

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 27, 2007**

PRESENT: Board of Education: Kazoua Kong-Thao, Chair; Tom Conlon, John Brodrick, Elona Street-Stewart, Anne Carroll, Tom Goldstein.  
Mr. Oertwig joined the meeting at 4:45 p.m.  
Ms. Carroll left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Staff: Superintendent Carstarphen, Deb Henton, Jeff Lalla, Hitesh Haria, Valeria Silva, Lois Rockney, Bill Larson, Jeremiah Ellis, Michael Thompson, Kate Wilcox-Harris, Willie Nesbit, Steve Shellenberg, Phil Moye, Nancy Meyer, Joe Munnich, Wayne Arndt

Other: Cathleen Mills, Walt Mills, Lisa Freyberger, Kelly Krattiger, William Pletzer, Ferdinand Peters, Mila Daloia, Valerie Perry, Christin Van Tassel, Scott Wacker, Mike Sedonka, Donna Denbinger, Bill Summers, Mary Mackbee, Rita Christen, Anders Hughey, Sean Foltin, Andy Moscu, Kent Hany, Mary Cathryn Ricker, Fran Posthonus, Howard Wilson, Tom Marvin, JoAnn Clark, Ken \_\_\_\_, Patrick Igo, Tom Swift, Louis Mariucci, Doug Beldin, Kevin Driscoll

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kong-Thao Called the meeting to order at 4:41 p.m.

**II. AGENDA**

Ms. Kong-Thao indicated the areas to be covered at the meeting included: Military recruitment, the School Calendar, selection of a topic for CBFAC for the school year 2007-2008, Board consideration of a resolution in support of current State legislations on domestic partner benefits and graduation scheduling.

**1. Military Recruitment**

The Chair called on the Superintendent to open the discussion. She indicated this is an issue the Board has been looking at over a period of time directing administration to bring a recommendation forward in its motion passed on January 23 which stated: *the Committee of the Board recommends the Board of Education direct Administration to develop a formal mechanism to pursue how the Opt Out form could be modified in such a way it allows minors to sign, that it allows that option as permitted under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the State's definition of secondary. That it is made available in grades 9-12 so that the students can do this anytime in the year and anyone who is legally allowed to know can contact the school to verify whether or not a form has been completed.*

The Superintendent stated she was bringing the administration recommendation forward and that it is made up of actions and procedures administration can implement immediately and does not require a policy action by the Board. She then asked her Chief of Staff to review the recommendations being made in the following areas:

- **Form Modification**  
The form will have a signature line for minor students who can then opt-out on their own. If students sign the form requesting their information not be released **and** the parents do not also sign the form, schools must notify parents of this decision. Students, who complete a form and later want to release information to the military recruiters, must have their parents send a note to the school indicating that their student's information should be released to military recruiters. The parent note will suffice as proper notification.
- **Availability of Forms**  
Forms will be available for all students at 9-12 grades and mailed to homes by individual schools in Opening Week Packets. Forms will be available for students in grades 7 and 8 upon request. New students coming through the Placement Center will be given the form. Each school administration will inform students of the location and availability of the release of information forms.
- **Verification Process**  
Completed forms will be copied at the schools and sent to the district office. Schools will maintain a copy of the completed forms on site for students and parents/guardians to access.
- **Location and Supervision of Military Recruiters**  
Location of military recruiters will be a site-based decision; military recruiters are either in the Career Centers or located near or directly inside the cafeteria and are supervised by school staff in both areas.
- **Scheduling of Military Recruiters**  
In consideration of legal opinion, the administration is recommending that military recruiters will have the same opportunity to access students as college recruiters at all 9-12 grade schools.

The Chief of Staff went on to review the forms and procedures which would be put in place should the Board approved the recommendations being made. She also reviewed the Privacy Notice to Parents of High School Students. She noted the forms would be translated into Hmong, Spanish and Somali.

