID. The district used those strategically to supplant some funding, make sure that they spent the money before the deadline and that allows you to add to the fund balance to then spend down and I think the budget for the next 2 fiscal years is a planned spend down of some of that obviously you can't do that into perpetuity, but I think that that is Kind of part of that same with how that kind of works in with the budget?
- I know you guys have been working on kind of a fund balanced, kind of revision or working through some of that, and I know we've gone through and we know that you have the minimum fund balance requirement of 5% unassigned, it would be maybe look at what you want, your target percent to be a lot of districts have want targeted fund bounds between about 20 and 30%, but they'll have a minimum and a maximum defined of what they're want to do, so maybe something to consider, as you guys work through that.
- So as a clarifying question, I want to make sure I understand correctly. So like this past year, we sent down some in the budget we adopted was pretty close to that 5%, the measurement is not at

the point of what we adopt. It's at the end of the fiscal year. What is then remaining that has not been allocated throughout the year, and that's represented by the blue line, and the green line is what is the sort of the fund balance of budgeted 4 plus everything that ends up not being allocated in the way that it meant to.

- The green line represents every think of all of the assets over liabilities, so what's left at year end in total and that also includes the things that are unassigned, but it includes restricted fund balance, you receive money and it has to be spent on a certain thing, it also. Includes non-spendable things so you have prepaids, a prepaid expenditure, you can't actually do anything with that, so it's nonspendable you have a signed fund balance, which is done by management, you have committed what yourself the board is able to commit and then unassigned. As the last bucket, which is something that isn't committed assigned or any of the others, and then that's the blue line does that answer the question?
- Yes, thank you.
- Can you explain what a clean report?
- So, when we say your audit reports, unmodified or clean out, a report that means that your financial statements are materially correct, we are not able to neither does the district or any entity want us. To give you absolute assurance on your financial statements, because absolute assurance means we've audited every possible transaction that could go into or through your district's operations, not feasible. So our under oddity standards, we make sure that they're materially correct, which means we have a calculation that we use according to auditing standards that gives us a number, basically a materiality number, and we want to say, every single number in your financial statements is within that kind of various threshold that allows us to issue that clean honored opinion. If you look at the intro controls for the district, we do not provide an opinion on internal controls, no auditing firm. That is our responsibility is to let you know if we identify any deficiencies or potential deficiencies.
- What is compliance so, yellow book is well when you start talking all different things, accountants are very strange. We have governments have yellow book. If you're a federal government entity, you have something called the green book, all sorts of different things, if you have cars, that's a blue book, also, yellow book is what we call, it's essentially government oddity or generally accepted government auditing standards. So the federal government has basically said, if you're a governmental entity that spends federal funds, we're going to put out this additional requirements for the for auditors to follow, essentially to help increase the transparency, the scrutiny that governments are going through when it looks at internal controls and compliance and things like that. So, when we say that there were no compliance findings when it comes to a yellow book report. What we're looking for when we look at that compliance threshold is say that there was a material there or violation of some type of a contract that could have a significant impact on the financial results. We would need to report that think of a had a huge violation in like an EPA contract or some type of thing like that, or it could be resulting in a significant liability for the district. That's a type of compliance finding we're starting to look at there. Having done this for 20 plus years now, working with local governments. I don't think I've ever actually reported a yellow book compliance finding in my entire career. They're very rare when it comes to that, especially at the local government level.
- So this is a draft, is anything missing there's between this one and the final part
- There probably won't be much difference in information in general, this is pretty finalized. The difference is we have a couple of levels of quality review, the most common things that change in our verbal reports. So, we take your reports like, almost 200 pages long we type up a disclosure, and we adjust it sometimes slightly might change like a couple fund balanced classifications. There's something that process but the overall numbers that you guys are looking at are unlikely to change the single added results, I've kind of alluded to you might see a couple of items pop-up there, since we're still doing some of that compliance testing most likely in the area of procurement. That's what we see most often in districts and he had issues last year with that so that wouldn't be surprising to see. The next time we meet, just because it's more affordable, probably, we might short enough kind of how we present it and unless something new.
- Are there are statics, what is what, perhaps there's, I do a lot of the review and select off recommendation stuff.

