

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 29, 2005**

PRESENT:

BOARD OF EDUCATION: John Brodrick, Al Oertwig, Kazoua Kong-Thao, Anne Carroll, Tom Conlon, Elona Street-Stewart, Toni Carter

STAFF: Dr. Pat Harvey, Jeff Lalla, Su Yeager, Tanya Pekel, Tom Watkins, Kent Pekel

OTHERS: Bill Polous, David Downing, Jeff Koon, Doug Belden, Paul Rohlfing

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Ms. Street-Stewart, Committee Chair.

**II. AGENDA**

Ms. Street-Stewart introduced the subjects to be addressed at this meeting:

- **Board Vacancy**
- **Officer Restructuring**
- **Monitoring Indicators**

**III. BOARD VACANCY/OFFICER RESTRUCTURING**

**1. Board Vacancy**

Ms. Street-Stewart announced the board was meeting to decide the processes and procedures to fill the position Ms. Carter will be vacating upon her resignation and assumption of her new position as County Commissioner. Ms. Street-Stewart indicated all decisions were being made in anticipation of the receipt of a formal letter of resignation from Ms. Carter at this evening's meeting. She further noted the position is an unexpired vacancy to be filled for the remainder of the term which will end with the swearing in of the newly elected Board of Education members in January, 2006. Ms. Street-Stewart stated Board policy provides for an appointment process.

Several handouts were provided: (1) an outline of the procedures and questions used to fill the Board vacancy which occurred in 1992; (2) a copy of SPPS Policy No. 201.00 – Board/Unexpired Terms; (3) a copy of the Application for Appointment as Board Director used in 1992; (4) a copy of the Minnesota Affidavit of Candidacy; and (5) a color highlighted calendar of scheduled Board/COB meetings with the application/interview process worked into it as a starting point for planning.

Ms. Street-Stewart indicated the first order of business was to establish how the position is to be filled and asked for input from those present. Mr. Conlon asked Mr. Lalla if the appointment could be made by consensus. Mr. Lalla indicated the state statute requires a board appointment be made at a regular or special meeting of the Board with no further directive as to process. However, he stated, SPPS Board policy expressly provides for an application process with public interview of the applicants. If the Board appoints by consensus, it would be violating its own policy. Mr. Oertwig indicated the Board could

waive policy or change policy, but the question was whether this would a prudent thing to do.

Ms. Carroll raised several questions with regard to the 1992 process as outlined indicating the Board could adapt the 1992 process or implement its own new process as long as it adheres to established Board policy. She stated the proposed schedule of final interviews on May 23 did not allow the Board time for discussion regarding the candidates which she viewed as valuable. She also requested that written material be included in the process along with more extensive information on the applicants than that provided by either application form.

Ms. Kong-Thao requested clarification as to whether one or both interview sessions were televised. In 1992 both first and final interviews were held at special Board meetings which are open to the public, and in practice, are televised...

**MOTION:** Mr. Brodrick moved, seconded by Mr. Conlon, that the Committee of the Board recommend that the Board of Directors utilize the 1992 process with the stipulation that modifications be made to the time schedule through the use of the timeline provided as a handout and that the motion is made pending the receipt of a letter of resignation from Ms. Carter.

Clarification was made that the application period would be 30 days from the date of posting with interviews being scheduled and final decisions made in the second month out so that the new appointee would be in place in June 2005 and would have one-half year to serve on the Board.

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Ms. Carroll moved that the motion be amended to state approval of the 1992 process steps 1-7, that new questions be developed for step 8 and that the interview process be determined along with details on the actual speaking presentation. Further, that steps 10 and 11 be eliminated to be replaced with new process for second interview to be scheduled in conjunction with second board meeting to be determined.

Motion failed due to lack of second.

After further discussion Mr. Brodrick withdrew his motion.