Following a review of administration's recommendation, the Board carried on extensive discussion and posed numerous questions to administration, including:

- Clarification was requested on opt out timing, if a student opts out have they blocked access to their information for the remainder of their school participation. Response, yes.
- A statement was made that, to be fair, an "opt-in" option should also be on the form and that students should have to renew their choice on a yearly basis.
- The observation was made that by SPPS policy all information is private from the start; all students come into the system with privacy except per the terms mentioned on the form.
- The comment was made that the additional parental notification when a student opts out on their own was a good addition to the process
- Disappointment was expressed that students would still be confronted in a cafeteria setting while making future life choices.

Administration responded that they had talked to every principal about career centers vs. cafeteria locations and also about supervision in cafeterias. Administration stated the decision for site-based decision making on location of any recruiters was made because facilities and space in every school are different, principals know their facility, what is going on at any given time and are best placed to decide what is appropriate at that particular time. It was stated that supervision of recruiters is generally done by educational assistants who most often staff career centers. High school principals indicated that multiple staff persons are available in the cafeterias supervising students and recruiters.

Further Board observations included:

- Administration has fulfilled the requests put forth in the motion but not gone beyond procedure

- The opinion was expressed that there is no need to go further than the minimum requirements regarding the presence of military in the schools because their message can't be governed and schools don't need to make it easier for them to do their job.
- The issue of meeting in the cafeteria was raised again as not being a space conducive to a thoughtful discussion on a student's future.
- The questions was raised exactly what the work of this evening was; to approve the forms and set direction for issues around release of information and managing information. What action is being sought?

The Superintendent responded administration was presenting the information requested by the Board and no action is required in order for Administration to implement what is being presented. She indicated the new process brings larger accountability to the schools for tracking and communication with students and families.

- The opinion was offered that sites can best manage space and schedule for students as they see fit
- Appreciation was expressed for the information received, for hearing Board concerns and for clarifying the opt-out process for the Board and schools.
- A Director stated he was pleased with the recommendation, would like to see equal access for all and asked that the Board not micro-manage how schools work out location issues, give them flexibility and let them decide the best use of their space and access for students.
- Concern was expressed that too much time was being allow for recruitment at the expense of what schools should focus on, student achievement
- The opinion was expressed that various sites should be making comparable decisions about comparable groups and their access across the board.
- A request was made that Administration update the Board periodically on how this process is working, particularly the supervision issue.

**MOTION: Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Ms. Street-Stewart, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education receive the recommendations as written with thanks.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- The observation was made that this motion does not denote agreement with all aspects of the issue but only to receive the recommendations is fine.
- Concern was expressed again that the recommendations only address process/space issues but doesn't address concerns of students, parents and the community about the deeper issues connected with military recruitment
- A request was made that the principals be given a copy of these minutes so they can make note of the deeper concerns the Board has around this issue.

MOTION: Mr. Goldstein moved that all recruiters (military, post secondary, etc.) be restricted to the Career Centers. Seconded by Ms. Carroll.

The Superintendent responded that it is a broader issue than simply having the recruiters in the cafeteria or career center, utilization of space also depends on the numbers in the student populations, what other activities/events are going on at a given time, the need to utilize space for academic purposes; it is a matter of space availability and flexibility in its use.

- The suggestion was made that the Board should trust administration to raise the placement issue with principals and to talk about ways to bring more balance in both presence and access of students so the cafeteria is not the primary space in which recruiters meet with students.

The Superintendent stated that, in fairness to high school principals, she found them to be deeply engaged and very responsive to the questions being asked. They weren't looking at it as a space issue but rather in terms of instruction and academics.

- It was stated there is a need to be fair to students without projecting support for or against the military, professional groups or colleges/universities who come in to recruit
- It was noted the Board, administration and staff need to be aware of the expectations of the community around this issue.
- A Board member stated this recommendation was a solid step toward where the Board wants to go and suggested the matter be brought back to be looked at in a year as to the success of the process implemented (this to be inclusive of all recruiters, not just military) and what refinements/changes might further enhance the program.

The Superintendent stated there is an action item within the Strategic Plan suggesting implementation of a study to see if college career centers should be implemented at all high schools in order to be certain standards are the same across the board.

