



## **MINUTES**

### **Board of Education Operations Work Group Meeting – September 19, 2016**

#### **Ed Hughes, Chair**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Burke, Michael Flores, James Howard, Ed Hughes, Dean Loumos, TJ Mertz, Anna Moffit  
MEMBERS ABSENT: None  
STUDENT REP. PRESENT: Ameya Sanyal  
STAFF PRESENT: Mike Barry, Jen Cheatham, Alex Fralin, Nancy Hanks, Deirdre Hargrove-Krieghoff, Zachary Herrmann, Karen Kepler, Lisa Kvistad, Dylan Pauly, Kelly Ruppel, Rachel Strauch-Nelson, Barbara Osborn—Recording Secretary

*Board action in italics (all materials provided via [BoardDocs](#))*

#### **1. Call to Order**

**Action:** *Chairperson Ed Hughes called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.*

#### **2. Public Appearances** (Registration slips are attached to the meeting in BoardDocs.)

F. L. Miller supported the Isthmus Montessori Academy (IMA) proposal and their efforts to be part of the MMSD as an innovative and strategic alternative. He was concerned that if the proposal were turned down for financial reasons that the IMA would seek independent authorization.

Brittany Wilson, teacher at IMA, spoke to diversity in population and in learning as one community using the Montessori method of teaching.

Carmon Caire, principal of IMA, spoke to the strength of her staff and getting to know each child and building community with families. She looked forward to their work becoming more impactful once the school becomes public and to access more diverse opportunities within education. She was proud of their effort to become part of the MMSD and to be at the forefront of inclusion and opportunity.

There were no written registrations.

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

**Action:** *It was moved by Ed Hughes and seconded by TJ Mertz to approve the minutes from the Operations Work Group meeting dated August 8, 2016. Student advisory vote was aye. Motion unanimously carried.*

#### **4. Tax Incremental District (TID) #25 and #41**

**Proposed action item for September 26, 2016 Regular Board meeting**

(Documents within BoardDocs: background/recommendation memo, TID #41 Donor Plan, and TID #25 Project Plan Amendment)

Staff: Mike Barry, Assistant Superintendent—Business Services

##### Staff Overview:

- TID #41:
  - Recommended support for the amendment to TID #41 as a donor TID for TID #40.
  - TID 40 has no development around it to pay off the remaining balance, impacted by Oscar Meyer building closure, makes sense to pay off and close using funds from a successful TID.
  - Does not put TID 41 in jeopardy
  - It was surmised that the City will probably make a series of moves around the Oscar Meyer plant and clearing the books is on the path to creating new solutions.

- TID #25:
  - Created about 25 years ago. City wanted to amend and expand it financially. Funds would be used to pay for construction of a large parking ramp in the Judge Doyle Square project. City believes it is a necessary prerequisite to whatever else may follow.
  - Recommended that, having agreed to the promissory note, the district should support the steps that would lead to that surplus benefit. Amending TID 25 sets in motion other developments.
  - This proposal also corrects one piece in the TID 25 borrowing flaw within the city process where they expended almost \$20 million more than the TID budget and without the approval of the Joint Review Board. This put the city in the awkward position of asking the MMSD to grant retroactive approval to amend the budget after the fact to correct for this series of decisions made some time ago. There would be a single action to the Joint Review Board. Administration recommended supporting the amendment to TID 25 and the related budget increase and also to go on record through written correspondence with the city to say that we understand the need for the corrective action but did not like being put in this situation and that the city should put the necessary steps in place to make sure that this kind of thing does not happen in the future.

Board Member Topics--Questions/Comments:

- TID 40:
  - Does not include all of Oscar Meyer, but the plan is to include a new TID that does include it as one of the reasons for the foreclosure. City wants long-term investments there.
- TID 25:
  - District has an obligation and should be fair.
  - Want to formally request an explanation for how this happened in some detail and request some accounting from the city treasurer's office that this was known and that this money has been paid back before the Board votes on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Other taxing entities agree that they want this assurance as well.
  - Status of MMSD TID 25 loan:
    - Borrowing has closed. MMSD has a firm agreement in the form of a draw. Administration will bring annual draw requests to the board in about 4-5 annual installments as part of the October budget finalization process. The first one is heading for the Operations Work Group in October.
  - Communication from the city will better inform the vote on the 26<sup>th</sup> and allows the Board to express concerns and to get information. Also brings transparency to the decision making about what happened back then. Money was devoted to a legitimate TID purpose. Mistakes were procedural.
- Staff will come back with these items for the September Regular meeting.

**Follow up:**

- Request a letter of explanation from the City Treasurer's Office and some assurance that this will not happen going forward.

