

**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](http://www.spps.org/boe) and Saint Paul Cable Channel 16

**March 18, 2025  
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: J. Vue, Y. Carrillo, C. Franco, E. Valliant, H. Henderson  
Interim Superintendent Thein

C. Allen arrived at 5:32 p.m.

U. Ward was absent.

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 motion was seconded by Director Carrillo.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

**4. RECOGNITIONS**

**BF 34193** Acknowledgement of Good Work Provided by Students

Twelve student musicians from Central High School and one from Open World Learning auditioned for and were selected to participate in the Minnesota All-State Band, Choir, Orchestra, and Jazz Band. During their experience, they spend nearly a week living on a Minnesota college campus during the summer, meeting fellow musicians, working with world-class conductors, and preparing for a culminating performance.

This past February, the students reunited at the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) Midwinter Clinic, where they rehearsed for a day before performing at Orchestra Hall (for Band, Choir, and Orchestra) or The Dakota (for Jazz Band). These talented musicians showcase their skills to thousands of audience members, performing alongside some of the finest student musicians in the state.

Congratulations to the following SPPS students on their participation:

**Central High School Minnesota All-State Musicians Under the Direction of Alex Ferderer and Matthew Oyen**

- **Lewis Leifeld**
- **Maya Nirmal**
- **Lydia Simon**
- **Noah Tonneson**
- **Michael Walbran**
- **Kathryn Kereakos-Fairbanks**
- **Maria Solakhava**
- **Joe Weimholt**
- **Alexander Morey**
- **Ella Kahnert**
- **Felix Duckwall**
- **Ava Clift**

**Open World Learning Community Minnesota All-State Musician Under the Direction of Greta Cina**

- **Emma Oseguera**

**BF 34194** Acknowledgment of Good Work Provided by Outstanding District Employees

1. **Matthew Oyen**, an Instrumental Music Teacher at Central High School, has been named the 2025 High School Music Educator of the Year by the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA). He has been a part of the Central music program for more than 28 years.

This award recognizes exemplary music teachers throughout Minnesota that have demonstrated excellence in teaching, leadership and advocacy in music education. Matthew officially received his award at the MMEA Midwinter Clinic Opening Meeting on February 13, 2025.

2. The Hidden River Middle School French Immersion program was recently awarded the Label Education award. This is the Blue School Ribbon award given by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. The international accreditation is given to educational institutions who contribute to the promotion of French language and culture. It recognizes strong French language programs which allow students to discover other disciplines in French.

The French Immersion program at Hidden River is led by French teachers **Halina Solachava-Chamutouskaya** and **Rachel Payia Yang** and **Principal Teresa Vibar**.

All three SPPS schools with French Immersion programs (L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School, Hidden River Middle School and Central High School) have now received the award.

3. Amharic is spoken by over 350 SPPS students, but is not taught in Minnesota-- until now. **Negasi Tesfai**, Educational Assistant at Highland Park Senior High, participated in the Heritage Language Licensure by Portfolio Cohort and has become the first Minnesotan with a license to teach Amharic.
4. Saint Paul Public Schools is home to more than 25 currently certified National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). NBCT teachers comprise fewer than 5% of all teachers nationwide. This prestigious honor requires teachers and counselors to do a thorough analysis of their practice and engage in rigorous reflection on the impact they have on students' learning. The certification is valid for five years from the date of initial certification, and must be renewed every five years through a maintenance of certification process to ensure that the educators continue to bring accomplished excellence to their classrooms and beyond.

The following educators represent the group that received certification in 2024.

