

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

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102, and**

Available Streaming Online at www.spps.org/boe and Saint Paul Cable Channel 16

**December 19, 2024
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Halla Henderson, Chair.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: H. Henderson, U. Ward, J. Vue, C. Allen, Y. Carrillo, C. Franco
E. Valliant arrived shortly after Roll Call.

Interim Superintendent Thein

C. Long, General Counsel; S. Dahlke, Assistant Clerk

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of the order of the main agenda - the agenda was updated prior to the meeting to move Further Items that Require Board Action - Deliberation to Select the Preferred Candidate for Superintendent to follow Recognitions. The motion was seconded by Director Allen.

Director Vue requested more details on the rationale for this change. Chair Henderson noted that deliberations will continue from the meeting of December 18, 2024, and for the previous discussion to be top of mind and the grounding of the deliberations in the leadership profile. Director Vue noted that it was not too long ago that Public Comment was not an agenda item, but prior to the start of the meeting.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Absent
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

4. RECOGNITIONS

BF 34067 Acknowledgment of Good Work Provided by Outstanding District Employees

1. **Kaitlin Scott**, a French teacher at Harding Senior High School, won the Early Career Award at the 2024 annual Minnesota Teachers of Language and Culture (MCTLC) conference.

The Early Career Award is given in recognition of outstanding promise in providing excellence in instruction in the world language classroom by a language teacher in Minnesota in their first three years of teaching.

2. **Megan Budke**, the district's Immersion, Indigenous, & World Language Coordinator, earned the Administrator Award at the 2024 annual Minnesota Teachers of Language and Culture (MCTLC) conference.

This award is given in recognition of outstanding service to and support of education in world languages and cultures by a current administrator who is not a world-language educator.

3. SPPS teachers **Lighter Moo and Ehtalow Zar** became the first Tier 3 and 4 licensed teachers of Karen language in the state of Minnesota. Lighter Moo teaches at Humboldt High School, and Ehtalow Zar teaches at Johnson Senior High School.

4. Central Senior High School German teacher **Charles Bublitz** earned the German Embassy Teacher of Excellence Award.

The German Embassy in Washington, in cooperation with the American Association of Teachers of German, each year honors three especially outstanding, early-career American teachers with the German Embassy Teacher of Excellence Award.

The award is intended to raise local awareness of German teachers who are still early in their careers and bolster them in their teaching profession. The award includes travel costs to the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages national conference, where Mr. Bublitz was officially recognized.

BF 34068 Acknowledgement of Good Work Provided by Students

1. Thirteen students from Saint Paul Public Schools received a \$3,000 scholarship from The Optimist Club of St. Paul.

The Optimist Club held its annual Youth Appreciation Dinner on November 7, awarding 15 students from St. Paul (13 from Saint Paul Public Schools) with \$3,000 scholarships. Each honoree was nominated by a school counselor in recognition of their success in overcoming significant obstacles in their young lives.

Optimist Club member John Tillotson told The Pioneer Press: "All of these students have incredible self-motivation in pushing themselves to adapt and face things head on to grow in many ways. We are so impressed by their grit and resilience. They are just great examples of what can be possible."

Said one attendee of the event: "It was truly a night that I will never forget and an experience that I've been telling everyone about, from my colleagues to my friends and family."

This year's Optimist Club Scholarship recipients are:

- **David Ortiz**, Creative Arts Secondary
- **Maxine Yeboah**, Gateway to College
- **Abdullah Abdulaziz**, Harding Senior High School
- **William Rubio**, Harding Senior High School
- **Oscar Tadeo**, Harding Senior High School
- **Tiffany Tran**, Harding Senior High School
- **Noah Grisham**, Johnson Senior High School
- **Jessica Vue**, Johnson Senior High School
- **Eh K Yaw**, Johnson Senior High School
- **Murtaza Ahmadi**, LEAP High School
- **Maybelin Henriquez**, LEAP High School
- **Lorena Rosas**, LEAP High School
- **Mariyam Kajela**, Washington Technology High School

