

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

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

**February 4, 2026
4:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Vice Chair Valliant.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Staff: Superintendent Stanley, K. Bergstrom, S. Dahlke

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE MAIN AGENDA

MOTION: Director Valliant moved to approve the other of the main agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Ward. It passed by acclaim.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent Stanley provided an update on the temporary virtual learning program, noting a high enrollment of over 7,600 students. Within support services, Social workers and the student support team are conducting active outreach to families to ensure high attendance and address technical or resource needs. In partnership with Second Harvest, the district is delivering weekly meal boxes to the homes of approximately 500 students (1,500 total weekly meals). Unlike USDA-standard school lunches, these boxes consist of ingredients and recipes for home preparation. Families wishing to return to brick-and-mortar instruction may do so on a three-week cycle. The next re-entry date is scheduled for February 17th.

She also noted that the launch of the strategic plan efforts will begin soon. Following an anonymized screening of 302 started applications, a 35-member task force has been seated. The committee includes 15 students and aligns with district demographics. Vice Chair Valliant, Director Franco, and Director Henderson will also serve on the task force. Chief Stacey Gray-Akyea was also recognized for her role as project manager.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Allen requested details on the details of those students who have moved to the temporary online virtual model. Response: Ms. Unowsky noted that virtual learning is available for Pre-K through 12th grade across all district brick-and-mortar schools. Attendance in Pre-K is currently lower than other levels, attributed to the non-compulsory nature of the grade and the requirement for adult supervision at home. The district is employing different models at the elementary level based on student density, including one model in which, student numbers are high enough to support dedicated virtual-only and in-person-only classrooms; and another model where students participate in a virtual morning meeting with their home-school homeroom before transitioning to instruction supported by a grade-level academic support teacher. Staff noted challenges in managing fluctuating requests from families moving between virtual and in-person options. To ensure instructional consistency and allow staffing "to settle," the district has implemented a three-

week cycle for enrollment transitions. Enrollment varies significantly by location, ranging from as few as 6-7 students at some sites to nearly 40% of the student body at others.

- Director Henderson noted questions about supports for school communities as they make the transition. Response: Superintendent Stanley noted that the district allocated two non-instructional days specifically for staff preparation to mitigate the "large obstacle" of the transition. Dr. Unowsky highlighted ongoing work with principals, emphasizing that leadership is encouraged to prioritize essential tasks while setting aside non-critical projects to maintain an "all hands on deck" approach for student and teacher support. The communication has been critical, with central leadership has prioritized clear, multi-channel communication to maintain stability. Support is provided through "pop-up" meetings with principals, written documentation, and a centralized master guidance document. The Department of Communications is launching weekly updates for both families and staff. These updates will cover the virtual learning option and other community concerns, including safety and immigration-related topics. Administration also noted a strong, collaborative relationship with the St. Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE), including weekly check-ins to troubleshoot and problem-solve emerging issues, an updated MOA to include language regarding "simultaneous teaching" (where teachers engage with in-person and remote students concurrently). Dr. Unowsky noted that the partnership has been helpful in ensuring teachers are supported as they navigate the complexities of the new instructional models.
- Director Henderson also noted questions about support for students and families as they may transition back to in-person learning, regarding academic and emotional stability. Response: Administration acknowledged the concern regarding learning loss and the need for mindful transitions. Support will be localized at the school level, utilizing counselors, social workers, and additional support staff to facilitate the return. The district has maintained connections with virtual students, including those with attendance challenges, to ensure they remain integrated into the school community prior to their physical return. Leadership expressed confidence in the teaching staff's preparation to welcome students back, though it was noted that the transition may not be entirely seamless. The return of students would necessitate further flexibility in school operations, including adaptive learning models as student populations shift back to physical buildings, schools will likely need to adjust their current learning models to accommodate changing classroom sizes and configurations, and future planning as we continue to monitor the number of families choosing to return during each three-week cycle.
- Director Vue noted questions about the food delivery for students enrolled in the temporary virtual learning option, including meal content and delivery methods. Response: Because meals are being provided off-campus, they do not qualify under standard USDA school lunch regulations. Consequently, the food provided differs from the daily hot meals served in school buildings. The district has partnered with Second Harvest to fill this gap. Currently, the program is delivering approximately 1,500 meals per week (serving 500 families). In terms of logistics and nature of the food being provided, unlike prepared cafeteria meals, these are meal kits containing main ingredients and recipes. This allows families to prepare meals such as spaghetti, breakfast, or dinner at home. Food is distributed in a "meal package" or bag containing a full week's worth of food, similar in appearance to the distribution models used during the COVID-19 pandemic. All meal packages are delivered directly to the students' homes to ensure accessibility for virtual learners.
- Director Vue noted that transitioning to virtual learning model creates a "ripple effect" of disruption that impacts all students, not just those choosing to go remote. Disruption isn't limited to virtual students; those remaining in physical classrooms face significant changes as well. When teachers are moved from physical classrooms to cover virtual ones, it forces remaining students to adapt to new teachers and classmates. Even if the curriculum remains the same, the loss of a familiar environment and established expectations can be jarring for a child's learning experience.