**Kristen Foss**

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Teacher, Highland Park Elementary

**Kristin Meister**

Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Gateway to College

**Sorcha Nix**

Science Teacher, Open World Learning Community

**Rebecca Palmer**

Science Teacher, Open World Learning Community

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was established in 1987, with the goal of recognizing accomplished educational practitioners. As a result, the National Board Certification process was developed. National Board Certification is the most respected professional certificate in the United States for Teachers, Counselors, and Library/Media Specialists, and the only certification to recognize accomplished teaching in the nation. Only about 3% of teachers across the U.S. are National Board Certified.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b><u>Charlotte Dehn</u></b>       | Gymnastics Co-Op   |
| 2. <b><u>Yuliana Remedios</u></b>     | Board Resolution - relating to Immigration                     |
| 3. <b><u>Heidi Goldman-Gray</u></b>   | Highland Park Head Wrestling Coach Contract                    |
| 4. <b><u>Alexandra Kotze</u></b>      | Gymnastics Co-Op   |
| 5. <b><u>Sonita van der Leeuw</u></b> | SPPS: Electric School Bus Leadership Thank You + Opportunities |
| 6. <b><u>Trista Martinson</u></b>     | Highland Park Head Wrestling Coach Contract                    |
| 7. <b><u>Ashley Jensen</u></b>        | Achievement Plus   |
| 8. <b><u>Barry Saeger</u></b>         | Highland Park Head Wrestling Coach Contract                    |

- 9. Joua Yang Mistreatment
- 10. Hannah Soule Achievement Plus
- 11. Jessica Jordan Achievement Plus
- 12. Isaac Roberts Highland Park Head Wrestling Coach Contract

**6. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Director Henderson moved approval of the Order of the Consent Agenda with no items pulled for separate consideration. The motion was seconded by Director Carrillo.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

**7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 18, 2025
- B. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of February 24, 2025

**MOTION:** Director Henderson moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of February 18, 2025, and the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of February 24, 2025. The motion was seconded by Director Vue.

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Minutes of the Committee of the Board Meeting of March 4, 2025

At the Committee of the Board Meeting on March 4, 2025, Superintendent Thein noted the impending weather discussions, as well as the budget update and adjustments. We are proud that enrollment is close to 34,000 students, which is a significant increase and has a direct impact on our work. He also noted the continued work by Administration on the budget, preparation for federal changes, and flexibility for the Board and our new superintendent.

The first presentation was the HMong Motivated On-Going Needs Goals, or H.M.O.N.G. project. Discussion included what's at stake for students in relation to this initiative, and the innovation of SPPS in

language and culture programs. Parents shared their experiences of their time in the District. The Board noted that this is a starting point for conversations and collaboration, and thanked the families for their work. Questions also centered on envisioning the collaboration with the Board, and flexibility of the timeline, questions to answer about the educational opportunities for HMong students in the needs assessment. Board members also thanked parents for their bravery in sharing their stories and concerns, and noted a commitment to working with the HMong community on areas to be addressed. There was also a request for information on the recent financial investment in cultural programs in the District. Discussion around the emotions and tension of this work were also noted. Elected officials from the state House of Representatives also shared their experiences. The partnership with Administration, especially the Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, was also discussed. The Board noted that we cannot afford to guess what students need - the answers are in front of us and we need to work with our students and families around the data. Details were also requested about the proposed needs assessment and objectives. A needs assessment may also shed light into the needs of other communities as well. Questions also included the alignment of this work with the upcoming budget. The Board then suggested forming a subgroup of board members and members of the H.M.O.N.G. Project to discuss the timeline and scope of this work, and to move this work forward.

The next presentation was the Policy Update. The first policy revision to be discussed was Policy 401.00 - Equal Employment Opportunity. Notes from the Board included that the purpose has not changed, but that a purpose statement was added, and a suggestion to include a more general term instead of a specific job title within the policy in case the title should change. Overall, the Board was comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

The next policy revision was Policy 408.00.5 - Pre-Service Training. Discussion noted that these changes to this policy would not change the district practices or procedures, but would bring the policy up to date with state statutes. Overall, the Board was comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

The next policy to be reviewed was Policy 425.00 – Nepotism. Questions from the Board included the location of family members and business partners within the policy, contracts and family members, romantic relationships and close friendships included in the policy, and contracts for athletic coaches. A similar note was also noted about the specific title listed in the policy, and a suggestion to change it to “Superintendent or Designee.” Overall, the Board was comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