5. FURTHER ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION

A. Deliberation to Select the Preferred Candidate for Superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools

Director Henderson provided a recap of the superintendent search process, and noted that deliberations will continue at this meeting. There were three full days with the finalist candidates, Dr. Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed, Dr. Brenda Cassellius, and Dr. Stacie Stanley. She noted that the Board will be grounded in the leadership profile. Board members then recapped their time spent with candidates through virtual sessions, in-person meetings, informal meetings, school visits, and formal interviews. They also spoke about the strengths of each candidate, impressions, and words to describe each of them. Their deliberations were grounded in the leadership profile. Board members then reviewed their time spent with each candidate, and shared their thoughts on each.

Board members then discussed the strengths of each candidate in relation to the leadership profile, with the topics of strengths of the district, challenges of the district, and leadership attributes.

Board members then continued the conversation around visioning based on previous conversation with two candidates that were connected to the majority of strengths who were lifted up - Dr. Brenda Cassellius and Dr. Stacie Stanley with the number of times each candidate was lifted in relation to the strengths. The goals were also noted within immediate, mid-range, and long-term and the alignment for each candidate were also discussed.

There was an opportunity to discuss all three candidates as well.

There was a question on writing the top candidates from each board member to the Chair due to confusion on the role of the leadership profile in this process and the lifting up of candidates.

Board members also shared their top two finalists, which was then narrowed down to one finalist - Dr. Stacie Stanley.

BF 34069 Selection of the Preferred Candidate for Superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools

MOTION: Director Henderson moved that the Board of Education offer the position of Superintendent of Independent School District No. 625 - Saint Paul Public Schools to Dr. Stacie Stanley, and authorize contract negotiations to begin. The motion was seconded by Director Valliant.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

6. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of the Order of the Consent Agenda with these items pulled for separate consideration:

- **3a - Request to Sign the Contract with City of Saint Paul's Right Track Youth Employment Program pertaining to the Spring Internship Program**
- **3b - Approval for a Contract that Exceeds \$175,000 with eCapital Advisors LLC for continuing Oracle EPM support through 2025**
- **4i - Enter into Lease Agreements with Apple for iPads**

The motion was seconded by Director Ward.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of November 19, 2024
- B. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 19, 2024
- C. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 2, 2024
- D. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 3, 2024
- E. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 5, 2024

MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of November 19, 2024; Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 19, 2024; Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 2, 2024; Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 3, 2024; Minutes of the

Special Meeting of the Board of Education of December 5, 2024. The motion was seconded by Director Carrillo.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Minutes of the Committee of the Board Meeting of December 3, 2024

At the December 3, 2024 Committee of the Board meeting, Superintendent Thein welcomed everyone and provided a brief update on the search for the next superintendent for Saint Paul Public Schools. He also noted the annual Truth in Taxation hearing and our adherence to open government.

The first presentation focused on the 3-Year School Calendar for July 2025-June 2028. Questions included the end day of the school year and impacts to learning, discussion around starting school before Labor Day, the importance of student voice in the calendar, and questions about holidays that fall on a weekend.

The next presentation was School Year 2023-24: District Outcomes. This sparked a robust conversation with board members, which included the alarming concerns in the data, how this appears in classroom settings, literacy and math interventions, team communication about these results, frustration for families, direct supports for students, PreK data, attention to students and check-ins, timeline for review of individualized data, personalized learning plans, the data collection process, and importance of interactions, as well as the alignment of this data with the upcoming BIGG project goals initiative.

The next presentation was the Fiscal Year 25 Budget Update and Fiscal Year 26 Budget Assumptions. Questions from the board included further details on the deficit after adjustments, contingency plans and potential delays of payment from the federal government, details on the enrollment assumption and the state formula. The Board thanked Chief Sager for the safeguards built into the budget, and a request for a work session to further discuss this work. The impacts of tax increases to our community were also noted, as well as a request for different scenarios in the budget.