- So if the federal guidelines essentially, if you code any payroll to a federal program? If you have like a think, you have like a special Ed director if you code a 100% of their payroll to the program. They're the special Ed director they prospect a 100% of time on special Ed, but say a teacher that, maybe they teach a couple regular classes. Maybe they teach a couple special education classes, they split their time, 20% special at 80% regular. There has to be something documented like A Time certification semiannually, sometimes a time card. Itself will show the coding different districts have different things in place, but there has to be something supporting that allocation, if what's supporting that allocation is well, they spend about 20% of their time in special ed and we don't think it's a compliance issue but for those seeing a lot of purposes, they say, Hey, that's an exception, you have to really document them and then would you say that's a fairly normal finding in terms of comparison with other districts, or would you consider that?
- It's elevated and you know a need for immediate correction, I would say, anytime you have a federal compliance audit and you have a recommendation. I would say that that is a good thing to follow-up on in remedy, okay and definitely improve the process. So any of the results that we provide you guys as the board we have elevated to the level because we think that the district should make progress on them. That being said is it normal to have a couple of allowability items in a district. I would say the occurrence like percentage-wise of our testing is a little bit higher than usual, but also, you're working with a more disaggregated district with more things that go into payroll, so it is a little hard to compare when you're talking. The second biggest district with the other school districts that we audit, so definitely something to focus on and fix, but you'll notice title regular program, no problem, So there's a process in place that works for the district. I think they just need to apply that to special Ed part of what lends lens. Let's that is when everything goes remote and how that worked with time sheets and things going digital, and then then you had your for FY23 is really when it got back into person, we did see a little bit higher degree of that type of recommendation, but again, I would say, right if you're looking at, like 20 or 40 that we're testing, yet definitely something to fix from a documentation perspective, but also understand that we didn't we test these in detail. We look at all the numbers we didn't see anything where we're like, oh, they spent that money or allocated it incorrectly, you didn't really need that approval piece of the allocation.
- So for a competitive absence is where it says this will like to increase the government liability.
- Yes, for account of purposes, right is for accounting purposes, rights so compensated absences is a liability that you guys book. That's it's kind of like the best estimate of if everybody quits at 6:30 am, what's that cost? I mean, that's kind of what it's trying to project. It's not a likely scenario, it's likely never going to happen, but that's how they have you do it. In addition to that, what else is likely to happen and what are people likely to take. If I got a 1000 sick leave hours built up, what's the likelihood I'll take 40 a year, so that's the part that's going to increase. Is, it's really going to for some of those sick hours that aren't accrued, fully. There's going to be an estimate that says, if I've got 2000 sick hours and I only get paid out 500 if I leave, what's the likelihood and how many am I likely to take them 1500 that are left and then they're booking more. Now, that is only on your government wide statements, so it's not really on the Functional pieces, you're looking at from a budgeting perspective, and you guys don't have kind of an internal service fund funding that because you have plenty of coming forward in your regular fund balance, which is signed kind of committed to that, and you wouldn't necessarily have to change how you do that because it's not. It's kind of a fictional liability for the end of the year if that makes sense.
- How many hours does it take to do an audit a \$1 billion district?
- If you have all the things you need 12 hours. That's long it takes, but that is broken up with planning, doing the work and then the work gets done, then we review it then Chris reviews it and then QT reviews it. So there are like things you have to do in a certain order. The ideal time frame from start to finish for district the size of probably about 3 or 4 months, and it wasn't during the scheduled time, so I think given the turnover and the things that went on in the finance department, the past couple years, we've been working on them you can kind of see what the findings they're fixing things, as they're kind of catching up with stuff and I do think there is a plan in place to issue much earlier going forward and now we have a dedicated team. I do think there will be progress made in the timeline fronts, if you look start to finish last year was our first year auditing you guys for FY22, which has its own kind introduces the first year and that I think

we started in October finished in March and then this year it was kind of started towards the end of May and we'll finish the end of September. We anticipate this year to start beginning November an issue as soon as possible. The most likelihood might be early spring, but we're going to shoot for before December if possible. That'll be a tight turnaround. That's kind of the goal we're going to set with the district internally, and we'll see how that goes.

- Can you help us understand what the delay because I know traditionally districts are accepting their audit by November of it of November, 30th or whatever, I was really just genuinely curious about how much it is total number of like what I would consider billable hours that would exist and so like perform an audit of this and I know that's not the way that like I was just curious how many hours is spending and reviewing and auditing our financial and 1 and 1 thing to maybe point out 12 hours is the ideal amount if we have everything.
- The first time and it's during our scheduled field work, you know, I would say, if you know if it's different timelines, things take longer, you know. If we ever have anything that's incorrect or recommendations like you're seeing that stuff takes longer to look into this year. We aided in the implementation of that, so we had a team that kind of worked with that review contract, so there are things in addition. To the audit that we help with kind of from a procedural standpoint that is ours outside of that, but that's a little more consultative than the actual assurance works we're doing and then just in terms of next steps. we're planning to present the next month at the board meeting with the finalized audit.