The next policy update item was a new policy, Policy 419.00 - Professional and Respectful Workplace. Board members requested clarification on parent volunteers as outlined in the policy, as well as the suggestion for additional language on implicit bias, and clarification on civility and uncivil conduct details. The Board also noted the job performance section and power dynamics, and possibility of false reports. It was also noted that this policy should be encompassed instead within the strategic plan within Positive School and District Climate instead of policy. The Board also noted the 415 process, and the process to investigate. The Board also discussed the expectations for stakeholders, but the majority of the policy feels staff-directed, so others may not know to look to this policy for guidance. Further details were requested on the complaint process, and the 415 process. There was also further discussion on the expectations for parents in relation to this proposed policy. Overall, the Board agreed this policy should not move forward with the three-reading process yet, and instead go back to Policy Work Group for more discussion.

**MOTION:** Director Valliant moved to accept the report on the February 4, 2025 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 Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes
Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Absent

## 9. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

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

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

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

- January 7, 2025 (Annual Organizational Meeting at 4:00pm)
- February 4, 2025
- March 4, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- May 6, 2025
- June 10, 2025 • August 6, 2025 – Wednesday (Primary Election)
- September 9, 2025
- October 7, 2025
- November 5, 2025 – Wednesday (Election Day)
- December 2, 2025

### C. Motion to Schedule a Special Meeting of the Board of Education on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at 360 Colborne

Director Henderson then noted that the Board needs to schedule a special meeting for the purpose of a public input session for the FY26 Budget in accordance with Board Policy 720.00 – Establishment and Adoption of School District Budget and within the section of “Public Input” which states: “At least one will take place within the eight weeks prior to the adoption of the budget.”

**MOTION: Director Henderson moved to schedule a Special Meeting of the Board of Education to be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 beginning at 5:30pm at 360 Colborne in Conference Rooms A and B. Director Carrillo seconded the motion.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

## **10. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Superintendent Thein noted that there will be a budget presentation which includes proposed budget adjustments for the upcoming fiscal year, and that has been a long process with thought and effort. The focus of these adjustments is to keep them away from students and staff, which is not an easy decision with 80% of the district budget for compensation and benefits. He thanked the Administration team and the School Board for their work in tandem to make the best decisions possible for our learning community. There is a huge challenge before us, especially with the unknowns of the federal funding, and the District has composed a steady plan that will help us to be flexible with surprises, including those from the federal government. It is also crafted in a way to ensure the new superintendent, Dr. Stacie Stanley, will have the ability to adjust for the unknowns, and he has great faith in her that she is the right leader, with the right message at the right time.

He also acknowledged the national board-certified teachers and their outstanding accomplishments, and thanked them for their efforts.

## **11. AGENDA ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION**

### **1. Consent Agenda**

**MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of all items within the consent agenda withholding no items for separate consideration. Director Vue seconded the motion.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

Director Ward

Absent

1. Gifts

**BF 34195** Gift Acceptance from Birch Tree Care for Tree Planting

That the Board of Education authorize the gift acceptance of trees to be planted at the American Indian Magnet site.

2. Grants

**BF 34196** Request for Permission to Submit a Grant to the MN Department of Education's Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit a grant to the MN Department of Education's Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program; to accept funds; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents.

**BF 34197** Request for Permission to Submit a Grant to the MN Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) Program

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit a grant to the MN Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program; to accept funds; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents.

**BF 34198** Resolution Supporting the Safe Routes to School Boost Grant

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Saint Paul Public Schools authorizes the Superintendent to enter into a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for financial assistance to fund a Safe Routes to School Boost Grant and eligible expenses.

2. That the Superintendent is authorized to execute such Agreement and any amendments without further approval by the SPPS Board of Education.

Adopted and approved at a duly called meeting, this 18th day of March, 2025.

**BF 34199** Request for Permission to Submit a Grant to the MN Department of Education's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit a grant to the MN Department of Education's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant; to accept funds; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents..

