

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

August 19, 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: H. Henderson, U. Ward, C. Allen, J. Vue, Y. Carrillo, C. Franco, E. Valliant
Superintendent Stanley

J. Wikstrom Donaghue, Assistant 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 Vue.

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <u>Mary Moore</u> | Athletic trainers |
| 2. <u>Donna Oda</u> | Test scores |
| 3. <u>James Kasel</u> | Athletic trainers |
| 4. <u>Thomas Lucy, Linda Jones, Sofia Cerkvenik</u> | SPFE Climate Action Team/Northern
Iron Foundry update |
| 5. <u>Aiden Mulligan-Anderson</u> | Athletic trainers |
| 6. <u>Leah VanDassor</u> | SPFE contract |

7. Jennifer Mulligan

Athletic trainers

5. 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 Ward.

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

7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of July 15, 2025
- B. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of July 29, 2025

MOTION: Director Henderson moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of July 15, 2025 and the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of July 29, 2025. The motion was seconded by Director Carrillo.

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

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Minutes of the Committee of the Board Meeting of August 6, 2025

At the Committee of the Board Meeting on August 6, 2025, Superintendent Stanley began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting and providing details on the recent leadership training and National Night Out events throughout the city. The Board requested additional information on the location and attendees of the training.

The first presentation was the Classification and Compensation Study. Questions from the Board included additional information on the custodian pay scales as noted in the presentation, bus driver data included in the study, further details about the recommendation for consolidation of titles, SCSP data and the market compared to our peer districts, and ways to share information with the community and alignment with the current market.

The next presentation was the Policy Update, which included three policies:
Policy 502.00 – Attendance Areas: Resident Students
Policy 520.00 – Technology Usage & Safety
Policy 419.00 – Professional and Respectful Workplace

Discussion around the Attendance Areas policy included the rationale for the three-reading process of these changes.

Discussion around the Technology Usage and Safety policy included information about use of technology as a privilege and impacts on students, further details about content deemed inappropriate, the process for parents to review files or terminate their student’s account, and protective measures within this policy, or another, for cyber security.

Discussion about the Professional and Respectful Workplace policy included appreciation for bringing forth this policy, answering questions and concerns. This draft feels comprehensive, and will shape the culture of the district. The Board also requested information about “responsible parties” as noted within the draft policy, and further discussion about the role of board members in this policy and statutes that govern school board members.

Overall, the Board felt comfortable moving these policy revisions and proposed policy to the three-reading process.

The Board then conducted a work session on Board Initiated Goals Governance (B.I.G.G.) and discussion of shared expectations of communication for District Relations Goals.

MOTION: Director Ward moved to accept the report on the August 6, 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 Henderson	Yes
Director Ward	Yes
Director Vue	Yes
Director Allen	Yes
Director Carrillo	Yes
Director Franco	Yes
Director Valliant	Yes

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 5:00pm)
- 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

10. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Stanley provided a recap of her time greeting 200+ new teachers and educators to the district, and about 40% of them are new teachers to the profession. She is proud of them and that their job is like no other – years from now a former student will walk up to them to thank them for their growth and development. At the New Educator event she was able to speak about the mission, vision, quest for belonging and dignity in SPPS.

She also noted that she finished her parent listening session with a variety of parent groups, and thanked the Office of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships for their support. She also thanked Dr. Gray Akyea for her work in looking at another way to engage the community different than a typical survey.

She was also able to attend the Family Values for Like event with close to 2,000 attendees, with backpacks and supplies, clothing, food, and connections.

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 Ward seconded the motion.

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

1. Gifts

2. Grants

BF 34368 Request for Permission to Submit a Grant to the Ciresi Walburn Foundation Annual Grant Cycle Program

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit a grant to the Ciresi Walburn Foundation Annual Grant Cycle Program; to accept funds; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents.

BF 34369 Request for Permission to Submit a Grant to the Saint Paul Children’s Collaborative’s Youth Outcomes Plan Grant Program

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to submit a grant to the Saint Paul Children’s Collaborative Youth Outcomes Plan Grant Program; to accept funds; and to implement the project as specified in the award documents.

3. Contracts

BF 34370 Benefits Telehealth and In-Home Services with Kavira, Inc.

That the Board of Education approve a contract with Kavira, Inc. for employee benefits counseling, effective January 1, 2026 at the proposed rates.