7. Presentation - Budget Policy

Motion: Vice Chair Ward motions to move the Budget Policy presentation behind the Ethnic Studies Update presentation. Motion was second by Director Henderson.

Superintendent Their then invite members of the administration team to discuss this report with Board Members.

Within the presentation were details about:

- Purpose of Board Budget Policy
- Budget policy requirement
- Board budget operations
- Working session
- Post-working sessions and informational meeting
- Budget draft
- Public input and adjustments
- Reallocation and implementation

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Generally speaking, we have received the district recommendation to what the budget and we have signed off on it. Sometimes we have complained about it a little bit, but then still sign off on it and the way that we have sort of structured our budgeting process, there wasn't really a way for us to be involved at a point before it was too looking to make changes.
- hoping that we can get the board involved in the budgeting process earlier so that we can be productive Partners in making budgetary decisions without it being disruptive to the operations
- The purpose of this policy is set expectations regarding the roles of the community and the board of education in the budget. The process and to establish lines of authority and procedures for the establishment of the school district's revenue and expenditure budgets, the policy of the school

district is to establish its revenue at extender budget budgets in accordance with the applicable provisions of law, the annual budget will effectively express and implement the school. District's goals and priorities. So a lot of that is just saying that we will evade a law. The last bit is saying that we will craft our budget to align with the goals and priorities that we have made explicit through our various processes

- It's really basically the practice that we've actually been implementing under the requirement section.
- So the board budget is the section of our overall budget that has to do with you. The board's functions. Rights like our board budget is what we use to pay our board employees, which is our board of the fair and board secretary. It's what we use to pay for our travel and our professional development opportunities.
- The board budget is a section of the district's budget, the funds, the operations of the board of education's prior to April 15th each year, the board of education. So we'll evaluate the current year's board budget and draft aboard budget for the following fiscal year. This task may be delegated to a committee of the board. The board budget will be provided to district leadership for consideration and their first drafts and budget options, the reason why it says here, our dismay be delegated to a committee for is in the past. This has been a function to the extent that we've done it of the board budget committee, and then the intention was to roll that committee into the governments and operations committee so this would allow a committee of the board to make to go through this process, we wouldn't have to delegate to a committee
- when the budget is put together? Is there a timeline included, and in that timeline, how would the board? How would this fit with that timeline? And is there something that would say.
- the board budget, as you know, has its own program type, just like all the other programs, just like all the other things. So I would anticipate this being handled in the same manner as any other program for it and/or any other site, so we typically have those the last 2 years. Anyway, we've typically had those program budgets allocations, allocations to those program leads first week in April. And those usually come after, like about a week that the sites get their allocations.
- this draft policy that we'll get to later that allows us to waive or just requirements in a given year if we feel like we need to I do I do believe that we should probably move that date of April 15th to. A date in April which is April 1st. I think normally we would be having these conversations during our January meeting and subsequent the important retreat about what our needs and what do we need? What do we need to function as a board during a prospective school year or prospective calendar years.
- This board budget will be provided to district leadership for consideration right, it's not a directive, we think this would be beneficial to us, and there's a built-in a way for us to come back and say, we're cutting this year, we really can't do this, that's good and because I'm just thinking about the entire budget process and yes, departments or divisions may say we would like this, but not because they ask, where do they get it but the reality is we actually look at based on the goals and the priorities that have been established because we really use the information that we got from the community.
- . Last year we started working on the budget process before way before January. I think January was when we actually had our first working session with the board and provided you with a lot of data and information and so it seems to me like January makes a lot of sense. So, should we say before the end of January, does that make sense. But, I just want to be mindful that that January is when new board members come in so they caught off guard so we have to be upfront with them about this if we move forward with it.
- The working section, so this was somewhat inspired by this section of the of the draft policy was changed in response to and inspired by the working session that we had at the beginning of this

year, I think it went pretty well. It was, it was kind of great to see the work that our administration was doing to come to sound budgeting decisions, I was really impressed by it, and this sort of enshrines. A process by which we can continue to do basically everything that you said you were just saying by the end of the third full week of February, the latest, the board should hold a public working session to review a the establishment of a set of parameters for draft budgets for the upcoming school year.