- It was stated this discussion leads to a broader issue of how to utilize the schools.
- A suggestion was made that perhaps career issues should be addressed after school, though this raise other issues such as transportation, etc.

The Superintendent asked that the Board define what it want and give administration a few months to look into the issue and report back.

Mr. Goldstein then offered an amendment to his motion:

AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Goldstein moved that all recruiters (military, post secondary, etc.) be restricted to the Career Centers, this to be implemented in the 2007-08 school year.

The motion died for lack of a second and after consideration, Ms. Carroll withdrew her second to the original motion. The Chair declared the first motion dead for lack of a second.

The Board then instructed administration to have a discussion with the secondary school principals about the board's concerns and how all recruiters are handled in order to afford them appropriate opportunities with available options while maintaining the students' focus on doing their best in class.

2. Board Consideration of Resolution in Support of Current State Legislation On Domestic Partnership Benefits

The Chair asked for Board concurrence with moving this subject forward in order to accommodate Ms. Carroll's need to depart the meeting early. The Board concurred.

Ms. Carroll stated the legislature is currently considering a bill that would remove restrictions from local units of governments so they can decide if health benefits may be extended to anyone other than the employee, spouse and minor children. This is strictly allowing local units of government to define dependents as it pertains to benefits. She noted the Board has gone on record in the past in favor of this but has been precluded from other action by state law.

**MOTION: Ms. Carroll moved that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education approved the following resolution:**

**The St. Paul Board of Education has long supported local control. Specifically, the Board desires to offer certain employee benefits, including health care coverage, to others in addition to a spouse or minor/dependent children. The Board is currently precluded from doing so by state law that defines "dependent" for local government entities. The Board believes it is in the best interest of our employees and thus of our students to allow decisions about benefits to be made by local units of government rather than by the state. The St. Paul Board of Education hereby resolves to**

**support SF 960/HF 1097 that would allow local units of government to exercise local discretion in defining "dependents" for the purpose of employee benefit programs.**

**Motion seconded by Ms. Street-Stewart.**

**Motion passed with six in favor and Mr. Conlon voting no.**

Mr. Conlon stated he had voted against the resolution because he has concerns it crosses into areas with moral dimensions and where additional costs might be involved and he would prefer the District keep its focus on educational issues.

Ms. Carroll requested the resolution be forwarded to the chief authors of the bill and to the SPPS Legislative Liaison.

3. School Calendar

The Chair asked the Superintendent to describe the process utilized in development of the proposed calendar, which she did. She then asked her Chief of Staff to review highlights of the items being presented.

The Chief of Staff acknowledged members of the School Calendar Task force in attendance at the meeting: Mary Catherine Ricker, Teacher's Union President; Howard Wilson, administrator's president; Lisa Freyberger, high school advisory leader; Joe Munnich, family involvement; Steve Shellenberg, testing administrator; Wayne Arndt, labor relations; Kate Wilcox-Harris, professional development; Bill Larson, operations; Hitesh Haria, operations; Michael Thompson, secondary administrator; Nancy Meyer, special ed; Lewis Mariucci, middle school principal; Valerie Perry, student representative; Kelly Krattiger, payroll. She extended her thanks to them and the others serving on the committee for their dedication, hard work and achieving a quality product on a tight timeline.

She then moved on the list the items presented to the Board: the proposal itself, the "roll over" working calendar, the actual recommended, survey supported, calendar for 2007-2008, the administrative footnotes, the membership list of the calendar task force, the guiding principals utilized by the committee in its work, the results of the parent/guardian and staff survey and a recommendations comparison chart which included a number of recommendations brought up and found worthy of consideration for calendars as they are developed beyond 2007-08.