BF 34371 Contract Amendment #2 & 3 for JLG Architects for Hamline Elementary School Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement (Project # 4160-25-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #2 & 3 for JLG Architects in the amount of \$13,560 (Amendment 2) and \$6,800 (Amendment 3) for the Hamline Elementary School Secure Entry, Heating and Plumbing Replacement project (Project #4160-25-01).

BF 34372 Contract Amendment #6 for ATSR Planners, Architects, and Engineers for the Farnsworth Aerospace Upper HVAC Replacement (Project # 1030-23-01)

That the Board of Education authorize award of Amendment #6 for ATSR Planners, Architects, and Engineers in the amount of \$5,827 for the Farnsworth Aerospace Upper HVAC Replacement project (Project #1030-23-01).

BF 34373 Post Age-65 Retiree Health Insurance with United Health Care Group (UHC)

That the Board of Education approve a contract for retiree employee health insurance coverage with United Healthcare Group, effective January 1, 2026, at the proposed rates.

BF 34374 RFP #A25-5547-MO FCC Pilot Cybersecurity Controls Awarded

That the Board of Education authorize administration to approve awarding contracts for Identity Provider (IdP) with Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), Secure Browser technology, Internet of Things (IoT) security and AI Model Data Loss Prevention services not to exceed \$2,000,000 over 3 years.

4. Agreements

BF 34375 Approval of an Employment Agreement with Operative Plasterers Local Union No. 265, to Establish Terms and Conditions of Employment for 2025-28

That the Board of Education of Independent School District No. 625 approve and adopt the Agreement concerning the terms and conditions of employment of those employees in this school district for whom Operative Plasterers Local Union No. 265 is the exclusive representative; duration of said Agreement is for the period of June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2028.

BF 34376 Eastern New Mexico University Partnership Agreement with SPPS

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with Eastern New Mexico University for student internship experiences for SLP students.

BF 34377 Lease and Agreement for a Cooperative Educational Program with Belwin Conservancy

That the Board of Education authorize the execution of the Lease and Agreement for a Cooperative Educational Program between the District and Belwin Conservancy, located at 1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN 55001.

BF 34378 UMTC Social Work Professional Agreement

That the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent (designee) to approve this partnership with the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities for student internship experiences for social work.

BF 34379 Approval of the Employment Agreement for General Counsel

That the Board of Education approve the employment agreement with a General Counsel, effective September 2, 2025.

5. Administrative Items

BF 34380 Monthly Operating Authority

That the Board of Education approve and ratify the following checks and electronic transfers for the period June 1, 2025- June 30, 2025

(a) General Account	#786698-787601	\$64,304,659.92
	#0011443-0011464	
	#7005550-7005571	
	#0012969-0013178	

(b) Construction Payments	- 0 -	\$9,920,949.86
(c) Debt Service	- 0 -	<u>\$287.50</u>
		\$74,225,897.28

Included in the above disbursements are two payrolls in the amount of \$49,661,837.41 and overtime of \$234,208.77 or 0.47% 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 December 31, 2025

Human Resources Transactions

BF 34381 Transactions for July 1 – July 31, 2025

BF 34382 Compensation and Classification Study

That the Board of Education approves moving forward with the implementation of the recommendations from the classification and compensation study.

BF 34383 Designation of an Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) for Education Identity Access Management

That the Board of Education authorize Superintendent Dr Stacie Stanley as the Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) for Saint Paul Public Schools and Anne McInerney as the Proxy Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) for Saint Paul Public Schools ISO 625.

BF 34384 FY2026 Indoor Air Quality Management Plan

That the Board of Education adopt the IAQ Management Plan by approval of this agenda item.

BF 34385 Phase Gate Approval of Randolph Heights Elementary Boiler Replacement (Project # 3150-22-02): Gate #5.2 – Project Final Fiscal Close-out

That the Board of Education accept the report provided for Randolph Heights Boiler Replacement project (Project # 3150-22-02) at Phase Gate Check #5.2 – Project Final Fiscal Close-out.

BF 34386 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 \$80,000.

BF 34387 Phase Gate Approval of The Heights Community School HVAC Replacement and Fire Suppression Project (Project # 1120-25-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the The Heights Community School HVAC Replacement and Fire Suppression Project (Project # 1120-25-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$13,526,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding.