Next, the Board voted to approve the resolution to change the school district general election to even years by lengthening the current term of three school board members by one year to align with the even year elections. Before the vote, this item sparked discussion about the cost comparisons of this change, the naming of specific board members in the resolution and process should one of those board members exit the board early, the statute that applies to this change, and the timeline of vote on this item.

MOTION: Director Ward moved to accept the report on the December 3, 2024 Committee of the Board meeting and approve the recommended motions and minutes of that meeting as published. The motion was seconded by Director Vue.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

9. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

A. Board of Education Meetings (5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted)

- 2025
 - January 7 (Annual Organizational Meeting at 4:00pm)
 - January 21
 - February 18
 - March 18
 - April 22
 - May 20
 - June 10 (Special re: Non-Renewals at 4:00pm)
 - June 17
 - July 15
 - August 19
 - September 23
 - October 21
 - November 18
 - December 16

B. Committee of the Board Meetings (4:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted)

- 2025
 - January 7
 - February 4
 - March 4
 - April 8
 - May 6
 - June 10
 - August 6 – Wednesday (Primary Election)
 - September 9
 - October 7
 - November 5 – Wednesday (Election Day)
 - December 2

10. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Thein congratulated the three superintendent search finalists and that he respects them as educators. He offered a special congratulations to Dr. Stanley and believes she will do a fabulous job, and he is willing to do anything to ensure a smooth transition. He also shared the OWL student march where seniors declare their post-high school plans and college.

He also shared information in honor of Homeless and Hungry Month and work with our Project REACH and Title 1 program:

In honor of Homeless and Hungry Month, I would like to recognize Project REACH which is part of the St. Paul Public School Title I program to support students experiencing homelessness.

McKinney Vento Law protects students who do not have adequate, fixed and reliable housing. The Law allows students to stay in their school of origin, have full access to educational programming, and be able to enroll without all their paperwork so that there are not gaps in their schooling. The Title I set aside for Project REACH provides eligible students transportation to school, provides them with backpacks and school supplies and resources for the students and their families to find stable housing. The team at Project REACH has supported up to 1800 students annually; currently there are 782 identified students in SPPS receiving these supports and services.

11. AGENDA ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION

1. Consent Agenda

MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of all items within the consent agenda withholding these items for separate consideration:

- **3a - Request to Sign the Contract with City of Saint Paul's Right Track Youth Employment Program pertaining to the Spring Internship Program**
- **3b - Approval for a Contract that Exceeds \$175,000 with eCapital Advisors LLC for continuing Oracle EPM support through 2025**
- **4i - Enter into Lease Agreements with Apple for iPads**

Director Franco seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

1. Gifts

BF 34070 Timothy Scott Scholarships

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent Thein to accept the \$7,000 from the Timothy Scott and provide a letter of expressing appreciation for the gift.

BF 34071 Accept Donation to Project REACH from Assistance League Minneapolis/St. Paul of Coats for Students Experiencing Homelessness

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to accept the donation of winter coats for students experiencing homelessness from the Assistance League Minneapolis/ St. Paul

BF 34072 Accept Donation of \$10,000 from the Jacobsen Foundation to Purchase Coats for Students Experiencing Homelessness

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to accept the donation of \$10,000.

2. Grants

BF 34073 Request for Permission to Accept a Grant from the Asian American Organizing Project

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to accept funds from the Asian American Organizing Project's Youth Civic Engagement grant and implement the project as specified in the award documents.

BF 34074 Request for Permission to Submit to the Public School District Opioid Recovery Trust Grants

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit these applications, accept funds from the Public School District Opioid Recovery Trust and implement the project as specified in the award documents.

BF 34075 Request for Permission to Support a Grant Application to the Environmental Protection Agency

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to support an application to the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus Grant and to work with First Student to implement the project as specified in the award documents.

