

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625
Saint Paul, Minnesota
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Administration Building
360 Colborne Street
Auditoriums A & B

JUNE 26, 2000

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by Becky Montgomery, Chair.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mr. de la O; Ms. Montgomery; Mr. Oertwig; Dr. Phillips; Mr. Thao; Ms. Carroll; Dr. Harvey, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Lalla, General Counsel; Mrs. Higgins, Assistant Clerk.

Unable to Attend: Mr. Conlon

III. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Oertwig, that the Order of the Agenda be approved.

The motion carried with the roll call vote as follows:

Mr. de la O	-	Yes
Ms. Montgomery	-	Yes
Mr. Oertwig	-	Yes
Dr. Phillips	-	Yes
Mr. Thao	-	Yes
Ms. Carroll	-	Yes

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Excess Levy Referendum

a. Presentation by Dr. Harvey

Dr. Harvey reviewed the history of the district's past year, its goals and its accomplishments which included:

1. Reading initiative
2. Ending social promotion
3. Raising achievement (test scores)
4. Site based improvement
5. Accountability system

Dr. Harvey followed this list of achievements with a narrative of how necessary the success of a referendum is for the children and also for the City of St. Paul. She noted the ways every child will benefit from the passage of this referendum, not only in attaining the basic skills to ensure a quality education for future employment and security, but higher skills that will enable them to compete globally. She explained that conversations with the community are scheduled to determine how the citizens of St. Paul look at the needs of the district. Dr. Harvey reviewed how education has changed, how expanded technology is needed, and how important it is to invest in early childhood education and all day kindergarten, so that students are ready when they come to school to begin a world class education. Funds are not available, at this time, to students in St. Paul to take advantage of the many programs parents want for their children and for smaller class sizes teachers want to better meet the challenges they face. Dr. Harvey commented further on the proposal and what it will mean to the taxpayers of this city in terms of dollars over the next five years.

b. Public Comment

Ramsey County Commissioner Raphael Ortega spoke on behalf of the citizens in the community to support the proposed levy in order to do a better job in educating our children. He noted how important it is to educate the older population as to the need for this referendum, and how it will affect the future of the city. Commissioner Ortega pledged his support for this proposal.

Following were fourteen speakers; ten supported the proposed tax levy and four spoke against.

Upon completion of Public Comments, Dr. Harvey and Lois Rockney, Executive Director of Business & Financial Affairs, answered questions raised by the speakers and by Board members.

Motion Recommended by Committee:

It was moved by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Oertwig, that the St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education is dedicated to providing a world class education that leaves no child behind, as is beginning to be articulated in Saint Paul's education blueprint 2000. We recognize the compelling financial need described in the superintendent's recommendations and wish to continue to engage the community's input around how to achieve world class education in Saint Paul. Following this process, the Board will take formal action. It was moved to waive the rules to accept this motion.

Board members each spoke to the proposal and gave their unanimous support for the motion.

Neal Thao – Cited global economy and the demand for high skills. This district is a multicultural district with many challenging educational needs. He stated how important it is to educate people of color to become contributing citizens. He strongly supports the recommendation.

Al Oertwig – Stated that there is no greater issue, at this time, than the appropriate education of the children in our city. It is our obligation to provide the resources for them to live a quality life. The future of our city depends on this proposal – a strong city depends upon a strong education system. The funds to accomplish this are not there. We need to continue to build strong community support. He will support this recommendation.

Anne Carroll – Supports this motion because it recognizes the compelling need the district has to provide the resources necessary for our children to have a world class education. Broad community support is necessary to embrace the vision and the only way this can be accomplished, and be successful, is if we have a true understanding by the entire community about what this means. She heartily supports the motion.

Gilbert de la O – Stated we are on the right journey of leaving no one behind –additional resources are needed to accomplish a world class education for each child. We need to engage the community for their support and move forward now. He fully supports this motion.

Dr. Phillips – Stated we need a referendum levy for every child, for every teacher, for every parent, for every citizen in our city. Education for all of our children is one of the best investments we can make and the best returns we can anticipate. She will support the recommendation.

Becky Montgomery – Commented that children deserve a world class education to compete globally. We do not have the resources and we need to invest in education. An educated workforce means a stronger city. A healthy city means a healthy public school system. She supports the recommendation and the need to move forward as soon as possible on the excess levy referendum. Ms. Montgomery added the note that educating the community is necessary to ensure that everyone is fully aware of the needs of the school district, and the support of the Public Comment speakers to assist in this project is appreciated.

Dr. Harvey thanked the speakers and stated she is looking forward to the conversations with the community to discuss the details of the referendum proposal.

Continuation of the Motion:

The motion carried with the roll call vote as follows:

Mr. de la O	-	Yes
Ms. Montgomery	-	Yes
Mr. Oertwig	-	Yes
Dr. Phillips	-	Yes
Mr. Thao	-	Yes
Ms. Carroll	-	Yes

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Thao, seconded by Dr. Phillips, that the meeting be adjourned.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. with the roll call as follows:

Mr. de la O	-	Yes
Ms. Montgomery	-	Yes
Mr. Oertwig	-	Yes
Dr. Phillips	-	Yes
Mr. Thao	-	Yes
Ms. Carroll	-	Yes

Prepared and submitted by
Gerrie Higgins, Assistant Clerk
Board of Education