Saint Peter Public Schools

Regular School Board Meeting Minutes

These minutes have not been board approved

Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2026
Location: Saint Peter City Hall
Attendance:

- Members Present: Rita Rassbach, Ken Rossow, Tracy Stuewe, Bill Kautt, Drew Dixon and Kate Martens
- Members Absent: Charlie Potts
- Others Present: Ytive Prafke, Jana Sykora, Darin Doherty, Jessica Buttell, Annette Engeldinger, Seth Putz, Jon Graff, Kimberley Deming and members of the public.

1. Call to Order & Agenda Approval

- **Call to Order:** Vice Chair Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.
- **Approval of Agenda:** Member Kautt moved to amend the proposed agenda to insert the Approval of the Presentation of an Honorary Diploma for a Deceased Veteran immediately following the Approval of the District Strategic Plan for 2026–2027. The motion was seconded by Member Stuewe and carried. Member Martens moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Member Kautt and carried unanimously by members present.

2. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda items listed below were approved on a motion by Rossow, seconded by Rassbach. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

- **Minutes:**
  - Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of September 16, 2026.
  - Approval of the Study Session Minutes of September 23, 2026.
  - Approval of the Study Session Minutes of October 7, 2026.
- **Bills & Wire Transfers:**
  - Approval of payments totaling ($6,303,245.73) for September 2026.
- **Personnel Changes:**
  - Hiring: Approval of the hiring of Forrest Olson, Alyona Viznyuk, Olivia Strandquist, Ruth Stark, Joseph Delacruz, Alex Kane and Isaac Alger
  - Resignations: Acceptance of resignations from Alishia Pete, Dominic Jannette, Bridget Campbell, Ellen Fischenich, Isabella Shelton, Steven Sassenberg, Roxana Kennedy and Rebecca Thurston
  - Terminations: Approval of the termination of Andrew Vollmer

3. Action Items

- **Student Spotlight** - Edison “Eddie” Zender is a hardworking and dedicated leader in Mrs. Friedrich's 4th-grade class. He excels at tackling tough problems and helping his peers succeed. As a quiet role model, he regularly encourages classmates to keep trying until they master difficult concepts, knowing firsthand how rewarding it feels to get the right answer. Outside of school, Eddie enjoys relaxing, swimming, fishing, and taking naps.

- **Student Council Report** - Student council co-chairs Gabrielle DeVos, Ellie Graham and Lyric Ruble presented an update on student council activities and annual events. Highlights included Homecoming festivities, such as the powder puff game, parade, and the pre-game crowning of the homecoming king and queen. Also mentioned were seasonal traditions like Thanksgiving and St. Patrick’s Day bingo, Senior Sunrise, Senior Sunset and Snow Week.

- **Approval of a Resolution Accepting Gifts, Donations and Grants:** A motion was made by Kautt, seconded by Rossow, to approve a resolution accepting donations from the Saint Peter Booster Club, Sarah Riviere, Keeley’s Landscape Supply of Saint Peter, and the Good Neighbor Diversity Council. Following a roll call vote, the resolution passed 6-0 (with 1 member absent).
    - *Voting Yes:* Rassbach, Rossow, Stuewe, Dixon, Kautt and Martens
    - *Voting No*: None
    - *Absent:* Charlie Potts

- **Approval of Superintendent Goals for 2026-2027:** Superintendent Graff presented his proposed goals for the 2026-2027 school year, which were developed in collaboration with Board Chair Potts. These goal areas will be incorporated into the evaluation framework for the school year. Motion by Stuewe, seconded by Martens, to approve Superintendent Graff’s 2026-2027 goals as presented. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

- **Approval of the District Strategic Plan for 2026-2027:** On an annual basis, the board reviews the broad goals and directions of the school district. The board engaged in an in-depth review of district and building-level strategic plans at its October 7 study session. An overview of the district’s strategic initiatives were presented for formal approval. Moved by Rossow, seconded by Rassbach, to approve the District Strategic Plan for the 2026-2027 school year. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

- **Approval of the Presentation of an Honorary Diploma for a Deceased Veteran** - Member Kautt moved to approve the presentation of an honorary diploma to the family of Frederick Joseph Brenke at the Saint Peter High School Veterans Day Program on November 11, 2026. A new Minnesota law went into effect August 1, 2026, that recognizes veterans who were unable to finish high school while serving in the Korean or Vietnam wars. A veteran may request a diploma on their own behalf, or a family member may make a posthumous request on behalf of a deceased veteran or service member. The motion was seconded by Member Stuewe and carried unanimously by members present.

- **Approval of Gymnastics Coop with Cleveland Public Schools:** Cleveland Public School District submitted a formal request to join the Gymnastics Cooperative currently comprising Saint Peter and LeSueur-Henderson Public Schools. Under Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) regulations, adding a new district requires dissolving the existing cooperative and submitting a new Application for Cooperative Sponsorship. The request was reviewed by the district’s MSHSL Advisory Committee and the School Board’s Education Committee in accordance with the district’s cooperative sponsorship checklist.

Motion made by Stuewe, seconded by Martens to approve the dissolution of the Gymnastics Cooperative Sponsorship between Saint Peter and LeSueur-Henderson Public Schools. Following a roll call vote, the recommendation passed 6-0 (with 1 member absent).

- *Voting Yes:* Rassbach, Rossow, Stuewe, Dixon, Kautt and Martens
- *Voting No*: None
- *Absent:* Charlie Potts

Motion made by Stuewe, seconded by Martens to approve the application to create a Gymnastics Cooperative Sponsorship between Saint Peter, LeSueur-Henderson and Cleveland Public Schools. Following a roll call vote, the recommendation passed 6-0 (with 1 member absent).

