

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

**SPECIAL 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

**April 29, 2025  
5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Halla Henderson, Chair

**2. ROLL CALL**

Board of Education: J. Vue, Y. Carrillo, C. Franco, E. Valliant, H. Henderson, U. Ward, C. Allen  
Interim Superintendent Thein

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

**3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA**

**MOTION: Director Ward 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 Carrillo	Yes
Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes
Director Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes

**4. FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Superintendent Thein noted that there will be a presentation on the FY26 budget, followed by an opportunity to receive feedback from the community. The budget process is a lengthy one with the consideration of the many needs of students, families, and the larger community. The Board of Education and Administration will take the comments very seriously and will be reviewing them at a future Committee of the Board meeting on May 6.

He also introduced Tom Sager, Executive Chief of Financial Services, Andrew Collins, Executive Chief of Schools and Learning, and Stacey Gray Akyea, Executive Chief of Equity, Strategy, and Innovation to present this report.

The goals for the 2025-26 budget process were reviewed and include to build a balanced 2025-26 budget that:

- adheres to financial constraints
- demonstrates alignment to SPPS Achieves focus areas
- addresses students' learning needs
- reflects community values and Board of Education parameters

There was a review of the process of the school district budget, including a video of how school budgets work in Minnesota.

The key drivers to a school district budget were also shared, including:

- enrollment
- state funding formula
- property taxes
- employment contracts
- others including inflation, federal funding, transportation, utilities, technology and other special initiatives

A review of the 2025-26 budget was also shared, including that SPPS is estimating a budget shortfall for 2025-26 of approximately \$51.1, with the revenue of \$681M and expenses of 732.1M.

The process for how budget decisions are made was also shown, including community budget priorities, to Board parameters, to budget reductions, to budget implementation.

The 2025-26 community budget priorities were also shared, and included:

- Increasing a sense of belonging and safety in our school communities
- Ensuring students are respected and reflected in their curriculum and classrooms
- Prioritizing literacy instruction to ensure that all students can read and create a foundation of success in school and in life

The 2025-26 Board budget parameters were also shared, including:

- Sustaining funding for early education to retain and prepare students for success through their elementary education and to meet third-grade literacy standards
- Sustaining funding efforts to increase enrollment
- Sustaining expenditures related to increasing student engagement and decreasing student absenteeism

Details were also provided about school budgets and department budgets for the 2025-26 year.

Figures were also shown about the FY26 budget shortfall progress for reductions, expenses and revenue.

The current school district budget landscape was discussed, and a video was shown with details about this topic.

A budget timeline update was also provided, as well as next steps.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

**QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:**

- Director Ward noted the new budget policy prompted this meeting, and there are also other ways to shift the spending decisions, including the adoption of the upcoming B.I.G.G. goals. The impetus for this meeting was from the frustrations felt by community members and board members that there were not a lot of opportunities to give meaningful feedback to make budgetary decisions. The structured process is more year-round for opportunities to shape the budget, including a fall/winter input opportunity. It was acknowledged that changes at this point are difficult, but that all feedback is welcome. The Board will hold the feedback shared for future budget cycles.
- Information was also shared on the expectations for this meeting, including that the Board may ask clarifying questions of speakers, or to provide additional details on current happenings according to Administration. We will be collecting feedback and adjusting to discuss at the May 6 Committee of the Board meeting, where the feedback will be discussed and a response developed to the feedback.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. **Amber Rae Bernhardt**
2. **David Kremer**
3. **Michelle Wall**
4. **Liliana Sanchez**
5. **Patrick Mulcahy**
6. **Hilary Novacek Bundt**
7. **Kelsey Wolf**
8. **Rachel Haydon**
9. **Ana Ordonez**
10. **Leah VanDassor**
11. **Colin McKiernan**
12. **Kari Westby**
13. **Katy Steinbach**
14. **Qualisha Johnson**
15. **Leah Dunbar**
16. **Ashley Jensen**
17. **John Moe**
18. **Chris Waters**
19. **Peter Hendricks**
20. **Saadia Haque**
21. **Samantha Zomer**
22. **Delores Fuller**
23. **Kaitlin Bornhoff**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Director Ward noted that this is a new process, and thanked the community for attending the meeting and speaking. The next steps are to reflect on the feedback and discussion together at the May 6 Committee

of the Board meeting, including grappling with the feedback and develop a response, and what will be done with the information moving forward.

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

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 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