**5. Isthmus Montessori Initial Charter Proposal**

**Discussion Item**

(Documents within BoardDocs: proposal, background/recommendation memo, initial application reviewers' evaluation, budget key factors analysis)

Staff: Superintendent Cheatham; Kelly Ruppel-Chief of Staff

Staff Comments:

- Discussion of initial proposal to establish a public Montessori option in the MMSD.
- Staff has been working harder at being better charter authorizers internally—new application process was created for existing and potential charters, including consulting work, a review process and a detailed rubric in a number of areas to help decide about expectations as a step in the right direction.
- Generally, charters submit their proposal, the internal team uses the rubric to score it, and anything not meeting expectations can be adjusted and re-submitted. This is followed by a full review of the proposal before forwarding to the Board. If any result of that does not meet expectations, the administration would not

recommend a full proposal. This does not mean that the proposal does not have merit but that the administration cannot put its stamp of approval on it.

- Administration was seeking Board guidance about whether or not a full proposal should be invited and what the Board would like to see in a full proposal.
- An overview of the administrative analysis of the initial proposal was presented, including strengths, questions that were addressed, questions going forward for a full proposal, and main concerns.
  - If moved forward by the Board, a full proposal would be due in January and the full rubric would come into play.
  - There were two budget documents provided; one within the proposal and a district budget analysis to initially determine impact on the district tax levy, revenues and expenditures outside of what IMA would be producing.
  - Reviewed strengths and questions; mostly around curriculum and instruction and, in particular, the high school model, service to students with special needs, English language learners, and the planned support structure. If this proposal were to move forward, these were the three areas the administration would like to see strengthened.
  - Overall, the proposal did not meet expectations largely due to budget around the high school structure, staffing ratios, recruitment and busing, so the administration did not rate them as meets expectations.
  - Recognized the hard work on both sides.

Carrie Marlette and Melissa Droessler, Co-Heads of School, were asked to join in the discussion.

#### Board Member Topics--Questions/Comments:

- How proposers arrived at the academic area:
  - Committed to working with the district on a two-pronged approach—becoming more accessible to families who are priced out of Montessori and bolstering MMSD as a competitor—ideally would be accessible to the whole district but more likely one-third to one-half. They would work with the district around flexible busing start times.
- Funding sources, current debt picture and annual budget, including facilities costs.
- Strong point is the need to know the financial impact on existing MMSD schools and on taxpayers for adding this school as an option including transportation, build-out, staffing, debt, etc.
- Enrollment questions—commitment to students on free or reduced lunch status, what the 3K model would look like and how it would be paid for, inclusion of ELL and students with disabilities that is reflective of the MMSD student body.
- Confirmed that state cannot authorize an instrumentality.
- Attendance and recruitment within the plan—there are mixed messages in the plan where it states that the student body needs to reflect the district population but later talks about pulling students from open enrollment, home-schooling, or private populations. Unsure about what population is being targeted.
- Specific supports for students with disabilities in terms of teacher licensing and the number of staffing allocations to meet the district percentage.
  - Responses indicated that every district approaches these supports differently; that the proposal contains just one model, and that they would work with the district on this to meet children’s needs, and also touched on how the Montessori method itself supports students with disabilities and could reduce the number of IEPs, particularly if students enter early and retention is increased.
  - Current examples were provided for how supports and interventions are done for students with special needs and ELLs.
  - Did not see anything in the plan around occupational therapy/physical therapy, speech and language, or multi-sensory supports. Need accountability under IDEA. Response was that it was discussed with administration and that this could be worked in but maybe not in the first year. Did talk about the use of Title funds but were cautioned about using that in the first year. They were asked to break out more specifically how the teachers would be allocated in the first year. There were some complications noted around becoming a Title school.
- Financial tension exists around those students who would be initially recruited and the impact on MMSD’s equalization aid while breaking down barriers to access.
- How the referendum would impact consideration of this proposal.
- Looking at finances in more detail without taking on too much.

- Views on high school with an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.
- Focusing just on lower grades using the Montessori method.
- Request was made to have the Board vote at the September 26 Regular meeting.
- Main issues for the administration were around the high school aspect and transportation. Suggested setting some parameters and maybe setting aside the high school program for now and voting to invite a full proposal.
- Proposers noted the success of the IB high school program, adding 3K as a natural marriage, the Montessori focus on independent learning and student-driven learning and community service at the adolescent level, and their experience with the IB program. Noted that a high school could still exist in Madison but would remain a private high school. They have families who are interested and IMA wants to provide them with that opportunity.
- Issues remain about the financial impact. Could support something that works financially.
- There were some questions around the number of high school students to be served by year and class size.
- Proposers expressed their appreciation to the district for their work throughout this process and how it has been so much more helpful than in previous years.
- There were some additional comments about drawing from the Franklin/Randall attendance area and transportation issues. Proposers responded that they are located on a bus line, that they have parent contracts, but would need one bus route from the district.
- Proposers reiterated their willingness to be flexible on many aspects of the plan.
- Timeline—a full proposal would need to be submitted to the administration in December. It would then go to the Operations Work Group in January with a vote either at the end of January or in February in order to start in the 2017/18 school year.
- Administration will include the item on the September 26 Regular meeting agenda and asked that any other questions be submitted as soon as possible in advance of the Monday vote.

## 6. Adjournment

**Action:** *It was moved by Ed Hughes and seconded by Mary Burke to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m. Motion unanimously carried.*

bjo