3. Contracts

**BF 34200** Contract Amendment #3 for Dunham Associates for the Rondo Complex ARP HVAC RTU Replacement (Project # 3170-22- 01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #3 for Dunham Associates in the amount of \$6,000 for the Rondo Complex ARP HVAC RTU Replacement project (Project # 3170- 22-01).

**BF 34201** Contract Amendment #4 for U+B Architects for the Frost Lake Building Addition and Renovation (Project # 1100-19-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #4 for U+B Architects in the amount of \$2,950 for the Frost Lake Building Addition and Renovation project (Project # 1100-19-01).

**BF 34202** Contract Amendment #4 for Braun Intertec for the Hidden River Middle School Renovation and Addition (Project # 3140- 20-02)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #4 for Braun Intertec in the amount of \$86,128 for the Hidden River Middle School Renovation and Addition (Project # 3140-20-02).

**BF 34203** Contract Amendment #5 for Knutson for the Jie Ming Mandarin Immersion Academy Addition & Renovation (Project # 3090- 21-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #5 for Knutson in the amount of \$374,471 for the Jie Ming Mandarin Immersion Academy Addition & Renovation (Project # 3090- 21-01).

**BF 34204** Contract Amendment #9 for Cuningham Group Architects the Bruce Vento New Construction project (Project # 1020-22-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #9 for Cuningham Group Architects in the amount of \$5,135 for the Bruce Vento Elementary – New Construction project (Project # 1020- 22-01).

**BF 34205** Transportation Department FY 24/FY 25 Purchases/Contracts over \$175,000

That the Board of Education authorize the purchase order/contract listed for the Transportation Department anticipated to be over \$175,000 in total.

- 4. Agreements
- 5. Administrative Items

**BF 34206** Monthly Operating Authority

That the Board of Education approve and ratify the following checks and electronic transfers for the period January 1, 2025- January 31, 2025

(a) General Account	#781615-782823	\$68,893,308.08
	#0011260-0011318	
	#7005435-7005462	
	#0011886-0012116	
(b) Construction Payments	- 0 -	\$16,115,207.13
(c) Debt Service	- 0 -	<u>\$58,098,723.47</u>
		\$143,107,238.68

Included in the above disbursements are two payrolls in the amount of \$47,991,476.42 and overtime of \$170,103.03 or 0.35% 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 July 31,

**BF 34207** 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 March 18, 2025 should they not comply with Minnesota State Health Standards for Immunizations on or before this date.

**Human Resources Transactions**

**BF 34208** Transactions for February 1 – February 28, 2025

**BF 34209** 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 34210** Minnesota Department of Education Review and Comment – Hamline Elementary Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement (Project # 4160-25-01)

That the Board of Education sign the Review and Comment Checklist Attachment 1 and authorize the Interim Facilities Director to submit the Hamline Elementary Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement review and comment document to the Minnesota Department of Education for evaluation and authorization of the work.

**BF 34211** Phase Gate Approval of the Hamline Elementary Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement Project (Project #4160-25- 01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the Hamline Elementary Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement Project (Project # 4160-25-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$14,474,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

**BF 34212** Phase Gate Approval of the John A. Johnson Renovations for LEAP (Project # 1140-23-01): Gate #5.2 – Project Final Fiscal Close-out

That the Board of Education accept the financial report provided for John A. Johnson Renovations for LEAP (Project # 1140-23-01) at Phase Gate Check #5.2 – Project Final Fiscal Close-out.

**BF 34213** Request for Approval to Create a Cooperative Sponsorship between St. Paul Johnson and St. Paul Como Park High School for Girls Softball

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve the Cooperative Sponsorship for Girls' Softball with St. Paul Johnson High School and St. Paul Como Park High School.

**BF 34214** RFP A23-2716-JA Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) Solution

That the Board of Education authorize administration to approve the refreshing of the current phone system in SY 24/25. The cost is not to exceed \$3,003,409.43 dollars over 78 Months, which is not an increase in overall cost.

**BF 34215** Settlement of an Insured Claim

That the Board of Education approve the settlement agreement, approve payment in the above referenced suit, and authorize and direct the issuance of payments in the amount of \$904,508.