3. Contracts

BF 34076 Amendment to Equifax Consulting Agreement for Unemployment Services

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to execute a contract amendment in the amount not to exceed \$280,000 for fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026 with Equifax.

BF 34077 Contract Amendment #8 for DLR Architects for the Hidden River Middle School Renovation and Addition (Project # 3140-20-02)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #8 for DLR Architects in the amount of \$17,600 for the Hidden River Middle School Renovation and Addition (Project # 3140-20-02).

BF 34078 Award of Solar Photovoltaic System Installation at Bruce Vento Elementary

That the Board of Education authorize the award of the solar contract to Cedar Creek Energy for the lump sum base bid of \$582,398.

BF 34079 Design Services for the 740 York RTU Replacement and Roofing Project (Project # 1140-25-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of design and construction administration services to Miller Dunwiddie for the not-to-exceed fee of \$385,860.

BF 34080 Design Services for The Heights Community School HVAC Replacement and Fire Suppression Project (Project # 1120-25-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of design and construction administration services to TKDA for the not-to-exceed fee of \$486,500.

4. Agreements

BF 34081 Creighton University - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with Creighton University for student internship experiences for occupational therapists.

BF 34082 Saint Catherine University - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with St. Kate's for student internship experiences for occupational therapists.

BF 34083 Augsburg University - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with Augsburg for student internship experiences outside of student teaching.

BF 34084 St. Thomas University - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with St. Thomas for student internship experiences outside of student teaching.

BF 34085 College of St. Scholastica - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with College of St. Scholastica for occupational therapy student internship experiences.

BF 34086 Alfred Adler Graduate School - University Professional Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with Alfred Adler Graduate School for art therapy and physical therapy student internship experiences.

BF 34087 Approval of Employment Agreement Between Independent School District No. 625 and Minnesota School Employees Association, Representing Classified Confidential Employees Association

That the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 625 enter into an Agreement concerning the terms and conditions of employment of those classified confidential employees in this school district for whom the Minnesota School Employees Association is the exclusive representative; duration of said Agreement is for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

BF 34088 Enter into Lease Agreements with Apple for iPad Charging Carts

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to enter into a Lease Agreement with Apple, Inc for iPad charging carts, for a total not to exceed \$1,500,000 over the life of the lease.

BF 34089 Enter Lease Agreement for Sale of District iPad Inventory Approval

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve the sale of district iPad inventory following the end of school year 2024-2025 to Total Technology.

5. Administrative Items

BF 34090 Monthly Operating Authority

That the Board of Education approve and ratify the following checks and electronic transfers for the period October 1, 2024- October 31, 2024

(a) General Account	#778615-779682	\$68,052,883.44
	#0011163-0011190	
	#7005355-7005386	
	#0011232-0011465	
(b) Construction Payments	- 0 -	\$14,261,567.98
(c) Debt Service	- 0 -	<u>\$0.00</u>
		\$82,314,451.42

Included in the above disbursements are two payrolls in the amount of \$46,241,201.26 and overtime of \$236,772.05 or 0.51% of payroll.

(d) Collateral Changes

Released: None
Additions: None

That the Board of Education further authorize payment of properly certified cash disbursements including payrolls, overtime schedules, compensation claims, and claims under the Worker's Compensation Law falling within the period ending April 30, 2025

BF 34091 Recommendations for Exclusion of Students Non-Compliant with Minnesota Statute 121A.15 Health Standards: Immunizations

That the Board of Education exclude noncompliant student(s) from school(s) effective December 19, 2024, should they not comply with Minnesota State Health Standards for Immunizations on or before this date.

Human Resources Transactions

BF 34092 Transactions for November 1 - November 30, 2024

BF 34093 Facilities Department FY25 Purchases over \$175,000

That the Board of Education authorize the purchases listed for the Facilities Department anticipated to be over the \$175,000.