- I guess the question is there anything in this list that we might not need in a given year, just the spending data across school, that's how i was that we had not doing that and that was the only one I mean, everything else we need.
- post works and sessions, slashing informational meetings basically work in section, and this was one section and the committee, I think, at a recommendation by chief sager, I think, was like some of these things are are different enough that like It's like they're not going to have an end to work session, so we should have a different section for them. So I'm just going to redo this. The draft budget options for the upcoming school year based upon the previous discussion, I think this is now will instead of should the draft budget options for the upcoming year school year will include and/or be informed by a relevant efforts to improve student performance gaps the plan to maintain district financial health see outcomes data across schools. The commitment to develop options for any proposed spending increases cuts or reallocations. These options will be specified and based on variable priorities as directed by the board, which speaks to something that is happening in the working session, explicit alignment to the goals of strategic plan of the district, as well as the goals of the board of education if the board has had goals and f staffing and enrollment trends and projections
- what if to get set, we deleted this entire section, and then under the working session, say, something about us setting expectations for updates on the process of developing the budget? My next question's just when how far from when we do the working session that I guess what we would say due during the working session, if at least by that suggestion that it could be anything. Could we also just make sure that there's a section that says, prior to budget adoption, the board will receive presentations that outline specific target funding areas or something to that effect.
- it's already something that is being provided to the board at COB, and BOE right, but then I think what I read from this is just like what information we continue to receive host the working session.
- I know that there's a lot of constraints around what funding we have to do that, and it would really require us to examine our district operations as a whole. In thinking about which positions have the most impact to student achievement, so rather than outcomes.
- the question of bringing it out in the public setting and having the discussion about it, which is something that you know? I guess in the interest of trying to be able to move forward, what if at least for now, it's not included, but if we as a board, think of a way to add it into the policy in a way that makes sense and we're comfortable with, we can do that during the readings of the policy and remember we, I think you made some change up above under the working session that talked about it's not going to be at all inclusive of I don't know, I don't know what the wording is at this point because we talked about so many different things, but that does then give the board to say, you know. Can we have some of this data so that we can't consider this as a part of whatever decision we're make? When we move on to the next section
- The composition of the budget preliminary and final will be a packet composed of required fund allocations comparison to prior fiscal year and a detailed document that breaks down all site allocations, administration departmental funding, displaying dollar amounts.
- There's been constant requests to have information about what does the budget contained, and a lot of the questions that for questioning that we've received on this point has been well, we don't have final data.
- You're going to get the final budget. Come June 30th, and then you will approve it.
- What we want at this point is essentially a SnapShot, and we understand it's going to move, we understand there's going to be more information coming in between April, you know, for a specific

date and June 30th that are going to change those numbers. So our understanding is that the main work around setting the parameters and understanding what is driving the decisions that are going to craft this budget happens earlier, the draft gives us the opportunity to say.

