

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

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

**January 7, 2025
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m. by Vice Chair Ward.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: H. Henderson, U. Ward, C. Allen, J. Vue, C. Franco, Y. Carrillo

E. Valiant was absent.

Staff: Superintendent Thein, S. Dahlke, S. Gray Akyea, T. Sager, K. Thao, L. Olson, A. Collins, E. Wacker, J. Danielson, K. Morris, S. Schmitt de Caranza, H. Nistler, N. Páez, K. Kimani, C. Green, D. Moser, P. Pratt-Cook, Y. Vang, P. Matamoros, A. Kunz, B. Schmidt, C. Anderson, C. Landreau, L. Bolepew, J. Turner, M. McHenry, A. Kunz, M. Sullivan

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

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

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Thein thanked the school board members for their new year of service and to the officers for leading this work. He also noted the upcoming AMSD meeting on Friday and the agenda will focus on education legislation. He also noted that these meetings are open to all board members and they are able to attend physically or virtually. He went on to note that he was able to meet with Dr. Stacie Stanley and that she is excited about joining the SPPS family, and is eager, measured, and studying and reviewing the district. Her bottom line is to do what's best for kids - all kids, and he was impressed with her, and is grateful for the decision of the Board.

5. POLICY UPDATE

Superintendent Thein introduced Jodi Danielson, Director, Schools & Learning to present this update and report.

A. FIRST READING DISCUSSION: Board Policy 550: Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

The objectives for the presentation were reviewed, and included to process the community feedback, focused discussion and guidance from the board regarding the policy, and to share the timeline and next steps.

The Cell Phone Policy Work Group members were also highlighted.

Community feedback included a summary of the survey data, Parent Advisory Council recommendations, Student Roundtable feedback, and reflection on this information by the Board.

Policy recommendations were then reviewed, which included community feedback and where that feedback appears in the policy draft.

Next steps were also reviewed, with focus groups January 9-15, the second reading at the January 21st Board of Education meeting, the third reading at the February 18th Board of Education meeting, and the creation of an implementation plan in February-March, with support for schools to plan and adapt practices as needed and modification of the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, both in the Spring.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook. Full details of community feedback were also included.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The Board requested clarification on the end date for surveys for students and staff.
- Director Ward thanked the team for their work and it is an issue that is of high interest, and that the results were not surprising that students want less restrictions and families and staff are more supportive of restrictions. There is also a unified stance around restrictions at younger grades.

What does the data suggest? What are the implications for a cell phone policy?

- Director Carrillo noted his personal experience with his children and cell phones and is happy that the community offered their feedback on this issue. He and Director Vue noted questions around the construction of the survey and response rates, as well as patterns to responses.
- Director Allen noted her concerns around discipline in relation to this policy, and when we resort to the same methods, it leads to the same disparities.
- Director Ward noted the importance of consistency across high schools especially, and the importance of the implementation, and intentionality in this work and to be student-centered.
- Director Franco noted the data of responses from students, and plans related to cell phones and the enforcement of this policy.
- Director Carrillo noted the apps for phones that are a platform to capture brain attention, and we need to get the number of students on these apps to decrease for students to focus on interactions with other students and teachers in a community of learning.
- Director Ward also noted conversations around families and parents to be able to contact their students in school, and the capacity for the front office to handle those communications.
- Director Franco noted that there should be continued conversation around iPad usage and strategically implementing iPad use to ensure students have them prepared, since it was an investment.
- Director Franco also requested details on the options for implementation at 6-8 buildings compared for 9-12.

- A measurable achievement of a goal should also be reviewed, as well as the documented plan should be reviewed annually. Director Vue noted that a policy is a monitoring of progress, but a general framework.
- Director Ward also noted this could be a request next year – to provide the same survey for data on middle school and high school cell phone usage during the school day.
- Administration noted concerns about building administration may not know the grade of every student and there may be discrepancies if there are different guidelines for 6-8 versus 9-12.
- Administration noted that they will contact 6-12 building principals about this discussion, as well as adding a note about goals and annual monitoring at the school level.

Based upon the community feedback shared, do you support the language as written in section 3.A.1.? If not, what changes would you suggest?

- Director Henderson noted questions about the search of a device and the reasonable use in the scope of circumstances.
- She also noted questions around students who may be translators for parents or family members and the mechanism to support them in establishing a boundary but not penalizing them.
- Director Allen noted support for positive incentives around not using cell phones, and using iPads that are fully charged and ready to be used in the school day, including work with Ms. Kimani and PBIS work in the district
- The Board also noted questions about emergency situations.
- The Board also noted a question about technology for families to communicate with their student through their iPad, and email usage.
- Overall, Administration noted trying to include language specific to incentives and positive incentives for students, and more conversation about the role of students to support their parents and families in this policy.

6. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) REPORT

Superintendent Thein introduced Dr. Stacey Gray Akyea, Executive Chief of Equity, Strategy & Innovation, to present this report.

The agenda for this presentation included the background, planning and implementation, budget and spend-down, and outcomes.

Background information included the different COVID-19 federal funding sources and details, the American Rescue Plan (ARP): ESSER III details, priorities, details on starting this work, a review of SPPS Achieves initiatives and ARP strategies by focus area, ARP allocations, and strategies.

Within Planning and Implementation, details were provided on the allocation team, the tool of “Year-at-a-Glance”, the Logic Model tool, and Dashboard tool. The Professional Learning Community Monitoring Structure was also reviewed, as well as informing of “scale-up”, and community engagement.

Budget and Spend Down included details about the annual spend down and monitoring of the spend-down, and a summary of the spending/

Outcomes included systemic impacts and data of students, staff, and schools and programs affected, details on safely reopening schools, strategies to address unfinished learning and to build equitable systems of teaching and learning, as well as support student and staff social emotional needs. There were

116 community partners supported. The national recognition of SPPS in this work was also detailed, as well as the unintended outcomes of this work and these funds. Lessons learned within planning and implementation, budget and spend-down, and outcomes were also reviewed.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Dr. Gray Akyea thanked her colleagues and team for this work.
- Director Vue also thanked members of Administration for this work, as they were doing their regular work, as well as the extra work within ARP.
- Director Carrillo requested details on the most effective use of the dollars in terms of mitigating learning loss, which included credit recovery, WINN, and Earn As You Learn. Language supports for families was also critical and family support.
- Director Henderson noted that there are mechanisms from ARP that affected our practices.
- Dr. Gray Akyea also noted the cross-functionality and “pulling the thread” as a metaphor to understand the impacts on areas. It’s an important factor in de-siloing.
- Director Vue requested details on the allocations.
- Administration also noted the additional funds from MDE, and grants, and that the budget was adjusted yearly, but not re-budgeted every year. Director Vue also confirmed that we did follow all guidelines of MDE in the spending down of these funds.
- The Board also requested information on the extent to which we accomplished the priorities listed previously in the presentation.
- Director Vue also noted that this report signals the turning of the page in a chapter of SPPS in returning from COVID-19.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

10. WORK SESSION

The Board then conducted a work session which included the topics of 2025 Graduation Ceremony Schedule - Board Member Attendance; Compensation Study; and B.I.G.G.: Board Initiated Goals Governance.

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

Prepared and submitted by:

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