Mr. Oertwig indicated that in 1985 a vacancy was filled by the Board appointing the person who won the election in November of that year, leaving the position vacant until the election was completed. He stated the language of the Minnesota Statute does not prohibit multiple appointments. Mr. Lalla indicated serial appointments might be made and indicated the Attorney General interpreted the statute as mandatory but since there was little guidance as to timelines, there was no penalty for violations.

Ms. Carroll indicated she would like to see the position filled by appointment indicating board dynamics changed with issues regardless of a newly appointed director being in place. She supported the timing of the proposed schedule in general and suggested June 1 as a target date for completion of the whole process.

Mr. Conlon indicated he supported the proposed process because it allowed for broad participation of the talents within the city. He raised the question of how the appointed board person might impact the upcoming election indicating he would like to see a statement included in the posting indicating preference in the appointment would be given to those who were independent of the November election. He suggested that during the interview process the applicants might be asked to state their intent with regard to the November elections.

Ms. Carroll suggested that the process be approached in segments, and proposed the following motion:

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Conlon, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education fill the vacancy in the Board of Education by appointment utilizing a process that follows the framework designed in 1992 and that the process be completed no later than the middle of June, 2005.

Motion approved.

Mr. Oertwig raised the issue of continuity vs. disruption; stating by doing an appointment the Board may change the working dynamics of the board. More fluidity will be created within the board with a new member coming on; potentially impacting the ability of board to be cohesive and move on in difficult times.

Ms. Street-Stewart indicated risk factors exist at any time which might bring bias to the Board and it is incumbent upon other members to address any issue arising due to undue influence. Ethical issues need to be addressed if an individual utilizes their position to influence an election. One-half year is a significant time to serve on the board and the question of intent as to candidacy could be addressed in the interview process. Ms. Street-Stewart stated greater good is served by being as open as possible in the process and providing the chance for another person from community to serve in public office is invaluable.

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Conlon, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education approve steps 1-7 as outlined in the 1992 process, excluding specific dates.

Motion Passed.

Steps 1-7 are:

1. Resignation indicated.
2. Official letter of resignation submitted
3. Letter submitted to Committee of the Board
4. COB brings formal recommendation of acceptance to Board at next meeting of the Board of Education.
5. Applications for Board through posting consistent with District policy regarding job openings.
6. Open application time (1 month)
7. First interviews of all candidates be done at a Special Board meeting and that the meeting be televised.

Ms. Carroll raised a question about the application forms within the packet and which would be used. Additional questions were raised on the application process, the questions to accompany the application, the questions needed for the interview process, etc.

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Mr. Conlon that the Committee of Board recommend that the Board of Education establish an interview task force to develop the process which will be utilized to interview and narrow applicants for the Board. Two rounds of interviews are to be utilized.

Motion Passed.

Discussion then moved to wording for the posting. Desire was expressed to s "preference will be given to candidates with broad experience and who are not running for school board in the upcoming election". Qualifications in the posting may narrow interested persons to those most suited. It was felt "broad knowledge" was a nebulous

statement and language used should perhaps express some knowledge of the district, experience in governance and involvement with schools.

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Ms. Kong-Thao, that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education use the following language in the posting “demonstrated knowledge of Saint Paul Public Schools and/or experience in governance; and who does not intend to be a candidate for the school board election in November 2005.”

Motion Passed.

Ms. Kong-Thao expressed a desire to see a “welcoming statement” which would encourage people from all backgrounds to apply and in addition to the normal affirmative action statement, and that accommodations would be made, upon request, for the interview sessions.

**MOTION:** Mr. Oertwig moved, seconded by Ms. Carroll that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education authorize the Vice Chair to draft a welcoming statement (including the EEO statement) to be included in the posting.

Motion Passed.

**MOTION:** Mr. Conlon moved, seconded by Ms. Carter that the Committee of the Board recommend the Board of Education appoint Ms. Kong-Thao and Ms. Carroll as the Interview Task Force to report back to the Board at the April 12 COB meeting with their recommendations.