- We get in our packet of information. It essentially tells us what is being allocated to school sites, which school sites have, and hopefully, by then, have you know been able to give it back? What is allocated to different departments and not necessarily on a line by line. But you know, we do want to see, like blocks of like money. This is going to operations, this is going to this, and then the final points, which may be contentious, is not necessarily every single contract. But we do want to see a ratio, and we wanna start measuring a ratio of how much money is just getting paid out to contracts contracted services. I think it's something that I'm then we get asked a lot by the community and it's a concern that the community has founded or unfounded, but because there's no information about like how much you spend on contracted services, it's something that we usually just draw blanks and say we're spending money on all these contracts.
- it comes down to distrust from the community about the district's funds. Now what we're trying to do here is clear the air and start building is by building blocks of trust with the community so that they see, this is how much we're spending this is our ratio our ratios going up this year, why we have the information we, you know, purchased this. Thing that we had to purchase, or this year, we pay for all these iPad that needed to get replaced or reading. That's the kind of information that we like to be able to share with the community and be able to have that conversation prior to when the budget is approved.
- It'd be very helpful that people know that contracted services include a lot more than people realize they take a look at it and all of a sudden, they realized that excel energy is a contracted service and having you start putting those things together. People think the district is hiring outside people to do work that could be done by employees in the district, and it's a bigger thing than that, so it's got to be an education for all of us and but especially for the public.
- if I think we talked about that earlier, these are some options to put together a full complete budget and have options like that, by April 1 would be the problematic. I mean, it just wouldn't be practical
- Just as long as we have that sense of expectation and what those options look like, and it's of very much of a framework, a skeletal budget type of thing somewhere right around that time.
- I understood that you're asking for a draft of that before we actually give you the final. Yes, and that's where I that would be challenging to have that done by April 1.
- I think there are a couple things that are really important like making sure that it's not so early that it's impossible to do it, but also making sure it's not so late that once we get the options, we can't make a decision to make changes right or whenever we get the options, it should not be too late to change the budget.
- I don't know that we can automatically give you that because it's because, and the reason why I say that is this because when we gave out allocations to departments, we made a decision as to in order for us to get to, where we wanted to get to for the bottom line number, right. This is the reduction that needed to be made across-the-board, and then we looked at by area by area to see, did that come app to that number, so to be able to tell you, it's going to mean, this is for sure, as where it's going to come from, we're now going to be able to tell you that by April 1st, because we're going to give the allocations off to those areas, they're going to make the decisions where those reductions are going to come from, but the percentage of reduction target that's going to each of those areas is knowing.
- I think April 1st as a deadline makes sense. This is not like the full thing or April COB I think that's good for you. Yeah, April COB we could get a snapshot of it move it over to the budget like final budget.
- Given all the things that we've talked about. Yeah, I'm not sure where the board is at, but I feel like do we not need to see the revised version before this actually goes to a reading.
- Public input, the district help hosts public meetings to get the feedback from community members for the purpose of informing budgetary citizens. At least one of these public input sessions will take place in the fall at least one will take place within 8 weeks prior to the adoption of the budget move so the reason why this is constructed like this, it's not super specific, as far as like what the

public says, public and possessions should look like, which gives us some flexibility around that it does specify that this is for the purpose of informing budgetary decisions.

- This is not us, asking people to come to us. So we can tell them how it's going to be, and they don't have a chance to give this feedback that's meaningful. The goal is to really gather feedback the reason why it specifies that one will take place in the fall is because we want these people to be able to speak to us early enough, which prior to the outcome of the budget is because, at some point we are going to start telling people what we're about to spend money on
- The reason why I really would like us to move forward with the readings of possible is because the goals is the try to get this implemented before the end of the year and since we have a 3 reading process it might take a while.

8. Ethnic Studies Update

Superintendent Their then invite members of the administration team to present this report.

Within the presentation were details about:

- Objectives
- Overview of the ST24-25 ethnic studies
- Critical ethnic studies – timeline
- Critical Ethnic Studies course overview, goals, curriculum and outcomes
- Support for educators
- Updated MDE requirements
- New Social Studies & Ethnic Studies Standards Implementation Plan
- Ethnic Studies Training Pathways
- Continuous Improvement

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The other objectives in the front is enlisted ethics on these training headlines. I don't think I saw anything about it or did I miss it half?
- We, this is how we interpreted that question, the training pathways for our teachers and then training pathways for our students, and this is upcoming. We've had the educator cohort in place for all 3 years, and then it's possible.
- Okay, so are we still doing that forward, or is that just what we have done?
- It's still the first one is September 19th, so we've got it on the schedule for this year. They all get together and they work on the curriculum together on a monthly basis.
- In addition to the district wide training previously that there were some training initiatives that I think these teachers were able to opt into, particularly over the summer is that something that they're still able to partake, and I know that was, I've heard from educators if that was a really helpful space to be able to learn and to learn outside of just in this environment,
- We have had a critical, I think studies institute for the last 3 summers, the last one, this past June during the EXPO and that's what we're working towards for next summer, whether it will be a separate institute, as we did for the last 3 summers with the Sierra EXPO or whether it will be a separate Construct, but agree, it's a possible opportunity is a continuation of that CRI EXPO that previously existed or have existed.
- there's nothing specific, because we're still talking with them. We've also had some transitions and staffing; we have a new person who has accepted the position and starting on the 30th of September. I'm having a report who has been doing this work in another district and is really, really part of the when you come MDE cohort, that is the working group for ethnic. We're bringing out ward, and the offer 2 possible opportunities with McAllister are not set in stone, but we did talk to them about some grant funding that has to do with undergraduate students and I'm interested teachers from SPPS, not in a in a joint course learning together around these topics. Again, it's

not finalized, it's just conversations, so then this summer, as folks were preparing to go back to buildings, what opportunities were they able to partake, so they could partake in the CRI EXPO? Subset, which is was basically totally separate but on the same days and then the opening week, we had about an entire strand just for those teachers to collaborate with each other and then extra time for them to get together during opening week beyond, they were also invited to a guest speaker for the social studies so that we could start introducing them. They had the options to participate in those areas.