5. FULL-TERM CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION, SERIES 2026A

Chief Sager and partners from PTMA than presented this report.

The purpose was reviewed, including that these full-term Certificates of Participation will fund construction at Bruce Vento Elementary, various capital deferred maintenance projects, additions to, and repairs at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary, Hidden River Middle School and Highland Park Middle School. Minnesota Statutes, Section 126C.40, Subdivision 6, authorizes the District to enter into the Lease to finance real and personal property.

Further details on the financing were also reviewed, including the original plan in August 2023 was to issue \$167 million Certificates of Participation to complete funding of the four projects. Split financing to sell the right amount at the right time for when funding was needed was also reviewed.

Each project is on target to stay within approved budgets by MDE and the school board. Details of these project budgets were also reviewed. A \$17.9 million COP sale required to complete project expenses after spend down of other available COP funds from prior issues.

A bar graph showing the Debt and LTFM Taxes for Residential Homestead Property for SPPS was also shown. A timeline was also presented with important dates regarding the sale, and information on the board resolution planned for February 17, 2026.

The full presentation can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Vue noted questions about the under-budget reporting, and if that will change the projections going forward. Response: While the team continues to use consistent budgeting practices, they are constantly updating the "future expenditure plan" based on actual costs. Coming in under budget creates extra financial capacity for future use. Original budgets include contingencies to ensure projects reach the finish line. In this case, those contingencies weren't fully needed, resulting in the surplus. The primary benefit of staying under budget is lower property taxes. Borrowing only what is necessary prevents a higher tax burden on homeowners that would have occurred if the full authorized amount were spent. Even though there is leftover "capacity," any new projects must still be individually vetted and authorized through the standard process.
- Director Franco requested information on the true interest cost of 5% threshold and how it aligns with current market performance, noting that recent rates have trended consistently below this cap. While the ceiling is set at 5%, we anticipate that current market rates to fall below 4% under present conditions. The 5% figure serves as a "ceiling" or "stop-gap" rather than an expected rate. It is designed to provide the financing team with the necessary flexibility to manage the bond sale process efficiently. If market volatility causes rates to exceed the 5% threshold, PTMA's authority to execute the contract would cease. In such an event, the matter would be brought back to the Board for re-evaluation, as the financial implications would be considered materially different from the original plan. Mr. Hart reaffirmed their primary objective: to utilize all available strategies to secure the lowest possible interest rate for the organization, regardless of the established ceiling. It was noted that that the 5% true interest cost is a protective limit rather than a target, ensuring that the project remains fiscally viable or is subject to further Board review.
- Director Carrillo requested further details on the anticipated costs budget figures, and the variances presented. Response: Staff explained that numbers fluctuate as they reconcile actual invoices versus previous estimates. The Facilities and Finance teams are now working in a "tight connection," meeting every two weeks to vet project costs and ensure reporting accuracy. The team has moved toward a more conservative contingency plan. They originally held large cushions but have reduced them as they gained a better understanding of the actual costs. This "drawdown" or bond issuance is intended to be the final financing for these four specific projects. Staff asked the facilities team to "sharpen their pencils" to ensure the projects stay within the remaining budget. Staff noted that by waiting to issue the full amount of debt, they avoided a situation where they might have borrowed more money than they actually needed to spend. Staff emphasized that these numbers will continue to fluctuate slightly until every invoice is closed out, but they feel confident in the current estimates as the projects near completion.

