

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

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

**December 3, 2024
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Ward.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Y. Carillo arrived shortly after Roll Call.

Staff: Superintendent Thein, C. Long, 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

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 noted that it is a very exciting time in SPPS as the district is searching for a new superintendent and leader for the 34,000 students, staff and Saint Paul community. He thanked the members serving on the committee to move the search forward, and is looking forward to the results of the work.

He went on to note that tonight is the annual Truth in Taxation hearing, and one way for the district to practice open government and present the financial information in a presentation Executive Chief of Financial Services, Tom Sager.

5. MOTION TO RESCHEDULE THE DECEMBER 17, 2024 REGULAR MEETING TO DECEMBER 19, 2024

Director Ward noted that the date of the December Regular Meeting will need to be changed due to interviews for the superintendent search scheduled for December 16, 17, and 18.

MOTION: Director Ward moved to cancel the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education for Tuesday, December 17, 2024 and schedule a Special Regular Meeting for Thursday, December 19, 2024 beginning at 5:30 p.m. here at the District Administration Office at 360 Colborne. The motion was seconded by Director Franco.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

6. 3-YEAR SCHOOL CALENDAR: JULY 2025-JUNE 2028

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carrillo noted questions about the differences in instructional quality if the last day of school falls mid-week versus on a Friday. Response: It is a chaotic time at the end of the year with field trips and presentations and wrap-up for matriculation to the next grade. There is a dip in attendance though when the school year ended on a Monday with it being a student contact day, and there was a lot of feedback that no one wanted to do that again. It's also not ideal to end on a Friday, because staff will need to come back to clean their classrooms, which is different than teaching, and definitely a consideration.
- Director Vue requested information on a hypothetical early start date in which SPPS could start the school year. Response: We would need a waiver to do that, and our transportation team has said there would be a lot of concerns about that with bussing, and the importance of those first days of school for our youngest learners and routing and re-routing busses. There are also cars parked all over the Como and Saint Anthony Park neighborhoods, and the Midway becomes very congested. We want to be as safe as possible for our students.
 - We have not done a deep dive into this because it is not an option. Response: Yes, that's correct.

7. SCHOOL YEAR 2023-24: DISTRICT OUTCOMES

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Henderson noted that these results are alarming, but known.
- She noted questions about what this looks like in a classroom setting and what it means for the majority of a class in math to be failing. What are the interventions and growth? Response: We do receive scores by class and groups of students, and grade level. There are four achievement groups - exceeding, meeting, partially, and not. The MCAs are a standards based criteria assessment taken at the end of the year and a measure of where students are in relation to grade level standards. The data is most helpful in aggregate, and the closer to the individual student, the less reflective it is. The data is most beneficial in determining how far we grew in what we wanted to teach. The assessments show data from year to year. In high school, there are assessments

in 10th grade in reading, and 11th in math and science, and it also gives us an opportunity to see where we are in relation to grade level standards.

- Administration noted that they share the disappointment of this results, and that they do not reflect the ability of our students, and we continue to work through strategies and professional development to determine how to interrupt these results. Administration then shared more about how this looks at a classroom level, including targeted service dollars for reading and math interventions, WINN literacy program at middle schools, as well as a support class in 9th grade at all high schools where students find relationships, and a place to focus with AVID-like strategies.
- More details were also provided on the literacy and math interventions, including our WINN teachers, SIPPS, Read Act, and Ufly, a rigour phonics instruction in a systemic way. Teachers are also able to support students with similar needs in reading through assessments such as FASTBridge. The CarryAll instruction was also shared, as well as details on the math program.
 - It was noted that it is more difficult to catch up on math when it builds year over year in terms of lessons. Students need the foundation for math instruction, and teachers work to move them along in greater knowledge of math. We have seen the impacts of SAAVAS and HMM.
- Director Henderson also requested information on how the team communicates amongst themselves about he work in classes, grades,and by school. Response: There are monthly, weekly, and daily assistant superintendent meetings with conversations about what we are doing, in the context of priorities, and maintaining the level of fidelity with UFly. We also make connections in visiting classrooms and seeing the joy of learning and the pride of our students to make those connections, and a level of affirmation. We also talk with building leaders about interrupting these results, and using our investments districtwide to be on the same page and working toward the same goals.
- Director Henderson noted the investments in different curriculum, but our families are getting tired of hearing “It’s going to get better” and they need to see the impacts.
- She also noted a meeting about the intersectionality with students with IEPs and MLL.
- Director Allen also shares the frustration, and the budget needs to invest in direct services for students. She also noted that some groups showed as proficient in some areas, but struggle in others. We need mental health staff, and support. She also noted the language and literacy scores, and we want them to be higher. She also noted that while there is funding to supports, we also need strong leaders to help our teachers also be strong. We need to find innovative ways to get students back on track, but continue to do the same things, and that needs to change. Our teachers also need to be culturally responsive and know our communities of color.
- Are PreK teachers licensed? Response: Yes.
- How are they so much more effective that K-12? Response: PreK is mainly play-based learning, and they like to play. The benchmarks are based on play curriculum.
- It was noted that interventions are important at the PreK level so that when students start kindergarten, they are ready for school.
- Director Allen noted that our older students also like to play, and it never stops. We need students to be engaged, and for our teachers and staff to know current tools for students.
- Director Valliant echoed Director Allen on how we are motivating students to be interested in their education. She is also interested in the culture for students and how they are paid attention to in school, and the importance of attention to all students, especially our older students who may be seen as more responsible or accountable. Teachers and staff need to check in with them to see if they need additional support instead of waiting for the students to ask them.
- Director Franco agreed with his colleagues that this is a problem and there needs to be a sense of urgency to support the growth. He then asked questions about how often instructional leaders are reviewing individualized data with teachers about progress for individual students. Administration