- Should something like the Macalester option fall through? Would our plan then be to find a different pathway?
- We're always going to be paying attention to how we support our educators in the summer.
- I'm really excited about well. First, I'll say the folks who built all of this, we're going to stay on their shoulders and they were giants and they deserve like every kudo that we, I could give fantastic people and how it did fantastic work have chosen to do, move out-of-state and take other opportunities, but the person coming in is going to have a lot of ideas around where we are and where we need to go and the position is funded, which is something that is stable funding for the position and is going into the future.
- We are committed to supporting the social study strand and the critical ethnic studies class, because it's helps our kids get across the stage and as a graduation requirement, so we'll be supporting all the way through okay,
- Like English ten is can be hard, if this is not going well, I don't expect this to go well, because this is a bit of a more advanced class.
- As we explored the data, we were concerned about the critical ethnic studies cohort, and then in comparing it and noticing that they're virtually the same. It's a stay wide problem and many antecedents or reasons that that happens, there's attendance there's engagement, there's understanding of the of the topic. There's the way that it's brought to students. There's also the systems and structures we have, or have had in place around the schedule and the grading systems and the ways that you do school to and we're being more specific about how these things work and how you get your grade and when you're on track, and when how that happens at high school, to improve this system wide problem and so it's not of courses, individual problem per se, it's all of those things together that we have to solve, it's like the Rubik's cube, we have to figure out to make improvements, we just didn't want to blame or hide the actual data from you and it's why we have a credit recovery network, and it's why we have credit recovery at al but anytime a kid needs to go to credit recovery, it takes away one of their options for a college and career seminar or something that they'd maybe really be interested in, because they're redoing something that they missed the opportunity the first time. So we're, we're really cognizant of that, and we're trying to make headway in in all of these things, but we do see it as a system wide problem, and we know that fair and equitable grading is going to help our tightening of our schedules is going to help and then talk into students what's going on, where now have advisory, every single day in every high school that was not part of the system, every Friday. Their advisory teacher is asking them, Hey, how on track are you? How are your grades going, what things can be weak to be working on? How can we approach this and help you to help yourself get all the choices you can get in high school.
- I hear what you say but I feel that ethnic studies is more critically looked at and I will be harder. We shouldn't compare some other classes other classes this isn't doing great either.
- The fair and equitable grading initiative that we have is based on these 3 beliefs that students should know what their grades should reflect what they know and can do that. They should know how they're going to be graded that they have rubrics, that everyone has access to and that they know ahead of time, this is how I demonstrate learning and that they have multiple opportunities to demonstrate and relearn, so in terms of what that process looks like they're in the curriculum that's been built out for critical, I think studies for every unit, there are multiple summative evaluations, so their final assessment, there's a couple ways they can do it. There's also within each school. They have a time frame in which something can be turned in, so it's not. Like it's due the 1 day and you don't get credit if it's not due so the time there's no one deadline for work to be due, so that's another way to make sure that they have apple opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned in terms of relearning the material again, that's different in every school. The

teacher's time available to relearn this the material, but what we're supporting with the support, and with the educator cohort is that they designed their curriculum, and it's in the plans already, so that there's like a lag time that students can move ahead or they can relearn, and so it's built into the curriculum that they have time to expand their understanding or to relearn something so that is it is a project. This is our second year of implementing this way of thinking of grading at the high school level.