- Director Valliant requested information on the overview of the Certificates of Participation process. Response: Mr. Hart noted that the mechanism of Certificate of Participation functions similarly to a standard residential mortgage. The District is entering into an agreement to borrow \$17.9M. The debt is structured to be repaid over a 20-year term. Payments will be funded through future property tax revenues levied by the School District. A trustee (US Bank) holds a legal interest in the school buildings for the duration of the term. Upon final payment, this interest is dissolved, and full title remains with the District. To secure favorable interest rates, the District formally pledges to levy taxes sufficient to meet annual debt service requirements. The legal documents are filed with the County to ensure oversight. The County verifies that the District has levied sufficient funds each year to meet its principal and interest obligations. Mr. Hart also noted that at the end of the 20-year schedule, the District will have fulfilled all financial obligations to investors, and all third-party interests in the physical school property will be terminated.

6. H.M.O.N.G. PROJECT REPORT AND RESOLUTION

Director Vue presented this report and draft resolution. He reviewed the H.M.O.N.G. Project Workgroup members, the project purpose, and project timeline.

Within the Data Collection and Findings portion, he shared details on the needs assessment focus groups, survey results, student focus groups, parent focus groups, and staff focus groups. He also reviewed the survey procedures and response rate data, demographics of survey respondents, and survey findings. The focus groups were also reviewed, noting that representation matters, participation figures, purpose, and findings in these core areas:

- Importance of Representation
- Celebrations and Cultural Integration
- Preserving Language and History
- Belonging & Engagement: Creating Inclusive Spaces
- Leadership & Advocacy: Championing Cultural Integration
- Mental Health & Support: Culturally Responsive Services
- Systemic Barriers & Equity: Interrupting Inequities
- Parent Engagement: Building Authentic Partnership

S.M.A.R.T. goals for the project were also reviewed, and included:

- The percentage of HMong SPPS students who experience language, culture and multilingual development outcomes will increase from BLANK in 2026 to BLANK by 2029 through student-reported sense of belonging and cultural representation on existing district student climate and engagement surveys as measured by growth trends via MCA, ACCESS and four -year graduation rates
- The percentage of culturally responsive instruction, representation and biliteracy pathways will increase from BLANK in 2026 to BLANK by 2029 through increasing early awareness and maximizing impact of biliteracy pathways, increasing attainment of biliteracy for HMong students awarded the Seal of Biliteracy, and ensuring consistent and explicit inclusion of Hmong contributions and perspectives within Tier 1 curricular and extracurricular programs as measured by growth trends via district and state reporting mechanisms and Minnesota Academic Standards.
- The percentage of HMong SPPS parents/guardians who have equitable access to language and culture opportunities will increase from BLANK in 2026 to BLANK by 2029 via increasing early awareness and maximize impact biliteracy pathway for Hmong students, improving reported access, communication and trust, reporting demand and access indicators for Hmong language and culture opportunities such as enrollment interest and waitlist data as measured by trends in existing family engagement and climate survey related to being informed, heard and valued.
- The percentage of HMong SPPS staff who support the academic, social and emotional well-being of HMong students will increase systemwide from BLANK in 2026 to BLANK by 2029 through monitoring HMong staff-reported feedback and readiness to integrate culturally responsive practices that affirm HMong language, culture and history as well as recognizing the cultural and

linguistic expertise of Hmong staff, while ensuring that responsibility for culturally responsiveness is shared across the district and embedded within Tier 1 expectations as well as ensuring that supportive conditions exist for HMong staff to engage in voluntary affinity-based peer collaboration including opportunities for connection, professional dialogue and mutual support as measured by trends in existing HMong staff climate and engagement survey and workforce data.

Details on the H.M.O.N.G. Project Task Force were also reviewed, including the purpose, composition, and process.

The H.M.O.N.G. Project draft resolution was also shared and discussed.