## 6. Bids

**BF 34216** Correction - Phase Gate Approval of the Cherokee Heights Elementary School Building Systems Replacements Project WS 09A (Project # 2070-23-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the corrected award of Bid No. A25-5264 for Cherokee Heights Elementary School Building Systems Replacements (Project # 2070-23-01) to Commercial Drywall for a lump sum base bid plus Alternate #2 of \$376,600.

**BF 34217** Equipment Acquisition Award for the FY25 Instructional A/V Program at Battle Creek Middle School, Highland Park High School, and Txuj Ci Upper Campus (Project # 0680-25-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of AV equipment for the FY25 Instructional A/V Program at Battle Creek Middle School, Highland Park High School, and Txuj Ci Upper Campus (Project # 0680-25-01) to Bluum of Minnesota for a lump sum base bid of \$246,660.

**BF 34218** Furniture Acquisition Award for the FY24 Furniture Replacement Program at Harding Senior High School (Project # 0160-24-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of furniture for the FY24 Furniture Replacement Program at Harding Senior High School to Acre for a lump sum base bid of \$691,000.

**BF 34219** Phase Gate Approval of the Dayton's Bluff Elementary Lead-in-Water Remediation (Project # 1060-25-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of the Dayton's Bluff Elementary Lead-in-Water Remediation (Project # 1060-25-01) to RAK Construction, Inc. for a lump sum base bid plus Alternate 1 of \$596,782.

**BF 34220** 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 #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of flooring at Maxfield Elementary for 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) to St. Paul Lino for a lump sum base bid of \$246,202.

**BF 34221** Phase Gate Approval of the FY25 Instructional A/V Program at Battle Creek Middle School, Highland Park High School, and Txuj Ci Upper Campus (Project # 0680-25-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of Bid No. A25-5357-JG for the FY25 Instructional A/V Program at Battle Creek Middle School, Highland Park High School, and Txuj Ci Upper Campus (Project # 0680-25-01) to Reiling Construction Co, Inc. for a lump sum base bid of \$1,900,128.

**BF 34222** Phase Gate Approval of the Highwood Hills Elementary Lead-in-Water Remediation (Project # 2120-25-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of the Highwood Hills Elementary Lead-in-Water Remediation project (Project # 2120-25-01) to RAK Construction, Inc. for a lump sum base bid of \$342,115.

**BF 34223** Phase Gate Approval of the Humboldt Practice Track Installation (Project # 2142-24-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of the Humboldt Practice Track Installation (Project # 2142-24-01) to Greiner Construction, Inc. for a lump sum base bid plus Alternate 1 of \$213,992.

**BF 34224** Phase Gate Approval of the Mississippi Creative Arts Paving and Play Area Replacement with Stormwater Management (Project # 4190-25-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award (Flagship)

That the Board of Education approve the award of the playground for the Mississippi Creative Arts Paving and Play Area Replacement with Stormwater Management (Project # 4190-25-01) to Flagship Recreation for a lump sum base bid of \$322,565.

**BF 34225** Phase Gate Approval of the Mississippi Creative Arts Paving and Play Area Replacement with Stormwater Management (Project # 4190-25-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award (Peterson)

That the Board of Education approve the award of Bid No. A25-5301 for Mississippi Creative Arts Paving and Play Area Replacement with Stormwater Management (Project # 4190-25-01) to Peterson Companies, Inc. for a lump sum base bid plus Alternate 1 of \$1,514,511.

**BF 34226** Phase Gate Approval of the Washington Technology Roofing and Paving (Project # 4040-24-01): Gate #4 - Contract Award

That the Board of Education approve the award of Bid No. A25-5200-JG for the Washington Technology Roofing and Paving project (Project # 4040-24-01) to Central Roofing, Inc. for a lump sum base bid plus Alternate 1 of \$6,343,870.