BF 34388 Phase Gate Approval of the Washington Technology Magnet Pool AHU Replacement (Project # 4040-26-01): Gate #3 – Project Budget

That the Board of Education approve the Washington Technology Magnet Pool AHU Replacement (Project # 4040-26-01) at Phase Gate Check #3 – Project Budget; setting the final project budget at \$1,479,000 and indicating direction to proceed with construction bidding

6. Bids

BF 34389 Network Equipment Acquisition Award for Central High School, Creative Arts Secondary School, District Administration Building, Harding Senior High School, Hubbs Center, Johnson Senior High School, Journeys Secondary School, Murray Middle School, Open World Learning Community, and Washington Technology Magnet High School

That the Board of Education authorize award of network equipment for Central High School, Creative Arts Secondary School, District Administration Building, Harding Senior High School, Hubbs Center, Johnson Senior High School, Journeys Secondary School, Murray Middle School, Open World Learning Community, and Washington Technology Magnet High School to Affinitech for a lump sum base bid of \$244,516.

7. Change Orders

ITEMS PULLED FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION - None

FURTHER AGENDA ITEMS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION

A. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit

Dr. Stanley then welcomed Tom Sager, Executive Chief of Financial Services, and Troy Gabler from CLA, to present this report. Details included:

- Troy Gabler and Chris Knopik of Clifton Larson Allen LLP (CLA) presented to the Board of Education a status report for the Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Statement Audit on July 15, 2025. Since that time, the single audit and quality assurance review work continued. The audit has been completed and the final statements are now issued.
- The District was issued a “clean” or unmodified audit opinion. No Yellow Book Compliance issues were noted in the review of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants that could have significant financial implications to the District.
- As anticipated and budgeted for, in fiscal 2024, the District decreased its unassigned General Fund balance slightly to \$78,261,330. Although, this decrease in fund balance was less than anticipated. This represents 10.12 percent of total General Fund expenses, and 37 days of operations. This fund balance will be used to help offset anticipated deficit spending in FY 25 and FY 26. In the Food Service Fund, expenses exceeded revenues by \$4.25 million. In the Community Service Fund, revenues exceeded expenses by \$853,174 and its fund balance is 41 percent of operating expenses.

- CLA did identify some findings related to Internal Controls, Single Audit, and Legal Compliance. Although, there are fewer findings in this audit as compared to last year's audit. There were no findings noted within Title I.
- The audit report for the fiscal year 2023-2024 has given the district clear direction and valuable feedback to address ongoing continuous improvement processes.

With the presentation, information also included further details on the required communications, audit results, financial results, and key issues/summary. Information on the upcoming accountant standard changes were also reviewed.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Gabler noted that the timing of this audit does not mean that the Board doesn't care about timelines. Director Franco will be joining the meeting tomorrow to discuss the upcoming audit, and they do have a pulse on the audit. In working with Chief Sager and the team, they have regularly attended training sessions about upcoming standards and best practices in accounting and legal topics. The auditors make recommendations, and there was a staff turnover on the finance team, and with reporting on a lag, they are working on the testing to issue the next audit on time. As auditors, they do not always have the same level of involvement from the Board as SPPS or a positive relationship with the financial management team. He believes SPPS does want and is trying to ensure the numbers are correct and working with the auditors to ensure the numbers are correct. We are ready to move in the right direction.
- What is the estimate of a healthy turnaround for the audit after the books are closed? Response: With a district this size, a reasonable goal is to have the numbers reconciled by the end of November, with an issuance in December. The auditors will be working with staff throughout mid-August and field work in October. The goal is to meet statutory deadlines, and there will be communication that if it takes longer than expected, the Board will receive the report. It's a collective goal to issue on the timeline, and to ensure there is an additional level of monitoring and oversight.
- Director Franco requested further details about the material weaknesses as noted in the presentation. Response: There were two material weaknesses – the first was around the timely reconciliation of cash, and bank reconciliation to review and catch errors, with adjustments to the end of February. It's an important control process. The second is the revenue controls of the organization, and internal controls changed during FY24, with changes from electronic signatures to in-person. There were not errors found, but missing documented approval, and it's important to control the documentation and staff member associated with each. Chief Sager noted that for the bank reconciliations, there were some changes in the Finance office, including staffing, training, reassignment of duties, and leveraging technology in the financial system to help the team move more quickly, and we anticipate to not see this in next year's audit.
- Director Henderson thanked the team and auditors for the time, presentations, and willingness to present multiple times. She hopes we are turning a new page and a new step in the process, and she looks forward to hearing more about the guardrails to ensure the audit is timely in the future.