The full presentation and draft resolution can be found in the BoardBook.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Ward noted there are a lot of pieces packed into each goal, and the measurements of each.
- Director Carrillo noted a formatting edit, including to use nested bullet points to list measurement metrics under each primary goal for better clarity. He also noted to clearly identify the primary metric among multiple measurements to determine which one best indicates progress toward the target, as well as specificity on the development outcomes and target, and thinking through the measurement and target. Within some of the goals to define exactly what "student experience" or "outcomes" look like—for example, distinguishing between time spent (minutes) versus the quality of the experience (survey results). He also noted it would be helpful to carefully evaluate the dependencies between the target and the chosen measurement to ensure the data actually reflects the goal's intent.
- Director Valliant noted a two-step process for goal setting: the work group should draft the foundational goals, while the board and district should be responsible for finalizing the specific "SMART" details—particularly the time-bound elements. The work group provides the high-level objectives, but the district refines them into actionable SMART goals. The district and board have the logistical knowledge of timelines and capacity. By having the district set the deadlines, the goals remain realistic and achievable, avoiding the need to vote on or change "uninformed" timelines later.
- Director Allen noted that the current goals are too wordy and ambiguous, making it difficult to identify the core mission or the specific actions needed for success. She suggested to consolidate the feedback into one or two clear, concise goals that are easier to monitor, to ensure the work group's input is integrated into the board's existing goal-setting framework, and to move away from "wordy" descriptions toward specific, measurable actions that define exactly how the mission will be accomplished; all while ensuring the voices of parents, students, families and staff are heard in those spaces.
- Director Franco requested clarification on the parent-focused goal, including the goal and intention of the goal. Response: Director Vue highlighted the need to capture parent interest and influence regarding language and culture programs. Parents want clear pathways for getting their children involved in bioliteracy programs. He also noted the suggestion to find ways to quantify how much parent input is actually shaping district offerings. Potential metrics for tracking this demand and involvement include enrollment numbers and waitlist data.
 - Director Franco noted concern over the lack of clarity and feasibility in the current goals, emphasizing that they feel "overloaded" and difficult to act upon. There is a need for better definition regarding who is responsible for specific actions. For parent-focused goals, he would also like to see actions directly involving parents/guardians rather than goals that feel like "physical space" or infrastructure targets. He noted he is hesitant to vote on goals or percentage increases without knowing if they are actually achievable. They are seeking "tentative numbers" and district staff input to ensure the district can achieve them. There is concern about seeing the final data and goals for the first time on the day of the vote without enough context or time to verify their realism.
 - Director Carrillo noted two critical "lenses" for evaluating the achievability of the proposed goals before they are finalized, including labor constraints and operational capacity. Within

the labor constraints discussion, he noted questions around the realism of staff to meet these expectations within their current contractual obligations. Within operational capacity, he noted questions if the district's physical infrastructure and logistics have the resources to meet these goals. He also noted that these goals be vetted by the Superintendent to ensure the district isn't setting "undoable" expectations