- Okay. So this is only the second year of this, like fear and equitable grading procedure, while in the past, we've still had recommendations and coursework that students can actually there was still an expectation that there was some relearning able to be had in order to move that needle right?
- Yes, would say, it's much more, it's permeated in the last 2 years in a way that we didn't have it permeated previously and we're learning new things constantly. So certainly, since the pandemic, there's been a relearning, I would say on the part of teachers and students' kind of how we do school, and this is a great opportunity. I'd say to let them know that they have a place they have some agency that they can say I didn't get it, I didn't. I would like another chance at this and now we have the language in place to support them with that.
- I have more questions about that, but I know that this is a conversation about The ethnic studies course and so I wonder if that's not something that we maybe could also go back to just, I think I'm really interested. I think because this option has been available to young folks throughout our system for a long time, and it hasn't necessarily change. I think I appreciate that there is this new renowned effort renewed effort to make sure that that learning is happening and so I'd be really curious to continue studying the results that come with this and so as you all are so interested in that.
- There 16 teachers teaching critical ethnic studies right now. Can you talk a little bit about what the selection are pre-requisite kind of in terms of selecting those teachers to teach?
- When the course was built and the work was put together where there was a St. Paul's school work group on ethic studies and they put together a teacher a job description for a critical essence studies teacher, and it included at that point input from various community groups in the pacs, and the student groups and for the first two well, every year we've suggested to the principals, as here's the job description, we'd like to have a teacher whose life experience reflects the students as much as possible that they've had some understanding of what it takes to teach a critical ethnic studies course, so to prioritize bipoc teachers and/or teachers who've done study in this and so of the 16 teachers. I think 8 of them have been teaching it since the beginning and have been part of this 2 years now, 3 years of building that body of knowledge there have been budget cuts, and so we have, I think 23 new teachers this fall, who did not teach it last year and so that's what we did during opening week was met together, they all met together for 3 and a 1/2 hours, I was with them for part of it and shared with them the work shared with them, like the approaches to learning that you have to really take into account with an excellence with an ethic studies class, so we have the guidelines, it's not always possible to once you're dealing with the reality of the staffing and the budget but that is the guideline and it's like a preferred Teaching role?
- I would also be curious if there's any way that we could see the data comparison. So the folks that have been teaching it for 8 years and maybe have more of that lived in life experience compared to the others and I don't know if you guys could get that data, but I think that would be really interesting, because I think it, this would be, and I would hope that the folks that have experience it more often probably are yielding better results. I guess that's an assumption that I have that I could be way off on.
- Can you talk a little bit around like other departments to what is actually like, can you give us a Snapshot of what's happening during PLCs, what are some of the likes of big projects and curriculum?
- I can speak to the critical ethnic studies plc last year. Is that what you're preferred to so or what the goals are for this year. Yes, so we have a district wide plc data cycle and it involves setting a goal studying, the students in your classroom, how they're assessed how they're learning is showing app if you're pursuing your goal. So, in critical ethnic studies, last year, we actually at the beginning of the year the staff and I planned that they would start looking at attendance and

grades in a way that they hadn't looked at the previous year because the previous year, it's a lot of a heavy lift to build this course and to teach it, and so the first year was mostly their PLC was spent on teaching pedagogy, and like how to do the teaching last year, they really dove into the grading and the attendants, and they did PLC cycles in terms of how do we balance maintaining the rigor and helping students like supporting to the rigor in essence is what happened and so that was the what their PLC work was last year, PLC's, our teacher directed, so they choose what they're going to focus their work on, so actually one of the professors from Macalester came in opening week last year, August 24 and August 23 and spoke about the history of grading from an ethnic studies perspective and says, let's unpack it from this direction and then look at how we're doing the grading, so I think it was an interesting year and the data that we showed from quarter 4, the grades had they were, they had improved the teachers reported on that themselves, too, that they felt like they had done some solid work in terms of unpacking how they were teaching and keeping the rigor and then supporting the students to the rigor so we hope that that will continue their first educator cohort meeting is September 19th and they will kind of discuss this event. At that point and decide which direction they want to go and we'll support them.