BF 34390 Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit

MOTION: **Director Henderson moved to accept and approve the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 financial statement audit issued by Clifton Larson Allen LLP. 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

10. INFORMATIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

A. Board Initiated Goals Governance (B.I.G.G.): Graduation Rates

Administration leaders then presented this report. The purpose of the report is to “Report the progress of B.I.G.G. programmatic goal, “The percentage of SPPS students who graduate in 4 years will increase from 68% in 2023 to 80% in 2029; returning to pre-pandemic levels for all student groups”. Reporting parameters include the measure of 4-year graduation results, and the metric of the percentage of students in the graduating class of 2024 who graduated in 4 years. Information about the data was shared.

The 2024 results were also shown, with four-year graduation rates by school with the 2023 rate, 2024 rate, and the change. Additional details on the results, including student group changes within the graduation rate, were also discussed. Influencers, including expanding access to internships, industry-recognized certifications, work-based learning experiences, and partnerships to connect classroom learning with real-world applications, support for students through their compulsory age, expanding/enhancing academic support courses across all SPPS high schools, and increased credit recovery options were also detailed.

Information was also shared on the public dashboard for graduation rates for SPPS.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The Board requested information about the inclusion of students within this data who either leave SPSP throughout their career, or those who join SPPS throughout their school career, and how those numbers are calculated within graduation rates. Response: It is about the end code in Campus, and if the student leaves the district and enrolls in another district, their enrollment is removed from the cohort. If they join the district and has been enrolled in another Minnesota district, they are removed from their cohort. If enrolling from another state, they are not included in the 9th grade cohort, and they need to be included in the 9th grade to be included. If a student joins SPPS from out of state in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade, that does not contribute to the graduation rate. If students enroll in a charter or private school, it is not more likely to count against us, but depends on the extent to which we are coding the end code and record in Campus at the end of the year. Many times students are enrolling in one or more schools, and it's important that the records are kept.
- The Board also requested information about which student groups need to increase still, after the pandemic? Response: That information can be sent via email with more details. There is work to do with American Indian students, those learning English as a second language, and Hispanic students.

- Director Valliant requested information about the enhanced academic support for high school students. Response: Academic opportunities start with daily advisory classes, as well as partnerships with networks for college success. We are also piloting work to support the framework for 9th graders, with information from the individual building data. Administrators meet monthly to discuss three-year trend information, including pass rates, specific classes, and courses where students may be struggling. We have discussed with the science department about supports for 9th graders for options, connections, and supports for students with data to drive conversations and feedback from staff and principals.
- Director Vue requested information about the figures in parentheses behind each identifier. Response: It was the difference in growth from 2023 to 2024.
- Director Ward uplifted this work in the district, and while there is room to grow and the growth is exciting, it means more students are graduating with diplomas, and he thanked the team for the progress on this B.I.G.G. goal, and spending time talking about our students
- Director Valliant noted her excitement about credit recovery, and her personal experience with a family member who attended. She thanked staff for the boost for students to graduate, and thanked staff – she has seen the firsthand impacts on the students of this program.
- Director Henderson echoed the sentiments, and that it is heartening to see the shifts from the previous numbers, and looks forward to the future. Our students leave with resources and the knowledge they deserve when they graduate.

B. 2025-26 School Readiness Report

Members of Administration then presented this report. The purpose is to provide an overview for the Board of Education on the state of readiness for the first day of school, Tuesday, September 2, 2025, in the areas of Schools and Academics, Human Resources, and Operations.

With Schools and Academics, details were shared on professional learning, and new and expanded programming.

Within Human Resources, details were shared about talent acquisition, and educator development.

Within Administration and Operations, details were shared about communications and outreach, including regarding the referendum, Community Education, the school readiness tracker, security and emergency management, facilities – both major construction and cleaning, maintenance, and moves, nutrition services, student placement, technology services, and transportation

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Franco thanked the staff who are working on the iPads and new phones, and the connection to the recent Board approval of this item.
- He also noted that he expected to see details about the implementation of the cell phone policy, and recognizing it may be a drastic change for some school programs, and a request for insight on the roll-out. Response: There have been continuing, on-going conversations about the cell phone policy since it was adopted. Administrators have had conversations and planning is underway. Materials from the Communications department have been sent to buildings to share with families, and to post throughout the building. There will also be a meeting with administrators this week, and there is a high level of confidence and readiness, to reinforce the core tenants about the

implementation and enforcement. We believe in our admin and leadership teams to lead the effort in the policy and the beliefs through the process. The Board noted questions on how they can be supportive in community to ensure consistent messaging. Information will also be shared in back-to-school newsletters for families, and signage in the schools to remind students about this policy.

