

**COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 26, 2007**

PRESENT: Board of Education Elona Street-Stewart, John Brodrick, Anne Carroll, Tom Conlon, Tom Goldsmith
Ms. Kong-Thao was absent

Staff: Superintendent Carstarphen, Lewis Scott, Lee Litman, Christine Wroblewski, Nancy Meyer, Mary Dooley Burns, Hitesh Haria, Donald Sysyn, Willie Nesbit, Tom Olson, Beverly Wittgenstein, Jeremiah Ellis, Luz Maria Serrano, Kate Wilcox-Harris, Lois Rockney, Marilyn Polsfuss

Other: John Thoemke, Frank Thissen, Kathy Korum, Paula Beiswenger, Jody Yungers, Catherine Wright, Maya Nishikawa, Jeff Koon

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Acting Chair, Tom Conlon.

II. AGENDA

Director Conlon reviewed the agenda items:

- Saint Paul City-Wide Community Education Advisory Board Report
- SPPS Special Education Advisory Committee Report
- Policy Update

1. Saint Paul City-Wide Community Education Advisory Board Report

The Superintendent introduced the advisory council stating its role is to advise on policy, process, programs and budgets that promote the value of community education and its role in academic achievement. She then called on Jody Yungers to present the report.

Jody Yungers, Acting Chair of the City-Wide Community Education Advisory Committee indicated this had been a year of transition. She stated the group takes its role of advising the Board on policy, process, programs and budgets for community education seriously. The Council works toward building a strong community and strong families through its ability to unite the influences schools, families and communities with its programs and services in support of the learning and development of children.

During the year the role of the Council was reviewed to find ways to better serve the community. The focus has been on bringing value and process to the council. One way was in looking at its membership with two goals. The first was to make sure membership was representative of the business community, the faith community, community-based organizations of the many partners within community education and to be sure the make-up was representative of the multi-cultural communities within the city. The second was to look for new members within the faith-based and business community to further strengthen the council and truly reflect the community served.

Additionally they have worked to ensure the advisory board brings value to volunteers at the table. In doing so, the meetings have been restructured to find a way the City-wide and the seventeen area councils could better communicate. How can information from the area councils be brought to the city-wide and to advance better dialogue with area advisory councils.

In addition to the restructuring, the group wanted to improve their ability to advocate for work of the City-wide and the importance of community education. An advocacy training session was conducted for the City-wide and area advisory councils. A lot of work was done on how to work with the legislature to bring forward policy conversations to do their work. This training helped in two ways: the early learner families became more active in advocating for their cause and they played a strong role in getting the referendum passed.

In 2007 the work has also focused on what the Council can do to align itself with the SPPS Strategic Plan. They looked at their programs, plans, goals and objectives to align them with the Strategic plan and identified strategies toward achieving this end.

- Ensure high academic achievement:
 - Increase the number of children ready for kindergarten
 - Help English Language Learners of all ages improve literacy skills
 - Provide academic and social skill-building programs for persons with special needs
 - Increase outreach to individuals who have been unsuccessful in the traditional K-12 system and offer opportunities for them to develop strong academic skills
 - Continue to partner and work within out multi-cultural communities and strengthen efforts to close the achievement gap
 - Continue to work closely with the Mayor's Second Shift Initiative, including providing opportunities for youth to connect with community, positive adult role models and mentors, all factors in students' academic development
 - Whenever possible incorporate curriculum which develops parents' interaction skills with their children, and facilitates better understanding of their role as "primary educator" in support of K-12 academic development.
- Raise expectations for accountability
 - Implement evaluation process for programs and services, making sure stated program objectives align with Board of Education Strategic Goals;
 - Reflect on CEAC's efficiency and effectiveness of practices
- Accelerate the path to excellence:
 - Integrate best practice principles in delivery of all programs and services, including Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Workforce Education, Adults with Special Needs and Adult and Youth Enrichment Programs.
 - Advocacy for research-based programs and services that represent best practices
- Align resource allocation to district priorities:
 - Make appropriate recommendations to align resources to district priorities
- Strengthen relationships with community and families:
 - Recruit and strengthen the involvement and representation of the community on the area advisory councils and CEAC. Ensure that representation reflects the community we serve
 - Continue to support the work of the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium (SPCLC) (a partnership of more than a dozen community-based non-profits) and the Saint Paul Public Library to provide a comprehensive, citywide approach to Adult Basic Education (ABE)
 - Continue to work in partnership with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department to deliver community programs
 - Ensure support of after-school and out-of school youth program resources. Research shows that quality out-of-school education programs increase school attendance, improve learning, improve school environment, and add to the quality of communities
 - Provide lifelong learning opportunities for all members of the community
 - Provide the means for ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse community groups to collaborate with Saint Paul Public Schools for the good of the whole community.

Ms. Yungers then went on to outline the Council's priority goals for 2007-2008 and encouraged Board support of them.