Motion Approved.

Ms. Pekel was asked what budget implications there were with regard to the posting. She indicated there were costs involved but if the posting was limited to a one-time posting they were manageable and she strongly recommended holding the posting to one time rather than multiple time listings.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Ms. Carroll, seconded by Ms. Kong-Thao that the Committee of the Board recommend that the Board of Education run the posting on the Board vacancy in the normal manner for external postings; to place it on the District web, on official school bulletin boards and as a District e-mail broadcast; that a press release be prepared by the Communications Office and released to all community newspapers and cultural media with follow-up by Communications Office to encourage its use; that community radio stations be approached to run the press release as a PSB; that a write-up be prepared and sent to all schools for inclusion in their newsletters and that Board members get the information out to their network of contacts.

Motion Passed.

It was decided, by consensus of the Committee, that applications be sent to Ms. Polfuss, Assistant Board Clerk, 360 Colborne, St. Paul, MN 55102.

## 2. **Officer Restructuring**

Ms. Street-Stewart indicated she had received a letter of resignation from Ms. Carter indicating her resignation from the Board of Education effective Friday, April 1, 2005. The letter was read to the Board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Ms. Kong-Thao that the Committee of the Board recommend that the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Ms. Toni Carter

from her position on the Board of Education effective April 1, 2005 and that a vacancy on the Board of Education be declared.

Motion Passed.

Ms. Street-Stewart stated, with the departure of Ms. Carter, various positions within the Board would need to be reassigned and opened nominations.

Mr. Brodrick indicated, before nominations were made, he would like a discussion on the nature and obligations inherent in the various Board positions.

Mr. Oertwig indicated it was important to understand expectations for the role of chair and vice chair; to establish relationships with other board members for input on critical issues, to network, and to recognize the time the position requires. He indicated the relationship with the superintendent is critical and includes developing the format for the superintendent's evaluation, preparing the board agenda, and clarifying areas between personal opinion and board opinion.

Mr. Oertwig further indicated the vice chair position is crucial in the working of the board. The vice chair is responsible for COB meetings and issues referred by the Board of Education to the COB. This may require work outside of actual board meetings in order to get background and answers to any questions board members might have.

Ms. Carroll stated the task of each officer is determined by the board and that the past does not bind the future. She indicated her belief that all members of the board were available to offer help and support to the rest.

Following these statements, Ms. Street-Stewart indicated nominations were open for the position of Chair.

#### Chair of the Board of Education

Mr. Brodrick moved the nomination of Elona Street-Stewart for Chair, seconded by Ms. Kong-Thao. Ms. Street-Stewart called for other nominations, there were none. Nominations were closed and the vote called. Nomination carried.

#### Vice Chair of Board of Education

Mr. Conlon moved the nomination of Kazoua Kong-Thao for the position of Vice Chair; seconded by Ms. Carter. Ms. Street-Stewart called for other nominations, there were none. Nominations were closed and the vote called. Nomination carried.

#### Treasurer

Mr. Oertwig moved the nomination of Tom Conlon for the position of Treasurer; seconded by Ms. Carroll. Ms. Street-Stewart called for other nominations, there were none. Nominations were closed and the vote called. Nomination carried.

Ms. Street-Stewart indicated the position of Clerk remains the same with John Brodrick in the position. Mr. Brodrick expressed his thanks for vote of confidence in retaining him in the position of clerk.

Ms. Carter thanked for board for the wonderful experience of working with each of them and with the Board as a whole as they met the challenges and issues facing them. She expressed her intention of continuing to advocate and work for children and families in the community.

Ms. Street-Stewart spoke to her appreciation in working with Ms. Carter as vice chair and the balance of skills and abilities they brought together in their work on the board. She

indicated her commitment to shared leadership as she serves on behalf of the community and her desire to maintain continuity in the work of the Board toward their goals.