- Director Franco noted questions about how to ensure all staff across the building understand the procedures and protocols around safety plans. Response: Typically, that information is provided in opening week from a building administration perspective. There have been conversations with principals and SSLs, as well as roles and safety teams. In terms of the updates to plans, these plans roll over from year to year, and do not start over. There is collaboration with partners in Security and Emergency Management. There are safety teams at sites, and soliciting perspectives as staff members have questions. Director Franco noted that as strong safety teams are implementing practices, he does hope opening week is an opportunity to experience how the EOPs look and responsibilities around them. Safety is a critical pillar of our operations as a district.
- Director Franco also requested information in regards to the recent increase in actions of the federal government, and the understanding of protocols as related to federal law enforcement. It's critical that clerks and educators understand the protocols and protecting of our students in spaces. How are we monitoring the attendance of our young people, if they don't feel safe leaving their home? Response: Assistant General Counsel Wickstrom Donoghue noted that she did meet with the immigration workgroup this week, and they are cognizant of the ongoing concerns, and is personally monitoring the tenor throughout the country and potential movement in the direction of federal immigration enforcement accessing schools, and there will be a plan developed in January. She also noted communication with Mr. Sullivan in SEM and training SSLs on the protocols to ensure we are up-to-date, and there will be a memo and resources in the Principals Playbook, and it is top of mind as we move into this next school year.
- Director Carrillo noted questions about Google Gemini for teen students, and reception at school sites, and further details about the implementation and feedback. Response: It is a shared service with Office of Teaching and Learning for students in grades 9-12. We do have a policy 520.00 on student use of technology and digital citizenship. Part of a FCC grant that was approved includes AI controls and to provide learning and protect students. We partner closely with Technology Services and Educational Technology for professional learning for OTL, and determining ways this will be helpful for students. It is part of the Google Suite and we are protected in many ways inside the SPPS dataset. This will also allow teachers to leverage productivity and resources – such as creating tests in different formats.
 - If the experience of this tool is successful, is the plan to migrate it to other grades, or will it be limited to high school? Response: In elementary and middle, there are more applications, such as Waggle Math.
- Director Allen requested details on the process for school-developed individual goals. Response: Each school year, schools develop SCIP plans on an annual basis, and we have tried to make it more streamlined, simple, and aligned with overarching themes and focus. We also look at evidence-based practices and providing guidance from MDE with a building to tailor to their SMART goal, and provide opportunity for voice and choice, along with alignment of the B.I.G.G. goals. We look at action steps and how to make those steps happen in a place of support for our students, with interventions and productive conversations on how to progress monitor and collaborate with leaders at each school.
- Director Allen requested information on educator development and professional development for TAs going into this school year. Response: The majority of TAs are in special education, and we have done a great job of hiring folks into the system, and provided PD as designated, and additional

PD throughout the year. We do have a need within the organization for PD to go beyond special education work, and it needs to be broader.

- Director Allen noted concerns about the TAs who are placed throughout the district and the many responsibilities within their role, and the right training to step into their job confidently. Response: Statutorily, we need to provide the minimum PD at the building level, with challenges that exist at the TA level, including less defined duty days, with EA duty days starting before the students start. TAs start the first day of school with the students. It does become about resource and planning. Additional details were also provided about onboarding opportunities for EAs and TAs in special education, including over the summer and at the start of every pay period, or about 1-2 times per month. Training includes unpacking the school year, READ Act training, and other topics like third party billing and responsibilities, documentation of services, overview of special education, different abilities, and the components of an IEP, as well as trauma informed practices and non-crisis intervention training, with check and connect mentor training.
- Director Allen also requested information about the Hidden River re-opening in January and the special transition tools to use over Winter Break. Response: The new building is outfitted with new furniture, which has been delivered and is ready, so there will not be transitioning furniture from the Wilson building to Hidden River. Educators will need to bring their classroom materials, and we are working with administration, facilities, and teacher to schedule times for the majority of items to be moved over Winter Break.
- Will there be sambusas on the lunch menus? Response: Yes, they will be on the menu every quarter, along with the homemade basbaas sauce, as well as a basbaas mayo.
- Where will the grill pilots be? Response: There will be a grill at all secondary schools, and time for other initiatives, with the schedule to be from the first day of school through MEA break, with more choices.
- Director Valliant requested information about the supports for teachers of color, and what it means for “conditions for staff to thrive”. Response: There are affinity groups within the pilot, and teachers also have the ability to request a mentor that is a member of their culture or background. There will also be professional development, including speakers to facilities discussions, as well as recruitment and retention specialists to work with groups and helping to identify issues and working with administrators in buildings and mentos to address issues as they arise.
- She also requested information about the new phone system. Every classroom will have a landline telephone, with a number for an individual person, as well for the room for Community Ed and flexibility for other programs. Many staff won’t have a landline and will be able to access and receive calls via Zoom.
- Why did we choose Zoom phones? Response: Google Voice is not a full phone system, and there are some features we wanted for more flexibility with softphones.
- Director Valliant also requested information about the AI features of Waggle. Response: Individual student programs are monitored at the teacher level, and through the HMH system, we have purchased that access and use, and any fixes are at the classroom level.
- Director Valliant noted that she is excited for Hidden River to open, so her 8th grade student can attend in the new school.
- Director Vue requested insights from Superintendent Stanley in HR. Dr. Stanley noted the SCIP process and monitoring of them by principals, as well as the recent hiring fairs from Human Resources and thanked Chief Pratt-Cook and her team for moving forward toward fully-staffed schools. She also thanked Chief Sager for his work on the completed audit, and looks forward to the next year to be completed on time. She also shared about Leadership Advance and the