- *Voting Yes:* Rassbach, Rossow, Stuewe, Dixon, Kautt and Martens
- *Voting No*: None
- *Absent:* Charlie Potts

- **Consider Approval of Contracting with MSBA for Strategic Planning Services:** The School Board and Administrative Team are preparing to launch a comprehensive strategic planning process. Following a presentation of services by the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) at the September study session, the Education Committee reviewed project needs during its October meeting and recommended partnering with MSBA to facilitate the process. Superintendent Graff and the Education Committee presented the rationale for this partnership. Motion by Martens, seconded by Stuewe, to approve entering into a strategic planning agreement with the MSBA as presented. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, except Kautt, who abstained due to his prior employment history with MSBA.

- **Policies for Approval with a Second Reading:** The board completed a second reading of proposed revisions to Policies 524 (Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety), 613 (Graduation Requirements), and 621 (Literacy and the Read Act). Revisions to Policy 524 address recent legislation prohibiting nonconsensual AI-generated media ("nudification"), while updates to Policy 613 reflect the current district Assessment Coordinator, revised legislative references, and provisions for awarding diplomas to veterans. Policy 621 has been updated to align with current READ Act requirements. Moved by Martens, seconded by Rassbach, to approve Policies 524, 613, and 621 with a second reading as presented. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

- **Policies for Approval in a Single Reading**: As part of the district's regular review cycle, Superintendent Graff presented proposed revisions to Policies 624 (Online Instruction), 709 (Student Transportation Safety Policy), and 806 (Crisis Management Policy). Key updates include technical adjustments, legal reference cleanups, updated resource links, a refined definition of "School Bus," and additional language regarding required bus safety equipment. Because the changes are minor and alignment-focused, approval with a single-reading was recommended. Moved by Martens, seconded by Rassbach, to approve Policies 624, 709, and 806 on first and final reading. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

- **Approval of a Resolution Supporting the District's Application for a Grant from the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Foundation:** The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Foundation provides annual grant opportunities to school districts to help reduce participation fees for athletic and fine arts programs for students with financial need. To complete the application process, the MSHSL Foundation requires a formal governing board resolution supporting the grant request. Motion by Stuewe, seconded by Rossow, to adopt the Resolution Supporting the Grant Application

to the MSHSL Foundation as presented. Following a roll call vote, the resolution passed 6-0 (with 1 member absent).
    - *Voting Yes:* Rassbach, Rossow, Stuewe, Dixon, Kautt and Martens
    - *Voting No*: None
    - *Absent:* Charlie Potts

- **Approval of 2026-2027 Assessment Calendar:** In accordance with Policy 616 (School District System Accountability), the board conducts an annual review and approval of the district assessment calendar. Following detailed reviews during the September study session and the October Education Committee meeting, formal approval of the calendar for the 2026–2027 school year was recommended. Motion by Rossow, seconded by Rassbach, to approve the 2026–2027 District Assessment Calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

4. Information Items

- Superintendent Graff presented the Board with the first reading of proposed revisions to Policy 511 (Student Fundraising). Due to the significance of the language changes within this policy, the Policy Committee wanted to provide the Board an opportunity to review the recommended updates prior to formal approval.

- Pursuant to School Board Policy 511 (Student Fundraising), the superintendent must share annual fundraising plans with the school board and the public. Building principals provided updates regarding the fundraising plans for their respective buildings.

5. Reports

- **Special Programs Administrator:**
    - Preschoolers enjoyed their field trip to the fire department
    - Indigenous Peoples' Day activities were incorporated into classes
- **South Elementary:**
    - Indigenous Peoples' Day activities were incorporated into classes
    - October 30 is the district's first early release day
    - K-8 conferences will take place on November 12, 13 and 17
    - An All Student Celebration will take place November 24
- **OLA**
    - Indigenous Peoples' Day activities were incorporated into classes
- **North Elementary**
    - Walk and Roll to School event took place on October 7
    - 3rd and 4th graders attended the Science and Nature Conference at Gustavus on October 20
    - Donations are being accepted for the 10th year of Quinn's Closet
- **Saint Peter Middle School:**
    - Walk and Roll to School event took place on October 7
    - 5th graders attended History Fest on October 8
    - Indigenous Peoples' Day activities were incorporated into classes
    - 5th and 6th graders attended the Science and Nature Conference at Gustavus on October 20
- **Saint Peter High School**:
    - A fall sports update was provided
    - The Fall Musical, The Drowsy Chaperone, will be performed on November 19, 20, 21 and 22

- **Superintendent of Schools:**
    - Acknowledged Nathan Hughes, custodial staff, who was recognized by the Minnesota Education Facilities Management Professionals Association (MASMS) with the Facilities Award of Excellence
- **Operations and Maintenance Director:**
    - Provided a Mend the Middle update
- **Around the Table Updates:**
    - Rassbach - thanked student council reps for attending
    - Rossow - thanked student council reps for attending
    - Stuewe - congratulated fall sports athletes
    - Martens - thanked those who attended the 4th Annual Indigenous Peoples' Day Walk, provided a reminder about the NAPAC Ribbon Sweatshirt Sewing event on October 24, and discussed the Permanent School Funding Amendment
- **Board Committee Updates:** No additional updates

6. Upcoming Meetings

- **Policy Committee Meeting:** November 10, 2026, at 4:00 PM (DO)
- **Education Committee Meeting:** November 12, 2026, at 1:00 PM (DO)
- **Business Committee Meeting:** November 12, 2026, at 2:30 PM (DO)
- **Regular School Board Meeting:** November 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM (City Hall)

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Stuewe, seconded by Kautt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Date Approved: November 18, 2026

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Kate Martens, Board Clerk