**MOTION:** Ms. Carroll moved, seconded by Ms. Kong-Thao that the Committee of the Board meeting recess and the Board move to a Special Board of Education Meeting.

Motion Passed.

The Committee of the Board meeting reconvened at 6:30 p.m

#### IV. **MONITORING INDICATORS**

Dr. Harvey stated how proud administration is of the initiative and SCIP process. She indicated the board would be introduced to the newest edition of the SCIP process tied to the new data center which will allow schools to make decisions with the best information possible. The system will be taken one step further in May with the general public being able to make use of the data (with certain privacy issue areas accessible only with password).

Dr. Harvey indicated the initiatives had been restructured under the board's end statements as requested in order to provide the ability to see what is going well and where changes need to be made.

Dr. Harvey then asked Kent Pekel to walk the board through a tour of the data support system which, over time, will help the district with reporting information on selected indicators in the following ways:

- Up to date
- User friendly
- Trend-based
- Multi-level
- Disaggregated
- Drill-down, and
- In context/benchmarked.

Mr. Pekel indicated plans were in place for the schools to update SCIPs in the August/September workshops with results available from the 04-05 data.

Mr. Pekel then walked the group through the data center, demonstrating some of its capabilities. He stated schools are very attentive to goals and utilizing all resources available to the schools. The system can assist in explaining how resources are being used, how they are being paid for from various sources and a comparison over time can be made to find trends.

A question was posed as to whether the budget display could be linked to SCIP sites. Mr. Pekel indicated the budget spreadsheet from the Business Office now allows school administrators to move information around but too complex to link the budget to SCIPs although not ruled out for future development.

Utilizing the system, the schools can select a goal to see how it is doing in that area over time, thus providing direct data reporting for schools on their goals; offering them another powerful tool to take them to the right questions about achieving their goals. Additionally it will bring information to the public in a different way on how schools are measuring goals and achievement.

SCIP is focused on the district's overall plan, offering a tool for looking at its own history and planning what current and future activities need to be implemented in order to reach goals. It is also a link between that work and NCLB, a link between activities and student achievement.

The data center is a valuable tool for professional development allowing schools to pull out data to better tailor development to fit needs as well as the ability to look at schools which are similar in order to establish levels of excellence, in other words, school improvement planning.

Tom Watkins gave the board a preview of areas looked at by research staff. While the data center has information in it relevant to SCIP it is bigger than that allowing the synthesis of achievement with demographics and context data. Mr. Pekel indicated the system can help in making relevant comparisons of the district to other schools, the state and the nation.

Dr Harvey indicated the development of the system is a journey where every step counted in building the process and end results and utilization by schools. The district now needs to ensure the schools enhance their use of the data in decision making and establishing direction.

A question was asked as to St. Paul's status in student improvement. Dr. Harvey replied that St. Paul is as good as or better than many in improvement in all student groups. Encouraging evidence from important measures shows that gaps are narrowing (ELL, Asian to Caucasian, etc.). In other areas there are more mixed results but still with clear evidence that student groups are doing better. Data indicates that continuously enrolled kids with opportunity to be in program over time are seeing great outcomes with greater improvements in achievement. Dr. Harvey indicated the state is now moving toward making similar measures to enhance their data.

A need was expressed to know where policies and programs are successful or not to establish a vision of what is being done right and what the board needs to strengthen. The new system, with initiatives tied to ends, offers a decision support system ensuring that decisions are based on actual data. It will assist in both qualitative and quantitative decisions and the information available will get deeper and richer as the process moves ahead. It will be invaluable to establishing the next action plan.

Dr. Harvey commented on the need to make the district better and to share, with the community, its knowledge of what cannot be achieved due to lack of resources. She indicated without help from the legislature, it will be nearly impossible to continue to meet standards.

Ms. Street-Stewart indicated the board needs to schedule the next steps to move forward in the monitoring process with the ends brought into their work. The monitoring indicator task force looked a process with staff working on behalf of the board to provide information in support of decision making rather than just reporting information.