BF 34094 Phase Gate Approval of the FY25 Flooring Replacement Program at Como Park Elementary, Randolph Heights Elementary, Humboldt High School, Farnsworth Aerospace Upper Campus, and Maxfield Elementary (Project # 0225-25-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the FY25 Flooring Replacement Program at Como Park Elementary, Randolph Heights Elementary, Humboldt High School, Farnsworth Aerospace Upper Campus, and Maxfield Elementary project (Project # 0225-25-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$1,283,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

BF 34095 Phase Gate Approval of the FY25 Paving Replacement Program at 360 Colborne and Hubbs Center (Project # 0800-25-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the FY25 Paving Replacement Program at 360 Colborne and Hubbs Center (Project # 0800-25-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$1,526,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

BF 34096 Phase Gate Approval of the Maxfield ES Parking Lot Extension (Project # 4180-25-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the Maxfield ES Parking Lot Extension (Project # 4180-25- 01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$935,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

BF 34097 Phase Gate Approval of the Washington Technology Roofing and Paving (Project # 4040-24-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the Washington Technology Roofing and Paving project (Project # 4040-24-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$11,169,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

6. Bids

BF 34098 Phase Gate Approval of the Bruce Vento Elementary - New Construction Project WS 32F (Project #1020-22-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of Bid No. A24-3928-JG for the Bruce Vento Elementary - New Construction Project (Project #1020-22-01) to Hoffman & McNamara Co. for a lump sum base bid of \$199,900.

BF 34099 Phase Gate Approval of the Bruce Vento Elementary - New Construction Project WS 32F (Project #1020-22-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of Bid No. A24-4021-JG for the Bruce Vento Elementary - New Construction Project (Project #1020-22-01) to Hoffman & McNamara Co. for a lump sum base bid of \$434,700.

7. Change Orders

BF 34100 Change Order #6 for NAC Mechanical and Electrical Services for the Highland Park Middle School Entry Addition and Renovation Project (Project #3081-23-01)

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent, Superintendent's Designee, or Interim Facilities Director to sign Change Order #6 for NAC Mechanical and Electrical Services for the Highland Park Middle School Entry Addition and Renovation Project (Project #3081-23-01) for the amount of \$178,718.

BF 34101 Change Order #1 for MCI Carpet One for the Bruce Vento New Construction project (Project # 1020-22-01)

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent, Superintendent's Designee, or Interim Facilities Director to sign Change Order #1 for MCI Carpet One for the Bruce Vento Elementary – New Construction project (Project # 1020-22-01) for the amount of \$298,305.

ITEMS PULLED FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

BF 34102 Request to Sign the Contract with City of Saint Paul's Right Track Youth Employment Program pertaining to the Spring Internship Program

Director Franco noted that he pulled this item due to his employer and to avoid a conflict of interest.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

MOTION: Director Henderson moved that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to sign the contract between Saint Paul Public Schools and Right Track for the 2024-25 school year. Director Carrillo seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Abstain
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

BF 34103 Approval for a Contract that Exceeds \$175,000 with eCapital Advisors LLC for continuing Oracle EPM support through 2025

Director Franco noted that he was able to connect with Chief Sager on this item and questions and now understand the work and that the contract is critical to integrate systems for budget abilities within the current financial system, and that he is intending to support this.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

MOTION: Director Henderson moved that the Board of Education authorizes the Finance Office to execute a contract amendment to add 612 hours and \$122,400 to the existing contract with eCapital Advisors LLC to increase the service support along with reporting and planning capabilities. Director Franco seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

BF 34104 Enter into Lease Agreements with Apple for iPads

Director Franco noted that he feels like this is a substantial item and with it being on the consent agenda, he'd like to understand more about it, but also understands it is time sensitive, and the timeline for this item was predetermined, and we did not know this would be the meeting with deliberations and determination on the selection of the next superintendent. He does feel it is critical to discuss at a future meeting about student outcomes related to the investment in iPads, and as a learning tool. He requested further information and conversation and justification for this continued agreement and the rationale for this device. He noted he did connect with Chief Turner prior to the meeting to understand more, and that this is a good deal, and recognizes that the iPads need to be ordered and prepared for students. He does request that this be discussed at a future meeting, because the \$17M pricetag deserves more discussion.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

