

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

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

**June 17, 2025
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Vice Chair Ward.

2. ROLL CALL

Board of Education: U. Ward, E. Valliant, J. Vue, C. Franco, Y. Carrillo

H. Henderson and C. Allen were absent.

Staff: Superintendent Stanley, J. Wikstrom Donoghue, S. Dahlke, S. Gray Akyea, T. Sager, K. Thao, L. Olson, A. Collins, E. Wacker, J. Danielson, K. Morris, H. Nistler, N. Páez, K. Kimani, J. Turner, D. Abrams, T. Walker, M. McHenry, C. Green, D. Moser, P. Pratt-Cook, A. Kunz, B. Schmidt, C. Anderson, K. Arzamendia, C. Landreau, J. Williams, M. Parsons, K. Wallace

Community: P. Leatherman, H. Reinhardt, M. Wall, M. Hart, T. Lonetree

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

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

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Stanley provided an overview of the agenda, including information regarding the community survey that was completed and an overview of how St. Paul residents perceive SPPS and provide data regarding the community's interest in supporting a referendum this fall. Next will be a presentation of background data for the facilities master plan and 10-year enrollment projections. Information was also provided on the presenter and report. Dr. Stanley noted she looks forward to learning the realities of where we have been and what to expect over the next several years. We have asked her to focus on the key findings of the report and potential areas of questions. She'll distinguish between those

components that can be influenced by SPPS, and those which are independent, such as birth rates. Next will be a report from Research, Evaluation, and Assessment about additional perspective on the demographics of the next 5-10 years based on our current younger students, in terms of their location, according to a number of specific characteristics, specifically with information on the population of SPPS.

Members of the Facilities team will then provide an FMP 1.0 Summary to look at the work of the first master plan, as implemented under SPPS Builds (the 5-year plan).

Finally, there will be a policy update for three policies - Tobacco-Free Environment, Staff Hiring and Drug Free Workplace.

5. 2025 RESIDENTIAL STUDY RESULTS

Peter Leatherman, from the Morris Leatherman Company, presented this report. Included in the presentation was information about the survey methodology, demographics of respondents, feedback on quality of education of SPPS, what respondents felt they liked the most about SPPS, most serious issues according to respondents, as well as other data related to the survey questions.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Leatherman noted that the overall atmospherics are good and there is momentum with support out there that the realization funding is inadequate. The challenge will be the macroeconomic situation of the country and the property taxes in cities and counties.
- Director Carrillo noted the demographics of parents, and their reliance on email since the pandemic, and the support may skew higher because of the parents in the group at this point in time. • Director Ward thanked Mr. Leatherman for this better understanding of the dynamics. There was additional discussion on the different names for this project – including “operations and tech levy” or “capital project levy”, and how the polling is affected. Response: The District must make the decision for the community to understand the need. Capital projects or tech levy does provide the funding for the relief of pressure on the operating levy, which is not as east to talk about the logical consequences. Capital is to maintain programming, staff, and other pieces. It’s easier to see the impacts.
- Director Vue requested additional information on the timing of the preliminary tax forecast. • Is the number of folks surveyed, 700, an adequate sample? Response: Yes, for the school district we typically survey 400 folks, but with 7 wards in the city of Saint Paul, we increased it to 100 per ward, and the 3.8% margin of error is very strong.
- The crosstabs of demographics and individual support were requested.
- Superintendent Stanley noted she was pleasantly surprised at the level of possible support for an operating referendum, and also appreciates that the community is aware of the financial situation of the district.
- Director Carrillo requested information if this falls within the higher end of the support range than recent. Response: Yes, absolutely. Director Carrillo noted that this mirrors the conversations, and we need to continue to build reputation in stewardship, transparency, and accountability. This will help our city to understand that we are co-partners in this process.

6. DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY

Superintendent Stanley then welcomed Hazel Reinhardt, state demographer, to present this report. Figures were comparative to ten years ago, and from 2014-15 to 2024-25. Key findings included: • SPPS K-12 enrollment (excluding Early Childhood and Pre Kindergarten) decreased by 5,628 students or -15.2%

- “Perfect enrollment storm”
 - SPPS resident school age population decreased -6.9% (3,695 students)
 - Increased competition for students
 - Net out migration flipped to net in migration in the past two years

The trends of K-12 enrollment in SPPS were shared, as well as competition data, with the majority of the competition being charter schools.