- Strengthen communication between CEAC, the Board of Education and the Superintendent in order to align goals and objectives with the Strategic Plan
- Implement Restructuring Plan for CEAC, including continued recruitment of members to fill representation gaps, restructure meeting format to be more inclusive of representatives from area advisory councils and conduct advocacy training for members in our efforts to meet the needs of the community.
- Support an evaluation process of programs and services to ensure stated program objectives align with Board of Education Strategic Goals; and make appropriate recommendations to align resources to meet stated outcomes.
- Continued support of programs and services based on evidence-based best research and best practices
- Engage as advocates in the legislative process in an effort to align State resources with District priorities.

Specific support was requested for:

- Continue to provide forum for issues and/or recommendations and improve communication between CEAC, Board of Education and the Superintendent in order to meet District strategic outcomes
- Support and restructuring plan for CEAC in their efforts to expand representation to the broader community
- Continue to support, through the School Board Legislative platform, community education programs for improved educational and economic outcomes for youth and families
- Involve CEAC in the selection process for its new leadership (Executive Director). Ensure leadership of Community Education Department is well positioned within restructuring of district-wide administration to have direct access to the Superintendent.

The presentation was closed with the statement community education is a partner in the community and its model addresses the whole child and content of the family. Working within the concept of a seamless day the program provides education, recreation and cultural opportunities for students to use in and out of school with safe places to connect with the community, positive role models and mentors.

Discussion included the following areas:

- Creating evaluation systems to look at alignment of programs
- The possible availability of District staff resources to help with looking at evaluation systems
- What new collaboratives are coming on board to engage at different levels than have previously been utilized
- New resources going to post secondary transitions
- The new Blast Off to Kindergarten Program
- The program Reducing At Risk Issue for Ramsey County Youth
- Funding issues facing various collaboratives and councils

MOTION: Ms. Street-Stewart moved acceptance of the report with thanks. Motion seconded by Mr. Brodrick.

Motion passed.

2. SPPS Special Education Advisory Council Report (SEAC)

Superintendent Carstarphen introduced the year-end report from the Special Education Advisory Council which involved reviewing the status of students identified as having

emotional behavior disorders (EBD) as well as programs and services provided by the District.

The co-chairs, Catherine Wright and Maya Nishikawa opened the report with the statement that according to Minnesota Statute 125A.24, school districts must have a Special Education Advisory Council that is incorporated into the district's special education system plan. The purpose of the committee is to:

- Increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in district policymaking and decision making
- Advise the district on policy and decisions affecting and/or related to special education
- Recommend priorities to be addressed by the district in their annual and long-term strategic plan
- Support the needs of students with disabilities regarding the special education budget at school committee meetings.

They stated over the past year the SPPS District Special Education Advisory Council has been active in addressing:

- The various needs associated with student identified as having emotional behavioral disorders (EBD)
- The impact of implementing a new statewide alternate assessment for students on Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs)
- Follow-up after the departure of the Director of Special Education, Pat Fernandez.

During monthly meetings over the course of the year, the Council focused on the following question: "What critical issues need to be addressed for children with disabilities during this funding crisis when the pressure of increasing standardized test scores exists? The most critical issue identified by SEAC was the availability of and support for the least restrictive environment for children qualifying as EBD.

They indicated the Council is thrilled about and supports the focus on a strong partnership between Special Education and General Education. The Council prioritized its findings under the District goals:

- Ensure high achievement for all students
In reviewing the 2006 Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) report conducted annually by the Department of Special Education, SEAC heard how the District was faring around the identification of students with EBD.
 - SEAC members learned that African American males are over represented in the EBD population
 - The Council became aware that there is a spike in referrals for EBD evaluations during the middle school years
 - Data also show that many students, already qualified as EBD, enter the District from out of district placements.
- Raise expectations for accountability and Accelerate the path to excellence
Then SEAC studied the special education referral process:
 - It was noted that the State rules governing emotional behavioral disorders are written in an ambiguous way. This may result in a categorical label which qualifies students for service despite lack of clear criteria
 - In discussion of national EBD trends, one way to reduce the number of students in the EBD category is to work closely with general education teachers and ensure that pre-referral techniques are implemented in the classrooms before students are referred for special education. This has not been happening consistently in our district until this year.
 - SEAC looks forward to the results of the district-wide data on pre-referral interventions as it becomes available.

The referral process led the Council to a review of the services provided through special education for children qualifying as EBD.

- SEAC members were impressed by the array of services available to children qualifying for EBD, especially how the District is family-focused beginning with special education services from early childhood on up to the juvenile detention center and Boys Totem Town.
- The Council members were also impressed by the District's child-centered focus. The district is not only meeting the students' educational needs but also reinforces individual mental health needs through integrated special education/mental health programs.
- Strengthen relationships with community and families
 - The results of this study indicate there is a disconnect between general and special education teachers which includes a gap in knowledge about the needs of students who have been identified as EBD
 - In addition, parents of children on Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and IEPs have multiple experiences across the various district programs that can assist in strengthening and supporting special education.