- On the final slide you talked about the evaluation plan for 24-25 school years of the current school year. Can you say a little bit more about what that as a district? What the goals are for the school year within that evaluation plan, are there specific matrix that we're looking for in that or like what projected outcomes? We're hoping to see just so that way at the beginning of this year, we may be able to look at it again. At the end, I know you all are checking that data, but I'm curious what we're working towards as a district for this year.
- We don't have the district wide and a district wide evaluation plan for this, but for critical ethnic studies, the staff and I spoke planned on this in June and July before he left and Brandi Sadiki, who will be joining us September 30th, as our new ethnic studies specialist, we're working on what we can do within the educator cohort, and within the PLC, like how what they think would be helpful to be evaluated, and then as a department will be working on like what our evaluation is by the end of the year, but I would have been more details for that. I could speak to briefly the last 2 years, as part of because the teaching that specialist position is funded, there is some reporting that goes back and so we've worked with Rea to gather data from students and from the teachers that way so what I hear is we're trying to take this year or some of this year to actually create a more like structure of evaluation plan for me
- So, in the in the goals of the critical ethnic study slide, our last point is developing critical thinking skills to empower them to the agents, a positive change and more equitable future. And that's something that we, I was part of that board in 2021, approving these goals for this, for this requirement and I'm curious to know if we have things kind of connecting that to our conversation around the outcomes of the critical ethnic studies have we asked our educators one are we meaning that goal and how what they're feeling is about, you know this, you know, this last couple of points specifically, what's the connection between that and our students' reading comprehension as they're entering this class, because I'm assuming they're taking it around the 10th grade most of them, and so what's that is, there a correlation that we could see understands that, you know if we can get our prepare, our students with better comprehension skills as they arrive. Would their experience be better? Not necessarily outcomes. It just measured in grades, but actual experience, like their critical thinking are improved and more importantly, there their connection to their community more relevant. So I'm just curious to know, I think we've asked a lot of questions around this table and that really come down to the fact that we're all very, very interested. I can hopefully speaking for all the board members, and we're all very, very interested in outcomes and understanding. You know what are things that we can do here to make the educator's lives better. Their work better and the outcome of the students better, so just thoughts, maybe it's, I don't know if it's more of a question as much as it was a data point request to kind of start asking educators, what are things that would improve the quality of the experience from the students' perspective but before they arrive into the class.
- I know that the teachers have spoken about what making sure that the material speaking to the student's literacy level, making sure that the students have options for materials and so all the units already built into the curriculum, we have videos, we have different leveled readings, we have speakers coming in and the assessments they can respond in written form in recorded form in verbal form in conversations so that part of it. I would say, we're working on it, we can get

better and I agree that that would be an interesting data point to gather, if we could get the, if we can get the reading level and then compare it based on the level of the materials that they're interacting with that would be interesting. I'm not sure if another part of your question was, if the evaluation would also look at how they see themselves developing their thinking skills. I don't know if that's measurable as much as it is like an output of the educators themselves reporting that the outcome of the class you know, at the end of the year, or at the end of the semester is better and that's something that I would trust the educators to tell me. So I'm just curious to know if that that's being gathered in a survey format or something some way like that. I think it definitely can be part of the evaluation process for this year.

- So in slide 6, I'm interested to know what are the 7 principles of it studied. Oh yeah,
- and I'm just going to call it up. The work group in St. Paul public schools built the curriculum in those 4 units and those themes of like developing identity, understanding the importance of advocacy based on the 7 principles. And so let me see if I can. I will have to I don't have them printed out here so I'll have to come back to you with them. But it's some of them are balance, community peace within self Knowledge of identity and I don't have the other 3 right here, but they are exemplified in the curriculum in those 4 units whisk. One of them is the important advocacy as a tool against depression and I will have to make sure that I'll just send them to before I leave.
- What's asked of students right based and another thing I want to point out is on slide 11, because I don't know a few people if the cohort is not about this, but because of the interdisciplinary nature of critical ethnic studies, shouldn't it be like a foremost part for English ten like the odd feeling better at English ten? Wouldn't they, because they know some of the principles of essentially, and they can apply it? so what I'm saying is based on the 7 principles of ethnic studies and the students kind of learning all those principles.
- I would say, I can't speak exactly to what the cohort is focusing on, but I know they deeply value the interdisciplinary aspect of the course, and they have had many conversations that I've at least been privy to about the value and the power that will come from having ethnic studies be that strand as it's built into the curriculum moving forward. As it stands now, its critical ethnic studies is a 2 credit. During 10th grade, and they could be taken in the fall or the spring. English 10 is all year long, so they're kind of overlapped in some way or another, but I would say, personally, that is a deep hope that, as students are learning more through the ethnic studies framework, they'll be able to bring more of this to their other courses
- Just one question about the student survey, based on what we heard from the students. We're going to kind of address that need and go forward. What exactly did come out of the students early?
- The student surveys were conducted as I said, mid-semester and end of semester, and the results were shared with their teachers themselves. The ethnic studies specialist also talked about them in the educator cohorts, there were a lot of the percentage of students who took the study was not a 100%. So I think last year, throughout the year, they averaged about 40% of the students during the 4 times that the survey was sent out, and so I don't have the specific grade, but it was overwhelmingly positive. What the students reported in terms of their experience with the class having said that 40% of the students took it, and so then that makes me wonder about the 25% that aren't passing the class, did they not take the survey but that I don't have the evidence on that.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

10. 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:

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