Resident live births were also presented, with a key finding that Minnesota, Ramsey County, and Saint Paul City resident births decreased from 2008 to 2024. A graph showing the trend of resident live births in Ramsey County and Saint Paul was also shown. Components of K-12 enrollment change for natural decrease and net migration was also discussed.

Projections were then shown for the next 10 years of 2025-26 to 2034-35 with the enrollment decline continuing from 31,426 in 24-25 to 25,929-27,571 in 34-35.

The analysis of components were also shared, including the projection method and assumptions with the cohort survival method data, SPPS share of Saint Paul City Kindergarten Pool for 2014-2024, kindergarten projections, and the reasons for this data, including the lower fertility and aging population. Data about net migration was also shared.

Figures about the data of housing units were also presented, including the Highland Bridge and Heights projects.

The K-12 Enrollment Perspective was also discussed, including the district wide projections and potential future causes including birthrate and capture rate.

Kara Arzamendia, Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment, then shared information about the population maps in Saint Paul. Topics, including maps and trend figures, included:

- Asian and Southeast Asian Populations Living in Saint Paul, MN
- Black/African American and East African Populations Living in Saint Paul, MN
- Other Race/Ethnicities Living in Saint Paul, MN
 - Hispanic/Latino Population
 - American Indian Population
 - White Population
 - Two or More Races Population

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Was the construction of sites factored into this report beyond 2030? Response: No, because we would need the number of units by type by year, and at this point, they are not able to do that.

- Director Carrillo noted similar issues for middle school during his time working in another district, and where the students in Saint Paul go for middle school and to target those families to understand our wonderful middle school options.
- When talking about residential births and live births, we don't capture students born outside the city or state, or those that moved into the city? Correct – the residential live births are a proxy. • There was also further discussion on the demographic differences in birth rates. • Director Franco noted questions on the projected enrollment based on the kindergarten capture rate.
- Director Ward noted questions about the enrollment increase over the past couple years. He also noted time spent with the Enrollment Committee, and the ways to recruit elementary families, and the positive effects of schools like East African Magnet and Hmong Immersion Program, and what is yielding to be most effective. Ms. Reinhart noted that the issues may be complex.
- Director Vue noted questions about the analyzation of enrollment figures past 10 years, and about 40 years ago and figures from that time, including if the decline has returned to the mean. Non public enrollment has declined, and may make a difference. Looking at the period before the pandemic is not a good guide because there is a distinctive change in the world, and it affected education in a big way.
- Ms. Arzamendia also noted clarification of the figures for Asian students.
- Director Franco requested information on the Two or More Race category of data, and if we collect data on the races that they identified as. Response: Families select from choices, and the answer to this depends on the number of choices they selected based on the responses. Director Franco noted it may be beneficial to look at those figures as well to see if there are trends.

7. SPPS BUILDS ANNUAL REPORT AND FMP 1.0 UPDATE

Superintendent Stanley then welcomed Jackie Turner, Executive Chief Administration and Operations; Kathy Wallace, Interim Director of Facilities; and Meg Parsons, Manager of Capital Project Delivery to present this report.

A review of the Facilities and Strategic Plan alignment grounded this presentation. The SPPS Builds/Facilities Master Plan (FMP 1.0) was reviewed, including the introduction and purpose, completed work, projects underway, and budget alignment summary. The Annual SPPS Builds Program Summary was also shared, including a map showing the system-wide impacts with major remodeling/addition, infrastructure improvement, and site/athletic improvement with \$979M from FY16 to FY25. The FMP process improvement process was also reviewed, including the external review recommendations, which include oversight, controls, staffing, and financing.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Carrillo requested information on the earnings after the fiscal year concludes. Response: It stays in the Construction Fund (Fund 6), which rolls over with the fund balance. We can either save it or add additional revenue due to the interest earned, or expand projects and/or take that funding and apply it to future projects so we don't need to borrow as much in the future. The funds are in segregated account, and do not affect the General Fund, but the interest earnings are required to stay within the segregated account for each bond issue, with specific requirements to each. The LTFM funding is different than Certificates of Participation, which are tied to specific projects and approve from MDE.