- Director Ward expressed urgency and a desire to move the goals toward a "yes" vote at the upcoming board meeting. While they are worried about the tight timeline, they are offering active support to ensure the proposal is ready. He noted that the language must accurately reflect the work done by the H.M.O.N.G. Project group; and it must demonstrate a clear, positive difference for the community and improve the educational experience for Hmong students. He also raised the "operationalization" of the goals to ensure they are measurable, realistic, and able to be implemented. He also encouraged the team to work together not to avoid any roadblocks before the formal vote on the resolution on February 17th.
- Director Valliant noted the original understanding of the H.M.O.N.G. Project and expresses caution regarding its current trajectory. She noted that the project was initially conceived as an advisory effort with a clear end date, and results were intended to serve as recommendations to help guide the board and the district. She noted that expectations have shifted, and the project is moving beyond its original advisory scope.
- Director Franco noted a clear, collective consensus from the board on whether they should pivot the project's output with differences in technical SMART goals versus high-level advisory recommendations. The Board will need to explicitly define what "less SMART and more advisory" looks like in practice and to establish a "common understanding" so the work group has a clear, unified direction before moving forward.
- Director Allen suggested to enact the H.M.O.N.G. Project's work as high-level strategic recommendations rather than immediate, separate mandates that could overwhelm the district's existing workload. This project is more substantial than typical community feedback and should be used to inform the district's long-term Strategic Plan. There is a concern that adding "inter-goals" on top of current district goals (like literacy) could lead to the project getting lost in the shuffle or failing to meet expectations. The speaker supports the project developing specific SMART goals, but views them as recommendations for the board to utilize as they shape the "next phase of transformation" for the district. By integrating this voice into future planning rather than forcing it into current operations, the board can better build long-term trust with the Hmong community, and to see the voice of this project continue to move forward and in the next phase of transformation for SPPS.
- Director Henderson expressed gratitude for the work completed so far but suggests a more structured approach to ensure the goals are monitored and that we can "get it right the first time if possible." She noted that a monitoring task force will be helpful to manage the implementation of the H.M.O.N.G. Project's goals, with the responsibilities to use the adopted project goals as a guidance to guide their work and align district, administrative, and community resources; to collectively determine short-term goals and specific tasks that demonstrate progress toward the larger objectives; and to schedule regular meetings and prepare progress reports for both the Board of Education and the community. The group would ideally include board members, district staff, and community representatives to ensure diverse oversight.
- Director Ward noted questions on the necessity of a new task force, expressing concern that adding complexity to the governing apparatus could make the board less "nimble and effective." He noted questions on what a task force would accomplish that wouldn't happen through standard channels. Usually, the board gives goals to the Superintendent to implement and report back on, and he would want to understand why this specific project requires an "extra" layer of community and board oversight.
 - It was also noted that this is a governance-rooted work project, rather than a standard administrative task, implying it requires a different level of collaborative leadership between the board and the community.
 - Director Valliant noted that the proposed task force or implementation phase falls outside the project's original, board-approved scope. The board specifically voted for a needs assessment, which concludes once the final recommendations (the SMART goals) are delivered. the project ends when those results are handed over

for the board to review and determine the next steps. While she understands why a task force might be suggested, she categorized it as a separate entity or "extra work" that was not part of the initial agreement.

- Director Carrillo suggested utilizing the existing Hmong Parent Advisory Council (HPAC) to monitor the project's goals instead of creating a new, separate task force. Since the district already has parent advisory councils—some mandated by law—creating a new body might undermine the purpose of the existing council. He proposed that the HPAC could take on the role of monitoring the goals annually and reporting back to the board on progress and outcomes. Since board members already participate in these councils, using the HPAC would keep the work within an established framework rather than complicating the governing structure. The HPAC could act as the research role for the community, verifying whether the agreed-upon changes are actually happening on the ground.
 - Director Valliant noted that she is unsure if that's the role of the parent advisory council.
- Director Valliant noted questions about the purpose of the H.M.O.N.G. Project task force. Response: Director Vue clarified that the proposed task force was intended as a high-level body with the flexibility to determine its own specific tasks and parameters for monitoring the project's work. The task force's primary function is oversight and implementation monitoring. The proposal was left broad intentionally so the group could define its own "to-do items" within set parameters. He also noted the group is open to the board's feedback and willing to pivot, including to task an existing group in this work.
 - Director Valliant reiterated that a new task force is unnecessary because it falls outside the original, board-approved scope of the needs assessment. She noted that the current commitment ends with the needs assessment. Once the assessment results in specific goals, those goals should be tracked alongside the district's existing work and objectives. Because these goals will be integrated into standard board monitoring, a separate body is not seen as a priority or necessity at this time.
 - Director Vue then noted questions about the demonstration of the progress to the community, including a possible report to the Board or an existing apparatus to report the progress.
- Director Franco noted exploration on how to integrate specific community goals into the existing district framework without overextending resources. He noted that existing drafts already focus on academic benchmarks like MCA scores, graduation rates, and the Seal of Biliteracy. There is a specific interest in seeing data broken down by community (e.g., Hmong and Latino) to ensure these broad academic goals are actually reaching specific groups. Rather than creating something entirely new, he suggested folding this work into current systems—such as PACs (Parent Advisory Committees) or existing reporting cycles—to stay within "constraints." He went on to note that once the specific "ask" is clarified, the board can determine if this is simply a "new branch" of work they are already monitoring.
- Director Franco also noted that the district already has the tools and data necessary to track progress without building new systems. The speaker highlights the district's Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA) team and their data center as a primary resource, noting that much of the required data might already be public. He pointed to existing student surveys as a way to measure "belonging," which aligns with the Superintendent's core values.
- Director Ward noted a revised resolution, and clarification if there should be a resolved statement to create a monitoring process, and questions on language to include.
 - Director Carrillo noted a monitoring process and the avenue for reporting, including a proactive approach to sharing progress, and presenting data through formal channels, such as in board meetings, specific board committees, direct presentations to PACs, and regularly scheduled public presentations. While the "monitoring" (data collection) might already exist, the speaker is calling for a defined reporting process to ensure the information actually reaches the community and the board.
- Dr. Stanly noted the technical challenges of disaggregating data for specific ethnic groups, particularly the Hmong community. Currently, the district identifies Hmong students solely by their "home language." This is problematic because many Hmong students now speak English as their