MOTION: Director Henderson moved that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to enter into a Lease Agreement with Apple, Inc for iPads, for a total not to exceed \$17,500,000 over the life of the lease. Director Franco seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

FURTHER AGENDA ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION

1. Certification of the 2025-26 School Year Tax Levy

Superintendent Thein introduced Tom Sager, Executive Chief of Financial Services, to present this item.

Chief Sager noted that this is the final part of the annual tax levy certification process that began in September. At the last board meeting, the district provided detailed information on the tax levy and district budget as part of the Truth in Taxation hearing.

BF 34105 Certification of the 2025-26 School Year Tax Levy

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Franco noted that school district finance is complicated, and other entities of the government must also align in the process, and we attempt to be most fiscally responsible for our community members and students. This is tough and folks are feeling it, and the increase in taxes are not sustainable, and it will be important for the Board and new superintendent to work on a plan on how to get to a point where we don't need to accept the maximum levy, and start thinking of other ways and opportunities to secure dollars. Our community members do pay large amounts of taxes in Saint Paul, and the commitment to ensure the big taxes lead to big outcomes and successes for our students.
- Director Carrillo noted that the tax levy is more burdensome per capita than others, and we need to continue to understand the right balance. We have learned a lot through this process and listened to the community-voiced concerns, and need to understand the tax levy for our elderly community why may rely on fixed incomes which are not adjusted to inflation. We do need to consider bringing to the table a multitude of options to right-size the budget and determine ways to increase revenue. This is not something we can do alone - we are going to need to work with our community as a city to ensure students are the priority.
- Director Ward requested information on if, hypothetically, the district did not approve the max levy, are there any other negative consequences other than the less revenue received? Response: Yes, if the levy for the amount proposed for FY26 is not approved, the deficit of \$44M would become greater. Other consequences would be less categorical funding on the state aid that is aligned with the levy, including achievement and integration revenue, which is \$15M part of the levy and part of the aid. If we underlevy, the aid portion would also be underlevied.
- Director Ward also requested additional information on the total aid from the state.

MOTION: Director Henderson moved that the School Board certify a property tax levy in the amount of \$220,848,442.35 as included below for the 2025-2026 school year. This amount represents a 7.92 percent increase from 2024-2025 school district property tax levy.

Director Carrillo seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

2. 3-Year School Calendar: July 2025-June 2028

Superintendent Thein introduced Craig Anderson, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, to present this item.

The presentation was grounded in the values of:

- Based in community input
- Inclusive process that includes student voice
- Informs a multi-year calendar to support long-term planning
- Aligns with Minnesota statute and logistical parameters

The Minnesota state statute that governs that length of the school year and hours of instruction was reviewed, as well as the parameters for SPPS. The challenge of when Labor Day falls on the 5th, 6th or 7th of September and we follow all of our other district parameters, we are unable to finish school before the third week of June. Ending in the third week of June makes having our robust summer offerings extremely difficult. Our only flexibility remains in winter and spring break.

The calendar process was also shared, as well as results of the engagement survey. Results were also shared of the parent statements at PAC meetings, as well as results by group. Responding families preferred to shorten winter break and have a full week of spring break. Responding staff indicated a strong preference for shortening winter break. Responding students preferred a full two-week winter break with a shortened spring break. Overall, a majority prefer a shortened winter break with a full week of spring break. The leading recommendation is to:

- Shorter winter breaks in School Years 26-27 and 27-28
 - Due to late Labor Day
- Full week spring breaks

For SY2025-26, the first day will be September 2, with a two-week winter break, one-week spring break, and school ends on June 11, with 175 days for secondary students.