**BF 34227** Furniture Award Revision for the Highland Park Middle School Entry Addition and Renovation Project (Project #3081-23-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of the Phase II furniture for the Highland Park Middle School Entry Addition and Renovation Project (Project #3081-23-01) to Acre for a lump sum base bid of \$850,040.

7. Change Orders

**ITEMS PULLED FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION - None**

**FURTHER AGENDA ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION**

**10. INFORMATIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

A. American Indian Parent Advisory Committee 2025 Resolution of NonConcurrence

Superintendent Thein then introduced Carita Green, Executive Director of College and Career Pathways and School Supports for this item. She also welcomed members of the team and AIPAC to present. They noted there were positive shifts, but areas of continued growth and we need to do right by our students. They also noted that there will be no opportunities for questions in accordance with the process set forth by state statute for annual compliance.

The full resolution can be found in the BoardBook.

**QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:**

- Director Henderson thanked the team and members of AIPAC for their work and time, and we remain in partnership and will continue to think about how we do this work differently.

B. Policy Update

- a. Policy 401.00 - Equal Employment Opportunity

Superintendent Thein welcomed Maria Eustaquio, Director of EEO, to present this update.

This policy was last updated in 20189, and there is a new policy format with a policy purpose and statement of policy. There were no substantive changes to the language of the policy. It now cross references Title IX – Grievance Procedures (102.00.01.)

The full presentation and draft of the policy revisions can be found in the BoardBook.

**QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:**

- Director Vue requested information on the specificity of the staff member or “Superintendent or designee” and the rationale for including both sets of titles in the draft. Response: Both were added so that one reading the policy would know where to go for a timely responses. The concerns will ultimately be addressed by the Director of EEO or Executive Chief of Human Resources to address the issues.

- Director Vue noted that a board policy should be the responsibility of the Board, and the one person that the Board can hold accountable is the Superintendent. Director Carrillo noted that was the way described during the Committee of the Board discussion.
- Director Franco recommended an additional statement that states the superintendent is responsible for the implementation of the policy.
- General Counsel noted that this change is at the Board's discretion. He also noted the substantive change to the policy is the addition of the purpose statement, which requires the three-reading process.
- Superintendent Thein noted that concerns that are submitted are forwarded to staff with the most knowledge about that particular case.
- Director Henderson recapped the two options – removing all language referencing a specific staff member within HR or EEO, or maintaining some language while also added a statement about the Superintendent to designate.
- Director Vue again recommended removing the mention of “Executive Chief of Human Resources or EEO Director”, keeping “Superintendent or designee” and the consideration of the function of the superintendent in policy to give it more depth. Director Carrillo also noted suggestions for clarity. There was also continued conversation on this topic.
- It was noted that it is not recommended to remove the specific identifying information for individuals to contact, and recommend to include both job titles with guidance from the Federal and State governments to ensure policies state where folks should go with concerns.
- There will be additional work on this language. It may also be including the Superintendent as mentioned first, and then designees following.

b. Policy 408.00.5 - Pre-Service Training

Superintendent Thein welcomed Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, to present this update.

Policy changes include a policy purpose, information about student teaching and practicum and field experience. Changes also include revisions to the requirements for pre-service training, and to align with state statute.

The full presentation and draft of the policy revisions can be found in the BoardBook.

**QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:** None

c. Policy 425.00 – Nepotism

Superintendent Thein welcomed Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, to present this update.

This policy was last revised in 2008, and will transition to a new policy format. The policy purpose was added, clarification of when family members or business partners can not be involved in or influence decisions related to employment status, and definitions of “nepotism”, “family member,” “business partner,” and “direct supervision.” Information about exceptions, and the complaint process were also added.

The full presentation and draft of the policy revisions can be found in the BoardBook.

### QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Henderson noted similar conversations about the titles included in the policy or language around “Superintendent or designee”.
- Director Vue requested information on examples of business partners. Response: It could be two individuals who formed an LLC outside of the organization, or run a business together and are now coming together to work in the same organization, and we want to avoid a situation where one of the individuals would influence the hiring, promotion, or retention, or compensation of the other individual.
- A board member also requested clarification on the concurrent employment, disclosing of a relationship within hiring, and also that someone could become a family member after employment or business partners while employed by the district.
- Director Franco noted questions about the hiring of close friends. Administration suggested that if the Board would like to add a definition of “close friends”, ideas or feedback would be helpful. Director Franco noted that it may be helpful to include it within the Complaints section as a way to be investigated. Administration noted concerns about including this in the Complaints section, and suggested to talk about this further in the upcoming Policy Work Group meeting and bring the changes back for the Second Reading.
- Director Henderson noted that this is an acknowledgement of relationships that exist, and a way to follow the process and procedures.
- Director Franco noted a concern about the hiring of coaches, and the process with the athletic director, and wondering if coaches can be related and on the same coaching staff. Administration responded that athletic directors do hire coaches and there was a recent procedural change where the positions needed to be posted to be actively open to everyone in the community with the expectation that the most qualified candidate would be hired. There was also further discussion on the hiring of coaches in relation to the interpretation of the policy.
- Director Carrillo requested additional information about contracts and family members. Administration noted that it would be a conflict of interest, and General Counsel also provided information from the Purchasing procedures about this topic.
- Director Valliant noted questions about persons who may become unrelated while both employed by the district.

### C. Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget Update

Superintendent Their welcomed Tom Sager, Executive Chief of Financial Services, to present this update.

Objectives include to share with the Board of Education and the public:

- Review of FY26 Board budget parameters and guiding principles
- Overview of school staffing allocations
- Summary of proposed district department reductions
- Running total of reductions and revenues to close budget shortfall

The Board of Education budget parameters and guidelines were also reviewed, and include:

- Sustain funding for early education to retain and prepare students for success through their elementary education and to meet third grade literacy standards.
- Sustain funding for efforts to increase enrollment, including maintaining funding for the enrollment project committee

- Sustain expenditures related to increasing student engagement and decreasing student absenteeism.

Additional Board guidelines from budget options also include to reserve at least 5% of daily operating revenue in the unassigned fund balance, and to decrease layers of central office staff.

Information on closing the FY26 budget shortfall was also detailed, including \$19M in proposed budget reductions. Guiding principles for the FY26 budget reductions include:

- Prioritize keeping reductions outside of schools/classrooms
- Prioritize districtwide functions needed to operate
- Reduce staffing within district departments aligned with Board guideline to decrease layers of central office staff
- Reduce food budget for meetings/events
- Freeze supply costs at FY25 levels
- Limit non-essential travel for employees

Further details were then shared on School Budget Allocations with information on the FY26 School Allocation Guidelines, formulas and guidelines to allocate, and working with other divisions to ensure school allocations are accurate and equitable, with highlights from each category, and comparisons from FY25 to FY26.

District department budget allocations were also shared, including that District departments support schools and programs across SPPS in areas including finance, human resources, curriculum, professional development, communications, legal, technology, and other key functions by division, and each division is making budget reductions in one or more of these four areas – staffing, contracts and vendor services, travel and supplies, and service levels.

Details were then presented of the total budget adjustments in Schools and Learning, Administration and Operations, and Business and Finance, Equity Strategy and Innovation, and Human Resources.

The amounts and running totals for the budget shortfall progress were also reviewed.

Information on school and community budget meetings was also shared, including that:

- All schools will host budget information meetings between March 26- April 18 to inform their school communities about their 2025-26 budgets
- The Board of Education will host a special meeting to hear from the community about the budget on April 29 at 5:30 p.m. at the SPPS Administration Building (360 Colborne Street and live streamed)
- The Board will vote to approve the budget at the June Board of Education meeting (June 10, 2025)

The FY26 budget timeline was also shared.

**QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:**

- Director Vue requested information on what lessons were learned from last year to this year in the budget process. Response: Within the Division of Schools and Learning, there were more simplified resources for engagement, with clear expectations, agendas, and reflection questions to prompt conversations. The allocation guidelines are also important, and sharing those guidelines with administration to give them time to absorb them and react, with the budget toolkit for reference.