first language, therefore, they are not included in specific Hmong-centered data. She acknowledged that broad categories (like "Asian," "Black," or "Indigenous") mask the diversity of the diaspora and fail to represent the specific needs of distinct communities. There is a stated desire to break down data more effectively to create meaningful SMART goals, but a warning that the current data collection methods are limited. She supports opening the discussion to all staff to find better ways to navigate these complexities and ensure accurate representation.

- Dr. Gray Akyea noted the technical limitations of data collection and warns against creating redundant administrative burdens. While there are ethnicity variables beyond home language, they are optional and limited. Only about 50% of families use them, making the data inconsistent and potentially unreliable for full representation. She suggested mirroring a previous successful model by distinguishing between student outcomes (academic results) and programmatic goals (the work being done). She recommend embedding these community goals into the existing organizational cycle (e.g., Strategic Plan, Civic Readiness Report, or Achievement and Integration reports). The goal is to "illuminate" specific data within the current framework to ensure the district actually has the capacity to respond to the findings without being overwhelmed by overlapping reports.
- Director Ward noted questions on the mission statement within the resolution, and if it would be required if there isn't a task force. There was then further discussion on this topic. Director Valliant noted that a formal "mission statement" doesn't belong in a legal resolution. Instead, the suggestion is for the Board to "adopt recommendations" from the concluding project to guide future work. There is a growing consensus among the Board to exclude the creation of a specific task force from the resolution.
- Director Allen noted concerns over the word "actively" in the draft. They believe the project's purpose is to "inform" the district about the Hmong community's cultural and linguistic needs, but "actively" implies a specific mechanism (like a task force) that hasn't been decided yet, including how the district will stay informed moving forward—whether through a Parent Advisory Council (PAC), a community group, or another method—reiterating that the "how" remains the missing piece. She also noted the process for gathering data, as well as questions about the budget, because stipends were included in the process.
- Director Valliant further noted the goal of the needs assessment, instead of a continuing group. Director Vue noted differing understandings.
- Director Allen advocated for the continuity of community oversight, emphasizing that the board needs a direct line to the community's perspective. She believes a community-based group should exist to "constantly monitor" and report progress directly to the board; and that if maintaining such a group requires funding, the board must have a frank, collective discussion about the budgetary implications and current financial constraints. The primary purpose of this group would be to ensure the community's understanding of goals aligns with the district's actions and to keep the board informed on whether those goals are being achieved.
- The Board then discussed changes to the proposed resolution. There is a strong desire for a monitoring framework, even if the specific details aren't finalized in this exact resolution. There were also questions about the changes required if the task force language is also removed, as well as new ways of monitoring the progress.
- Director Franco noted questions on the cadence of monitoring and reporting. Director Vue noted a 3x/year reporting structure, including mid-point reporting, and a report to the Board. Director Vue also acknowledged a level of "distrust" or misunderstanding between the community and the district. They believe the H.M.O.N.G. Project work group is actively seeking clear guidance from the board on what "monitoring" actually looks like to ensure their work isn't lost. The workgroup has questions about how the recommendations would be monitored, and the need for a sustainable, high-level reporting structure to the Board.
- Director Ward noted a compromise to ensure the resolution passes within the next two weeks, acknowledging that while there is consensus on the *goal*, there is still disagreement on the *method*. He suggested the resolution state that the board will determine a monitoring framework and reporting cadence at a later date within a specific timeframe. He recommended replacing the specific requirement to "assemble a H.M.O.N.G. Project task force" with broader language: "The board shall determine a monitoring framework... and a cadence of reporting to the board and the

public/community." This strategy allows the board to vote "yes" on the overall mission and the needs assessment immediately, while giving them more time to iron out the technical and budgetary details of the monitoring process.