continued focus on development of leaders, change management, culture and climate, belonging, and dignity in the system.

- Director Henderson requested information about the shifts in compliance guidelines and testing for TAs to be “highly qualified.” Response: The expectation for highly qualified staff is not new, and we are working with the government on these rules. Community Education is providing courses throughout the school year for paraprofessionals to take courses and for them to be paid for their time. She also provided details about the ParaPro and ParaEducator tests that are approved by the State, and the grant to switch to ParaEducator which often has a higher success rate and the process for hiring highly qualified staff.

C. Policy Update

a. SECOND READING: Policy 408.00 – Staff Hiring

Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, presented this proposed update. The proposed changes include a transition to a new policy format, that the Board will now be delegating the authority for hiring activities to the superintendent and their designee, and clarifies that the Board will not entertain applications for employment with the exception of positions that directly report to the Board.

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

b. SECOND READING: Policy 413.00 – Drug-Free Workplace

Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, presented this proposed update. The policy changes were reviewed, including the transition to the new policy format, the policy purpose statement of “The purpose of this policy is to health and well-being of employees, students, and visitors by prohibiting the use of alcohol, toxic substances, medical cannabis, nonintoxicating cannabinoids, edible cannabinoid products, and controlled substances without a physician’s prescription” to align with statutory language, definitions, exceptions, and legal references.

Per discussion at the July 15, 2025 Regular Meeting, a Non-Discrimination clause was added.

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Chief Pratt-Cook noted that if there are legal requirements that folks must test drug-free, we will not be able to bypass those regulations as part of this policy.
- Assistant general Counsel Wikstrom Donoghue noted that adding their hope for the non-discrimination section is that it closely monitors guidance from the State for this type of policy and helps to emphasize not seeking to punish folks for using medical marijuana during their term of employment – only if it impacts their routine job functions. She can’t advise to remove the distinction completely as the State of Minnesota allows through statute the ability to prohibit marijuana use on buses and in schools, and if we allowed that contrary to statute, and something did happen, there is a liability. She encouraged the district to move forward from a place of understanding, compassion, and non-discrimination as the baseline for statutory requirements.

- Director Allen noted that, based on a previous discussion, this language makes sense as there are jobs that involve driving, operating machinery, and others, including within the licensure of those roles, and in alignment with the State.

c. SECOND READING: Policy 414.00 - Tobacco-Free Environment

Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, presented this proposed update. The proposed changes include a transition to a new policy format, the general statement of policy, definitions, prohibition and exceptions, enforcement, and legal references.

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Valliant requested more details about the potential corrective actions for student who wear promotional products, gear, or bags. Response: In follow-up, over the past two years, there have been 4 events across the district that were coded as dress code violations. There was not discipline, but student conferences and a parent outreach. We will be approaching this through compassion and to understand. In conversations with students, the counselors are the best to engage with students.
- Director Valliant noted that some brands are familiar, and some are not. She has a lot of feelings about this section of this policy draft, and has questions about other products and their promotional materials that may not show a tobacco-related item. Dr. Stanley noted that the ultimate goal is to ensure we do not allow students to promote products that we know are bad for their health and want them to remain safe. She appreciated the data around this topic, and wondered if continued monitoring would help to ease concerns.
- Director Valliant also noted questions about depictions of a marijuana leaf or poppy flower on a shirt or hat, and if those would be considered within this policy. Response: We should consider this further as it may be dipping into First Amendment territory, and details would need to be sorted very carefully to uphold the student’s rights and maintain the learning environment.
- She also shared her personal experience in relation to this policy.

d. FIRST READING: Policy 502.00 - Attendance Areas: Resident Students

Jayné Williams, Director of Student Placement Center, presented this proposed update. Updates to this policy include the addition of the policy purpose – “The purpose of this policy is to define the manner in which designated school attendance boundaries are determined including factors considered for buildings. Additionally, this policy provides clarity for continuity of enrollment.”