For SY2026-27, the first day will be September 8, with eight-day winter break, and one-week spring break, and school ends of June 11, with 174 for secondary students.

For SY2027-28, the first day will be September 7, with a seven-day winter break, one-week spring break, and school ends on June 9, with 174 days for secondary students.

BF 34106 3-Year School Calendar: July 2025-June 2028

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

MOTION: **Director Henderson moved to approve the proposed calendars for School Years 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28. Director Allen seconded the motion.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

10. INFORMATIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

A. Policy Update

a. FIRST READING: Policy 550: Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Superintendent Thein introduced Jodi Danielson, Director of Teaching and Learning, to present this item.

The Cell Phone Policy Work Group members were reviewed. The rationale for the proposal of this policy was also reviewed, including that MN legislature made a law in spring 2024 that all school districts must have a district policy regarding cell phones. Assumptions were also shared, including assumptions added by the Board of Education on November 6.

Community feedback was presented, with information on survey response frequency, students' satisfaction with current rules (generally preferred less restrictive policies), families' satisfaction with current rules (families that were less satisfied generally desired more restrictive policies), and staff satisfaction with current rules (staff at buildings with more restrictive rules reported higher levels of satisfaction/ The impact on student learning perceptions by staff and students were also shown, with 52% of Middle School students and 87% of high school students report using their phone during the school day. Data was also shared on the frequency of addressing cell phone violations and when middle school students want their phones, when high school students want their phones, parent views on cell phone access, and policy preferences.

Information was also shared on feedback from the PACs, communication needs, parent perceptions of current practices, and recommendations for district policy. The presentation also included details from the Student Senators Roundtable, student cell phone use during school, and how cell phones impact students.

Policy recommendations were also shared, including the alignment of the recommendations to the community feedback. The experiences of students affected by this policy were also reviewed.

Next steps include to make adjustments as needed based on Board feedback, student and staff focus groups in January to understand how the policy looks like in practice, second reading at January 21 Board of Education meeting, third reading at February 18 Board of Education meeting, add to Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, schools adapt practices as needed, and implementation September 2025

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Valliant requested details on exceptions or special considerations for students who are parents.
- Director Franco requested information on the reference to Students Rights and Responsibilities, and the alignment to Technology Misuse.
- Director Allen noted questions about ear buds within the policy draft, and the device in which the ear buds are connected.
- Director Vue requested clarification on the deadline for this policy, which is March 15, 2025.
- Director Henderson thanked the team for this work in a short amount of time, and contentious conversations and viewpoints in this shift for students. She looks forward for learning more about the implementation and the supports for students, educators, and families.

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION

A. Information Requests/Responses and Items for Future Agendas

- Director Vue requested that all PACs present to the Board at a Committee of the Board or Regular Meeting to bring reports or recommendations for the Board to consider and act upon if they choose.

B. Board of Education Reports/Communications

- Director Vue noted that he attended three Hmong New Year celebrations, at Johnson, Txuj Ci Lower and Upper, and provided observations to the Board about the Hmong Language and Culture and its impacts on the Hmong Community. He shared that at the elementary level, Hmong New

Year is immersive, more traditional, and folktales are told as well as Hmong songs. At the middle school level, the integration has begun with Hmong contemporary music by American instruments. In high school, there is full integration with K-Pop songs and dances by Hmong students and current music with pop culture and humor.

- He also attended the OWL Senior Walk, as well as the Michael Houston Atrium Event and a Txuj Ci Circle.
- Director Franco also shared his time at the School Choice Fair.
- The Board also thanked the Leadership Team, our Board Administrator and Board Secretary for their work in getting us to where we are with the superintendent search. Director Henderson also thanked her colleagues for trusting Director Franco, Director Ward, and her for getting to this place.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Director Henderson moved to adjourn the meeting; Director Allen seconded the motion.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

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