- Director Vue noted that Hmong students and parents have "done their part" by sharing their voices and needs. The responsibility now lies entirely with the Board to translate that input into a functional system. He also reiterated the core feedback: the Board wants achievable goals and a monitoring process that fits within existing frameworks (like the B.I.G.G reports or current administrative reporting) rather than creating entirely new ones. Instead of a new task force, he suggested that simply disaggregating existing data might be the most efficient way to meet the community's needs.
- Director Valliant noted that it would be nice to present certificates to the workgroup because it has been a lot of work.

7. **POLICY UPDATE**

- a. **New Emergency Policy xxx.xx - Federal Law Enforcement Activity on District Controlled Properties**

Director Franco presented this policy. He noted that in accordance with Policy 209.00 – Development, Adoption, Monitoring of Policies, an “emergency is defines as a “sudden, unexpected, serious event or unforeseen change in circumstances that requires urgent intervention.

To date, the current unprecedented Federal Agents actions has resulted in nearly 7,000 students electing to continue school through a Temporary Online Learning Option.

The sudden deployment of 3,000 agents to our state has caused significant disruption and fear in the community over the past several weeks.

This is the largest federal law enforcement operation in the US.

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

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- Director Ward noted the justification for the emergency method of this policy in these unprecedented times, and the importance to move with urgency. He also noted per Policy 209.00, that when a policy is adopted within the emergency provision after one reading, it is in effect for one year, but can also move to a second and third reading for adoption; while being simultaneously adopted within the first reading.
- Director Henderson noted she agrees with the emergency need for this policy and thanked the group for bringing it forward.
- Director Vue noted procedural path for adopting a new policy, specifically weighing whether to use a standard process or "emergency provisions." The board is deciding between the standard "three-reading process" (which allows for more deliberation over time) and the "emergency provisions policy" (which fast-tracks adoption). The speaker notes the board seems generally aligned on the fast-track route. He reminded the Board that during the pandemic, the Board passed a resolution granting "emergency powers" to allow leadership to act in real time without waiting for board guidance. The speaker asks if a similar level of autonomy is needed now.
- Director Franco noted that proposed policy isn't entirely new; it is based on existing operations, previously adopted resolutions, and current practices. The policy includes guidance from General Counsel and references existing operational frameworks to ensure it remains within legal and administrative bounds. It does give the ability to be nimble and flexible.
- Director Ward noted the previous emergency policy adoption in November for the Paid Family Medical Leave, and this is the same process.
- Director Henderson noted the importance of the formalization of existing practices into a permanent policy, emphasizing continuity and practicality. The content isn't "new information"—it is largely pulled from a previously passed resolution and reflects processes already established and shared

with staff. She also noted the current wording is effective because it is "able to be applied in real life," ensuring the policy remains a functional tool rather than just a theoretical document.