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION: None

e. FIRST READING: Policy 520.00 – Technology Usage & Safety

Mario McHenry, Executive Director, Technology Services, presented this proposed update. A policy purpose was added, as well as a general statement, and provision to remove, replace, or disable SPPS hardware or software designated as obsolete, out of compliance, or dangerous. Per discussion at the August 6, 2025 Committee of the Board meeting, a definition of “cybersecurity” was also added.

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Valliant requested information about the section for parents and guardians to review files and request termination of account access. Response: There is a form for families to opt out of technology, but there is not a known instance for family to opt out of the entire technology process. Reasons and challenges of technology were shared, as well as information on secure web content filters, restrictions on iPads and controls. Students can still use devices in a controlled manner to complete their learning. Information was also shared about how parents can access controls, and resources to maintain iPads.

f. FIRST READING: Policy 419.00 – Professional and Respectful Workplace

Pat Pratt-Cook, Executive Chief of Human Resources, presented this proposed update. SPPS is committed to promoting and maintaining a workplace environment where every individual is treated with civility, dignity, and respect. The District recognizes the importance of creating a culture where all employees feel safe, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives. Differences in culture, communication, and lived experience enrich our environment and must be honored in all interactions. The general statement of the policy was reviewed, as well as definitions, and reporting procedures. Discussion was also noted that the Board will need to determine if they are included within the scope of this policy.

The full presentation, and draft of the proposed updates, can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Assistant General Counsel Wikstrom Donoghue noted that this is a matter of discretion for the Board if they would like to be named within this policy or not, there is no statute or procedure that would implicate them as employees under the law or blue the lines within the governance role. Other options include to apply similar standards within the Board's code of conduct policy, or a new policy to explicitly distinguish as employees.
- Director Carrillo noted that the purpose of this policy is about committing to maintaining a workplace environment where all employees feel safe, valued, and empowered. He did note a concern where it states, "All stakeholders (Board Members, Employees, Parents/Guardians, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors) Must:..." which is a strong legal imperative, and he is unsure if our jurisdiction would apply to parents and guardians in the same ways as it would to employees, and expectations of ways to behave in SPPS facilities, or actions to take.
- He went on to note that parents and guardians do not sign a waiver about behaving in certain ways, and could claim violation of free speech rights to behave in a way that others may find offensive. He suggested an option of a separate policy for parents and guardians.
- He also noted his role as a board member within this policy, and possible legal implications as employee versus governance. Response: In terms of jurisdiction, the control of employees and those with contracts within the district and how they treat each other. We must also accept people as they are when walking through the doors, parents, students, and community members, are not held to the same expectations as employees and others in the district.
- Director Ward noted that the main questions were if school board members should be included in this policy, and if parents/guardians should be included as well. He noted he believes parents and guardians should **not** be included as the policy is written more for employees.