- Director Valliant requested information about the timeline of Hidden River. Response: January 2026 will be the re-opening, with thanks to Principal Vibar. We talked about waiting until September 2026, but she made a promise that students in 8th grade will be able to walk into a new building, and they made the decision to move mid-year and we will work with her and the community to make that happen over Winter Break.
- Director Vue requested information on the impact to future projects of the contingencies. Response: Budgets will be tighter, and the number brought forth on Gate Check 3 will be about 5% lower than it would be. It will allow us to plan tighter for each project. Chief Turner also noted that as projects are approved and we connect with the State and meeting regularly with MDE and the Minnesota Budget Office with achievement and integration, that we will be pleased with lower contingencies, and to show the community that we are good stewards of the funding and resources, and this will reinforce that.
- Director Franco thanked the team for this helpful review. He also requested information on the total value of assets. Response: We are prepared to provide that number, and the perspective on the management of an institution, and it is close to \$2B, but will provide the official number to the Board in an update.
- Director Franco also requested more details within the monthly construction reports to the Board, and the contingencies included. There is a framework for FMP 2.0, and will engage stakeholders on ways to view information differently with the next iteration of facilities. It will be helpful to see and understand the numbers and budget and tracking of the budget and the projected increases that require board approval.
- Director Valliant requested information on the overview of the order of the agenda items. Chief Turner provided a history of facilities in SPPS, including that the buildings are older and they were not originally designed to be the best instructional places for students. We began a strategic plan in 2017 to look strategically at the district with facilities to be intentionally integrated and align the FMP work around it. As we heard in the Demographic presentation, we will be paying more attention to secondary sites as we look at the buildings and needs. In August, there will be a FMP and Utilization Study Report that will encompass every building and report on the condition and usage. We will then use that information with the information from Ms. Rhinehart and Ms. Arzmedia to overlay with a map to ensure there are the right buildings in each part of the city. Dr. Stanley will also be leading a retreat with staff on the timeline and work. All this information will be compiled to a planning document that will be presented to the Board, with opportunities to interact and give feedback. In Fall 2026, the FMP 2.0 will be presented for adoption. Our partner, PMA, will also be working on the funding side of this project, and it will come together in a full recommendation. Dr. Stanley noted the importance of the interconnections in this work and a thread that is interwoven with each aspect. We will need information from the community to think about SPPS in the future.
- Director Valliant requested further information on the focus on secondary sites.

8. POLICY UPDATE

a. 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 information about logos or characters on clothing associated with tobacco products. It would be a violation of this policy. There was also further discussion on the consequences of wearing this clothing, as well as situations in which students may not know the references to the characters on their clothing. Support staff will be helpful in these situations to have conversations and problem-solve with students. Director Valliant encouraged Administration to think about the fact that not all students or families may know every logo or character, and to be careful and mindful about that piece.
- She also noted the use of the word “against” in Section C, and that it feels adversarial, and Administration noted they will make the proper adjustments.
- Director Vue noted that, within the exceptions, there is a note about American Indian students and families, and another policy that coincides with this about tobacco used for ceremonial purposes. It was noted that within that policy, it states that an adult or staff member of the district should be responsible for lighting the tobacco, rather than a student. Director Vue also encouraged Administration to connect with the AIPAC on this policy.
- Director Ward noted that in discussions about the Smudging policy and participation open to all students.
- Director Ward noted the access to tobacco that is in the community, including vapes, and working toward a tobacco-free environment.
- Overall, the Board felt comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

b. Policy 408.00: Staff Hiring

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 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:

- Director Ward requested information on the “unrepresented” group as noted in the policy.
- Overall, the Board felt comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

c. 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.

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

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- It was noted that this policy applies to anything containing THC or cannabinoids. • Director Carrillo requested information on hemp-derived materials, and their alignment with this policy, which is specifically for cannabinoids substances which can be smoked or inhaled. General Counsel noted they can clarify the language in the policy for the most precise legal language that is not over including items, and it is based on the FDA limits according to statute.
- Overall, the Board felt comfortable with moving this policy forward to the three-reading process.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 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