The proposed calendar includes the following recommendations:

- The start date will be maintained as the first Tuesday after Labor Day. Opening week for teachers will begin on the Monday of the week previous to Labor Day.
- Winter Vacation – it is recommended that the two week break for students and staff be changed so that students and staff will return three days earlier, on January 2, 2008, in exchange for ending the school year three days earlier in June.
- Spring break will remain the first week in April.
- Early release days – it is recommended the practice of four early release days for professional development be maintained.
- End of Quarter 2/Semester1 – it is recommended that the end date be moved from January 24 to January 18.
- Kindergarten and elementary professional development day and secondary grading and reporting day – it is recommended that this day move from January 25 to January 22.
- It is recommended the last day for students be June 5 and the last day for staff June 6.
- Summer School – it is recommended the summer session begin on June 16 and end on July 18.
- Parent Teacher Conferences – the recommendation is September 4 and 5 for Kindergarten students, November 21 and March 20 for Kindergarten and elementary students. Secondary conferences are site decisions.
- New Teacher Orientation – to be held on August 24.

The School Calendar Task Force will continue to meet on its charge to review alternative calendars and develop future calendars that support the professional needs of students and families, professional growth for staff and increased instructional opportunities.

It was noted the Survey was very helpful in addressing certain issues and that it had been done in four languages in order to receive input from a wide range of views. The calendar will include test dates as they become available. The calendar is designed to reflect the entire instructional year

The Board complimented administration on creating a precedent for establishing task forces in the future.

The survey process was reviewed and explained.

Concern was raised about the "meet and confer" aspect of interaction with the Teacher's Union and whether this was done in a proper fashion. The President of the Teacher Union was called upon to comment. Administration stated they have met legally what is needed but perhaps not what has been done in the past.

The Board noted the importance of a carefully crafted process for consultation with the Teachers' Union as the District needs buy-in from them for future efforts and the Board urged administration to be careful about the consultation process.

**MOTION: Mr. Conlon moved, seconded by Mr. Goldstein, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education approved the 2007-2008 calendar as proposed.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Selection of Topic for Citizen's Budget and Finance Advisory Committee (CBFAC) for School Year 2007-2008

Administration noted current guidelines for CBFAC work require the Board to charge the group with a specific task for the year that will result in a report to the Board at year end. Additionally having the topic in place aids the Board in making their recommendations of people with expertise in the area. The Business Office is recommending the following project for the 2007-08 year:

*Review of financial practices and procedures of the St. Paul Public Schools Business Office and compare them to best practices in the industry. Interview the external auditors and current staff to understand how and why the work is completed as it is. Survey schools to determine customer satisfaction. Recommend changes that improve or increase the support to schools and programs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation.*

The Chief Business Officer noted this topic dovetails with a study being done by The Council of Great City Schools who is looking at performance issues related to operations and financial management practices. It was thought CBFAC could utilize the results of this study as they make recommendations to improve service to schools.

The Board asked that the study include the relationship with and function of site councils and include them in the customer satisfaction survey.

The Board requested that in scheduling reports from advisory groups adequate time be allowed for a thorough conversation around their report.

The Board also requested that CBFAC include short, mid and long-term recommendations which might be acted on by the Board and a timeline for sequential implementation in the recommendations they bring forward to the Board and administration. It would also be beneficial if the dollar impact/consequences of the recommendations presented.

In response to a question it was noted the ERS study was the other topic considered for CBFAC. However, with the Council of Great City Schools moving on their study it seemed an appropriate time for this to be addressed by CBFAC. The study would also be beneficial as the Business Office is seeing changes due to technology implementation and foresees staff changes due to retirements, etc. which could be addressed within the study as well relative to impact and how to deal with them.

**MOTION: Mr. Goldstein moved, seconded by Mr. Brodrick, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education accept the proposed CBFAC project for 2007-08 as presented.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

5. Graduation Scheduling  
The Graduation Schedule was passed among Board members who signed up for various graduation duties.
6. Other  
Ms. Street-Stewart passed out a list of proposed Board of Education meeting dates for the remained of 2007 along with a date for a special closed Board meeting. She indicated action would be taken on the dates at the next Board meeting and asked Board members to put them onto their calendars.

### III. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION: Mr. Goldstein moved the meeting adjourn, seconded by Mr. Brodrick.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Polsfuss  
Assistant Clerk  
St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education