- He then went to the question if board members should be included within this policy. He noted that the accountability factors are different for board members, and the process and implications are different for disciplinary procedures.
- Director Valliant noted she believed that parents and guardians were removed from this policy, because it feels very internal-facing, with separate Rights and Responsibilities for families.
- She also noted that there is a separate policy for expected behaviors of board members, and while that policy can mirror this language for consistency, she believes the Board should be removed from this document. They are not technically employees of the district.
- Director Franco noted that it seems like the will of the Board to remove board members from this policy, but believes it will not implicate one way or the other, and the true discussion is if board members are employees or not.
- Director Vue noted that in previous discussions, the consensus was to remove parents and guardians from the policy, and it is concerning that they are still included. Parents do not work for SPPS. He recommended speaking with parents to ask them instead of telling them. A suggestion was a separate policy for parents, guardians, visitors, and volunteers.
- Director Stanley noted that parents do volunteers and are visitors in buildings. When we have volunteers and visitors, how do we differentiate that? She also provided context and examples, and if this policy would apply to them, and if not, it would need to be in a separate policy. If a parent is volunteering in our school, and they make a derogatory comment, does this policy apply to them? These are real situations that occur, and must be discussed. They often times intersect. Either we create a separate policy for parents, visitors, and volunteers to hold them accountable to the same standards. She would like those expectations to be listed as administration may need to step-in with a non-employee for a process in place. Director Vue noted a focus group to determine this information. Director Allen noted that there should be a separate policy, for example, athletic spectators. Volunteers are a part of our institution in working with us. We should do another policy to be in place for what we expect from spectators and visitors inside our buildings.
- Director Valliant noted that the district chooses the staff to work in the district, but we do not choose parents and families. There may be different abilities, mental health issues, and situations. We must accept parents and visitors as they are when they visit us, as a public institution. We do not want to create a policy that is punitive of parents.
- Director Franco noted that parents and guardians should be removed from this policy, and it may have been a clerical error that they were included in this draft.
- Director Ward noted this conversation could continue within Policy Work Group about parents, guardians, and visitors. He appreciated that we are approaching this topic from the perspective as to protect parents and not marginalize them, when they have historically been marginalized.
- He also provided his own experience on this topic both as a student, and as a teacher, and situations where students may have been put in unacceptable situations and folks may have been asked to leave, and it can be difficult. He believes that if those are not in this policy, they do need to be included in another space.
- Director Carrillo also noted his personal experience on this topic, and offering dignity in process and to protect the integrity of the system. He also noted that one of the expectations of a healthy community is to be healthy for students, and also want parents, guardians, and visitors to be welcomed into a healthy environment.
- He went on to note that he believes board members should be removed from this policy because it sets the expectations of what should happen, and it may confuse folks and the public on the process for board members, who have their own conduct policy.

- Director Ward noted a question on the comfort to remove parents, guardians and visitors, as well as board members, from this policy. Director Franco noted that he believes board members should remain in the policy, but is also okay with moving forward without board members in this policy.
- It was also noted that volunteers should remain in this policy with the note that includes they agree to the policy.
- Clarification was also requested about concerns submitted to the Board Chair in relation to Policy 212.00, and it should also be removed from this policy. Board members noted differing opinions on this topic, including that staff may not see or know about Policy 212.00, and a clarifying approach on how to handle issues with board members. Director Vue noted that he believes it should be removed from this policy because the point of a policy is to provide clarity, and the Board's policy on their code of conduct already exists. Director Allen noted a reference for staff to understand the process for reporting complaints against a member of the Board, and direct them to Policy 212.00, which is also listed as a cross-reference. Including it in that way as a reference point will then allow it to be updated, without needing to also update this policy.
- Director Franco noted this policy is to fill a gap in terms of interactions that are not covered under Policy 415.00, and the misunderstandings related to that policy.

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION

A. Information Requests/Responses and Items for Future Agendas

- Director Carrillo requested feedback on the artificial intelligence tool that high school students will be able to use this school year, and feedback on this tool in a systemic way. The timeline is to be determined by Administration, including Office of Teaching and Learning. He requested information on the quality of work, how students are using it, measurements and feedback from schools on the implementation of this tool and the tool itself
- Director Franco reiterated his information requests, including an update on safety and emergency management plans and ways to ensure school staff are fully trained on these plans, implementation of the cell phone policy, athletic co-ops and the challenges and success with them, as well as a follow-up from public comment and protocols around athletic trainers, including the need to not overburden coaches, but also requirements for nurses in this role.
- Director Ward requested information about the trade pathways for students and partnering with trade unions to utilize the training processes, as well as the operating engineers pathway.

B. Board of Education Reports/Communications

- Director Franco acknowledged the start of the upcoming school year, and looks forward to it. He thanked staff for their work. He also noted his participation in the district negotiations team with SPFE and it's important to acknowledge the amount of work in the process with the Chair and Vice Chair, with the first time in 20 years for educators to come back after summer to a presumptively settled contract and to be ratified in opening week and approved by the Board next month. He was grateful to be part of the process, and thanked Chief Pratt-Cook for problem-solving and working collectively.
- Director Vue provided an update on the H.M.O.N.G. Project, including the core group meetings and subgroup meetings.
- Director Ward echoed Director Franco in that he was able to join the bargaining and negotiation teams, and that it was an engaging process.
- Dr. Stanley introduced Dr. Valora Unowksy, Senior Executive Academic Officer, and Andrea Schmidt, Athletic Director and welcomed them to SPPS.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Director Ward moved to adjourn the meeting; Director Carrillo seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 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