Now that the ends have been formally adopted and a great deal invested in the work, the Board can structure the next step and move forward in meeting its ends in monitoring and informing the public of its goals. It was stated the general public may not understand monitoring and one of the first steps could be a conversation at a board meeting to introduce the concept of ends and why they are needed. The substance of the Board's work is in monitoring and no one gets to see it. Another suggestion was to develop a brochure to help establish a common understanding of the end in conjunction with the Board's monitoring discussions. Timing and structure will be critical as the next few months are extremely busy with testing and budgeting.

Dr. Harvey indicated it is essential to have an understanding of what the board wants and needs to communicate about monitoring and about sequencing that into a meaningful session on the issue. Staff particularly needs to understand what the board wants so that it can prepare appropriate materials to meet those needs.

The Board discussed a timeframe for a monitoring practice session. Dr. Harvey suggested that if a recorded monitoring session is planned for the near future; the board needs to design a format in order for staff to provide the appropriate information in response to questions. Ms. Kong-Thao suggested the end result should be that the Board is comfortable with the process after the first trial run and the effort results in a valuable session.

Ms. Carter stated this is an evolving process of work that is nearing the end of the current action plan driving the district. There is a need to evolve a new action plan with board and staff using this as a guide to develop monitoring priorities for the future.

Ms. Carroll stated she is not looking for data and information, but is looking for synthesis in order to make decisions. Specifically the ends should be a decision support system for board level policy making at a much deeper visionary level in step with staff and strongly tied to community standards.

Dr. Harvey stated more concrete direction is needed so administration can prepare for requests.

Mr. Pikel reinforced the need for the Board to communicate its vision so that staff can allocate its time in the best way to meet this end. He suggested the following process utilizing the subject of "preparation for higher learning." A framework will be created showing various issues within this subject, this will be given to the board, who will provide input on what they want to see and what questions they want answered. Staff will then develop a monitoring session utilizing this input from the board. He suggested board leadership establish the final format for the presentation. He felt this exercise would begin to establish an understanding the process, that it would reflect the specific issues the board wants and would define the final end product.

Dr. Harvey suggested that the Communications Office might find a facilitator and the seven board members might have a "conversation" (televised) about the Board experience, responsibilities, policy governance, the big picture issues and how this lead to the establishment of the "ends."

Mr. Koon stated from a public view the board needs to strike a balance to show what it plans now and how it is doing, and given the current status what it plans to do next and why. Both positives and negatives need to be brought out. He felt the public needs to understand old plans before moving on to new plans.

Mr. Brodrick suggested that perhaps the story needs to be told in sound bites, keeping it simple and understandable. Mr. Watkins suggested perhaps the inclusion of specific stories (i.e., kids who have achieved) might help to put the specific issue into a more personal context. Others agreed the Board needs to own this process, creating stories, graphics and issues to make it uniquely SPPS.

The introductory monitoring session will signal a change in the Update section of the Board agenda. The Board will contact other school boards to review the way they structured monitoring sessions... Additionally, Mr. Patton had indicated he would be willing to work with the board in a practice session. The board needs a clear picture of what it is doing and where it is going and using these resources might assist in getting there.

Ms. Carter affirmed both the idea of a brochure and a conversation on the evolution of the work, about what has been learned and what still needs to be done.

Dr. Harvey indicated there is strong respect and support for the end statements by staff.

Ms. Street-Stewart suggested scheduling another date in April or May (Monday or Tuesday) for a COB meeting to do a dry run wherein a report is made and discussion is "road tested." She stated she would work with Ms. Pikel, Mr. Pikel and Ms. Polsfuss to set a date and begin the work of defining an issue and framework for board input.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Ms. Kong-Thao moved adjournment, seconded by Ms. Carroll.

Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Polsfuss  
Secretary to the Board of Education