noted at the Leadership Academy which meets three times a month, two of the session are based on looking at data and trends. A pilot program in Chicago was also noted in looking at ninth grade student data and increases over their time in high school. PLCs also work with student data.

- Director Allen noted the importance of personalized learning plans.
- Director Vue noted questions about the process of this data collection, and the start and end points.
- Director Carrillo noted the importance of interactions to tackle these issues, and the need to focus on what is meaningful for students in the classroom, and changing systemic issues with a focus on relationships, and learning and listening.
- Director Valliant noted this information is disheartening, but will be a challenge for us that we need to accomplish.
- Director Ward noted the Board needs to proactively check-in about student outcomes, and that is the goal of BIGG, with progress monitoring and adoption of goals in the new year. The community will see an intentional effort to make it a bigger part of the work of the Board.

8. FY25 BUDGET UPDATE AND FY26 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carrillo requested information on the expected deficit after adjustments and the firm point in which we have to show our current enrollment to MDE.
- It was also noted about the contingency plants with the status of the political climate and suggestion of the elimination of the Department of Education.
- Director Ward requested information on the potential impact of delays of payments and impacts of that possibility.
- Director Ward also requested details on the enrollment assumption and the estimations based on that data.
- More information was also requested on the state formula and the tie to inflation and how that will work.
- The Board also thanked Chief Sager for the safeguards built into the budget.
- The Board also requested information on work with the legislature this session.
- Director Ward requested details on the fund balance assumption.
- The tax base supports were noted, as well as the comparison to other local school districts.
- The other options for funding were also noted, as well as collaboration with the city and county partners to expand the tax base.
- Chief Sager also noted for further conversation, the Board could schedule a work session to focus on this work and other assumptions, and discussion on the potential referendum process and timeline.
- Director Allen noted concerns about taxing people out of their homes.
- Director Valliant echoed Director Allen's point and the impact of tax increases on homeowners and renters, while understanding that salaries are not keeping up with inflation. When parents and families are stressed about finances, the children also sense that stress.
- Director Henderson noted it would be helpful to see the scenarios of impacts from the federal government, and in context of other districts and the burden of property tax versus business owners.
- Director Ward requested information about the amounts paid to each entity within property taxes.
- Director Valliant requested a work session on this topic to dig deeper into this work after the January Regular Meeting and after the new superintendent is identified.

9. ADOPTING A SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESOLUTION CHANGING SCHOOL DISTRICT GENERAL ELECTIONS TO EVEN YEARS

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Board members requested to view a cost comparison between the two resolutions.
- There was also further discussion on the orderly transition, which is not defined in the statute, and should be described in the resolution.
- Director Vue noted that specific board members are named in the resolution, and they may change. Administration noted that it is a possibility, and we did try not to identify specific individuals, but there was no other way to name that seat on the board. If a board member were not to complete their term, we would then need to look and see where they are in their term and determine if a special election would be necessary.
- Within the statute, the Board can effectuate a change from odd to even years, and it gives the authority to extend or shorten by one year.
- Director Vue also noted bringing this item to the December Regular Meeting with a vote.
- Director Franco noted he was prepared to vote at this meeting because there may be some urgency for folks to know about campaigning. Director Henderson also noted the urgency to vote on this item, and there will also be a full agenda at the December 19th Regular Meeting. Director Allen and Director Valliant noted they were also prepared to vote, as well as Director Carrillo.
- Director Vue reiterated that he would be in favor of voting on this item at the December Regular Meeting because there are built-in mechanisms to hear from community, such as public comment, and the vote is simply based on the resolution presented, and there typically is not a vote at a Committee of the Board meeting. He is not comfortable voting on this item, and would like more time to learn about the cost comparison, and two weeks is negligible in running a campaign.
- Director Franco noted that the ability to launch a campaign is not the urgency, but to take care of Board business prior to anyone announcing to run.

BF 34066 Adopting a Saint Paul Public Schools Resolution Changing School District General Elections to Even Years

MOTION: Director Henderson moved to approve the resolution Adopting A Saint Paul Public Schools Resolution Changing School District General Elections to Even Years to lengthen the current school board term by one year. The motion was seconded by Director Franco.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	No
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes
Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 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