Based on this year of study and documentation of district data, SEAC offered the following recommendations to the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education:

- Identify specific ways to strengthen the communication between Special Education and General Education
- Emphasize the importance of implementing two effective research based pre-referral interventions, as they will have the strongest impact on reducing the over identification of African American males in the EBD population
- Continue to develop and support the special education continuum of services that both meet the students' educational and mental health needs, as Saint Paul Public Schools is truly a leader in integrating services to meet the whole range of needs of students
- Support the least restrictive environment for all special education students as it impacts the space, the curriculum and the training of teachers
- Expedite the selection of the next Director of Special Education and invite parent participation in the process.

Discussion included the following areas:

- How findings and recommendations tie to push-in model, integrated multi-grade model
- Pre-referral process
- The exchange of information, collaborative work with parents and District to address issues
- Recognizing the availability of a continuum of services what happens when students get into middle and secondary schools
- Is there greater opportunity now to incorporate experiences bringing parents together (ECFE model) to assist and support parents on how to deal with issues; an opportunity to learn from parents experiencing the same problems and issues
- Connections with Children's Mental Health Collaborative
- Bridging various other services and areas (Power of Relationship, River East, Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative – wrap around services, communicate positively with parents)
- Positive behavior support programs emphasizing whole school initiative – educate to be successful
- Feeling among parents that a stigma attaches to children in special ed, may not fit in but not wanted in the general educational system
- Ways to strengthen communication between special ed and general ed
- Special education reform and new pilot projects and restructure/movement of other programs

- Giving the right professional development and right classroom structure to benefit kids and instruction; right supports in classroom to engage kids in regular ed classroom with same expectations along with right supports
- Empowerment training
- Dimensionality – is it working, in what way and how

MOTION: **Mr. Brodrick moved acceptance of the report with appreciation, seconded by Ms. Carroll.**

Motion Passed.

3. Policy Update

The Superintendent reviewed the reason policies are being brought forward for repeal at this meeting. She then turned the meeting over to Director Brodrick for his report.

Mr. Brodrick gave a brief overview of the process as it has progressed to date. He cautioned the Board against micro-managing policies brought forward for its consideration as that will prolong the process or stall it completely. He noted the Board will not relinquish its legal responsibility to oversee the revisions, provide input as necessary and in some cases be directly involved in the development of certain policies. He then moved on to a PowerPoint presentation which included:

- Why the review is being done
- The process
- The role of the policy team
- Pertinent definitions
- What policy is not
- Common language and style dangers
- Why the finished policies will look and feel different from current ones
- Expected outcomes
- Next steps
- Work to be accomplished at this meeting
- Suggest timeline

The Board was asked to focus particularly on the “next steps” slide as they will need to provide direction to administration on how the process is to proceed through presentation and approvals. This decision will have to be made soon.

MOTION: Ms. Carroll moved approval of the recommended action to repeal the policies and/or portion of policies listed on the chart below. The motion was seconded by Ms. Street-Stewart.

Discussion revolved around:

- How users will be able to find pertinent statutory pieces if they are not in the Policy Book. It was suggested that the web site be used to keep a chart of topics with statutory references and that a hyper-link to the appropriate piece of legislation be made.
- Specific reasons Policy 104.00 was being repealed were noted (SPPS is system of choice and this limits the District’s ability to be creative in a very diverse school district and, this information is better dealt with in another way)
- 204.00 paragraph is being deleted as it refers to committees which are dealt with elsewhere.
- Staff was instructed that the minutes of the policy actions be carefully documented so there is a record of what has been done.

Mr. Brodrick then reviewed each policy as listed on the chart and Board members indicated their agreement with each item.

- It was noted the Board needs to discuss the issue of “committees” at some point
- Staff was instructed to check on the issue of location of Board meetings – is restriction on location defined in law?
- Staff was instructed to consider whether the legal/statutory references under quorum should be deleted and if not, why not
- What will be supplied to Board members and what Board members can purchase needs to be dealt with but not necessarily in policy.

RESTATEMENT OF MOTION:

Ms. Carroll moved approval of the recommended action to repeal the policies and/or portion of policies listed on the chart below. The motion was seconded by Ms. Street-Stewart.

Motion Passed.

Board of Education Policies Obsolete and/or Unnecessary		
Policy No.	Title	Action
101.00	Legal Status, School District	Deleted – Defined in law
102.00	Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action – Student Assignment, Placement and Transfer	Deleted - Obsolete
104.00	School District Organization	Deleted – Obsolete
201.00	Board – Legal Status	Deleted – Defined in law
202.00	Board/Composition, Officers, Committees, Procedures for Committee Assignments and Selection of Committee Chairs	Delete – Obsolete
204.00	Board Meeting – Quorums	Delete sentence – “A quorum of all committee meetings shall consist of at least two of the designated members of the respective committee.”
214.00	Board – Equipment and Supplies	Delete – Obsolete
216.00	Board – Removal from Office	Delete – Defined in law
302.00	Superintendent/Compensation and Benefits	Delete Sentence – “The board shall annually set the Superintendent’s compensation and benefits by contract approved by four affirmative votes.” And delete paragraph dealing with severance pay.
307.00	Attorney	Delete -- Obsolete

III. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Street-Stewart moved the meeting adjourn, seconded by Ms. Carroll.

Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Polsfuss
Secretary to the Board of Education