- Director Carrillo noted a change from "ICE officers" to "ICE or related agencies" as noted in other sections of the policy.
- Director Allen noted questions about conversations with the city and their cooperation in our joint facility spaces. General Counsel noted that There have been instances of ICE officers staging in shared parking lots (jointly owned by the city and the district). While the city (likely St. Paul) doesn't have the exact same proclamation as Minneapolis, the City Attorney's office has a standing letter to ICE that outlines these restrictions. The local police department (SPPD) has actively assisted the district in moving ICE away from school property. There have been "secure" (lockdown-style) protocols during these incidents to ensure student safety. There has been full cooperation between the District, the City, and SPPD.
- There were also questions about the verification to be conducted to confirm the legal sufficiency of any presented warrant with the policy, and who will be verifying that information? Response: It will be the General Counsel/Legal office. There are protocols with buildings to go to their site leadership as well.
- Director Ward noted questions about ICE's refusal to provide a warrant or stating they do not need one, and the practical protocol for handling unauthorized entry by federal agents who may refuse to show a warrant. Response: Using an anecdote about a local business, the speaker emphasizes that agents must be denied entry if they lack a signed warrant. The directive is clear: if agents refuse to leave, the district will call local police to have them escorted out. School buildings are inherently more defensible than homes because they are locked and secured, making it difficult for agents to enter without cooperation. District leadership and SEM will personally intercept agents to verify documents. General Counsel noted they are familiar with local judges and will scrutinize any signature that appears suspicious. There is a candid acknowledgment that while the district has protocols, agents sometimes act outside the law. The district can only prepare for legal scenarios; they cannot fully control agents who choose to ignore legal boundaries.
- Director Ward also noted questions about judicial warrant versus an administrative warrant, and the specific fear that ICE officers might attempt to use "administrative warrants" rather than judicial warrants to gain access to school property. He acknowledged that community members are worried that ICE agents are being trained to believe an administrative warrant (signed by an immigration official) is sufficient to bypass the district's judicial warrant requirement. General Counsel noted that legal scholars generally consider the use of administrative warrants for such entries to be illegal or legally questionable. Even if ICE uses administrative warrants, current interpretations typically limit their use to homes and residences, not places like schools or businesses. In the event that an officer illegally breaks into district property, the speaker confirms that the district's protocol is to call the police and document the incident as it happens.
- Director Vue asked if there is additional guidance that is not currently covered within this policy. Response: This is a transition from a temporary resolution to a formal policy is as much about psychological safety and institutional commitment as it is about legal compliance. Feedback from staff and the union president indicates that workers feel a "greater sense of safety" when protections are codified in an official policy rather than just a temporary resolution. It provides a more permanent sense of security. The document is not just a legal text; it blends legal guidance with practical, real-world instructions, acting as a single, accessible manual for the district's stance. The policy mandates annual training. The speaker notes that training has already been ramping up since last year, but the policy formalizes this as a permanent requirement. By passing this, the board is reaffirming the values of cities like St. Paul and Minneapolis. It serves as a public declaration of the district's "temperature" or intolerance toward aggressive federal enforcement behaviors that other parts of the country might permit. The move is described as a high-priority signal to the community, showing exactly "how strongly" the board feels about protecting its students and staff.
- Dr. Stanley also noted the language in D-2 and communication about this policy, including multilingual communication, but also provided to students, families and staff. There were questions on how policies are sent to students, and want to ensure staff also have access to this policy. Director Allen noted student iPad use and a way to have this policy show on their device. She also

noted concerns about the mental health of students, and the conversations that can help to reassure them of the district's support.

- Director Ward noted further questions on the communication of this policy, including access to this policy. Director Franco noted it will be important for students to have access, as they are talking about this topic. There were further questions on the ways to inform students, and ways to teach this policy that is relevant to the safety of students.
- Director Ward noted questions about the communication, and if there will be one-time communication or if the intent is to continually educate our families and students about this policy. Director Franco noted that this will be a policy in which we can refer back to and in multilingual ways will be important. That will be at the discretion of Administration.
- Director Ward noted this policy is in effect for one year within the emergency adoption process, but the Board can continue to make edits through the second and third readings that will also be presented.
- General Counsel noted a change that it should state “all buildings, grounds, facilities and vehicles owned, leased, contracted, operated, or under the control of...”
- Director Franco noted the importance to bring a sense of security and safety, and the response for families. He feels good about having something in policy for reference to show the support in relation to the current chaos.
- The Board thanked Director Franco for proposing this policy.

BF 34571 New Emergency Policy xxx.xx - Federal Law Enforcement Activity on District Controlled Properties

MOTION: **Director Valliant moved to approve New Emergency Policy - Federal Law Enforcement Activity on District Controlled Properties, under the emergency language in Policy 209 as detailed in Section 'Adoption of Policy' subsection 6, which allows policies to be adopted upon first or second readings in emergency scenarios. The emergency provision can be activated due to the unprecedented and ongoing Operation Metro Surge, which has put our students and families in danger and has forced us to dramatically shift operations. If this motion passes, this language will become policy immediately and for one year thereafter. This policy will also continue onto the second reading for eventual consideration for permanent adoption. Director Allen seconded the motion.**

The motion was approved by roll call vote:

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

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

11. WORK SESSION

The Board then conducted a work session regarding the Board Initiated Goals Governance (B.I.G.G.).

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