There is robust documentation, and with feedback from the Board for differences in schools, and timely information to respond to buildings and flexibility to understand that each site is unique. Flexibility and transparency are also important and integrating those conversations to ensure principals feel prepared for changes and understanding how to leverage staff. Within Administration and Operations, it was noted that the budget is discussed early in the process and there are informal budget decisions early on to anticipate – an example of Freedom Schools to be conducted at one site with the reduction of ESSER funds, as well as family engagement sessions and hosting them online or together on the same day to save on childcare, food, and transportation. There are also areas in which there were vacancies due to some out on leave, and there are some departments with a high turnover of staff, which may average out over the year to make the budget targets. Within Financial Services, there were lessons affirmed, with every division very involved in the process, and comprehensive and inclusive to produce a holistic, robust and quality budget that maintains the commitments and direction – it is cross-divisional work.

- Director Franco noted that he hopes the school budgets and conversations with families are presented in a way that feels meaningful for them, and that they leave with an understanding of the impacts to their schools. We do see these as an opportunity for families to engage in conversations about values and what is most impactful at their sites, and hope that families will feel valued, partnered, and that they understand the impacts.
- Director Henderson requested information on the community sites and information for families, and what they can expect. Response: We were purposeful in these budget information meetings, with information about the summary for their staffing based on contractual commitments. Instead of one big reveal of information, we are also working to share information as it is known with buildings. We are also asking reflective questions about what went well and the challenges to improve. Within the budget conversations, of the sample questions in the agenda was asking what is most important for their child right now, and to build upon these and work together for a more cohesive vision. It was also noted that Title I schools have additional requirements, with an expanded conversation.
- Director Carrillo emphasized the special meeting to hear from the community on April 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. and requested information on when the Board should expect to receive the next update on the budget prior to April 29<sup>th</sup>. Administration responded that if there are changes, they will be presented at the Committee of the Board meeting in April, and if there are further changes, they will be presented at the Regular Meeting in April. Changes will be shared with the Board as soon as possible.
  - Director Carrillo noted that April 8<sup>th</sup> will be a good check-in time, and suggested that if board members have additional information they would like to see, to bring their requests to the April 8<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Board meeting, and recommended easily digestible information to be presented by Administration, as the special meeting is a service to the community.

### **13. BOARD OF EDUCATION**

- A. Information Requests/Responses and Items for Future Agendas
- Director Franco requested information on athletic co-op agreements, and details on the process including the basis for the formation of a co-op.
  - He also requested an update on the merger of the SPPS hockey teams into one team, including the recommendation of rebranding as a Saint Paul team as opposed to the host site, the strategies to continue to grow involvement, enrollment and participation from schools not at the host site, and coaching continuity to maintain the same level of connection.

- He also noted the communications around decisions, especially in athletics, where the community is told after the decision has been made, and feels that is bad practice across the district, and is not fair to families. He also noted wonderings about the success stories of co-op agreements in athletics.
- Director Franco also requested a Legislative Update presentation at an upcoming meeting before the session closes, including the impacts of the READ Act. Within the next section of the agenda, he also requested information on the READ Act and its impacts on dual immersion programming.
  - Director Carrillo seconded the request for a Legislative Update.
- Director Valliant noted questions based on a personal experience about high school students who may need supports in reading and the methods to support them.
- Director Henderson requested information on the sunseting of Achievement Plus.
- Director Vue requested information on the needs assessment for the H.M.O.N.G. Project.

**B. Board of Education Reports/Communications**

- Director Franco provided a report about his time at the Harding basketball game, as well as other athletic events, band concerts, Know Your Rights training, and conferences for Academic Parent Teacher teams at Highwood Hills. He also noted a conversation with local leaders about the READ Act's impact on dual language teaching and the science of reading in relation to dual language learners and non-English speaking students.
- Director Henderson noted her engagement with PACs in regards to the BIGG goals.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**Director Henderson moved to adjourn the meeting; Director Franco seconded the motion.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.