

MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
St. Cloud Area School District 742
St. Cloud, Minnesota
February 18, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Education of St. Cloud Area School District 742 was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at the District Administration Office, 1201 South 2nd Street, Waite Park, Minnesota.

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Shannon Haws with the following Board Members present: Gina Acevedo, Scott Andreasen, Natalie Copeland (Ringsmuth), Zach Dorholt, Diana Fenton, Shannon Haws, Heather Weems.

I. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Moved by Andreasen, seconded by Copeland to approve the Board Meeting agenda.

On roll call, the following voted “aye”: Acevedo, Andreasen, Copeland, Dorholt, Fenton, Haws, Weems. Motion carried.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Board member Copeland to remove Item D - Acceptance of Grant Awards and Donations from the Consent Agenda and she will recuse herself from the vote.

Moved by Andreasen, seconded by Fenton to approve Consent Agenda Items A-C and E-G.

Approve Board Meeting minutes from January 5, 2026, January 7, 2026 and January 21, 2026.

Approve Bills and other Financial Transactions in the grand total amount of \$2,595,934.77.

Approve the following personnel changes pursuant to relevant laws and appropriate provisions of negotiated agreements between the Board of Education and exclusive representatives. For new hires, the indicated rates are consistent with current negotiated agreements and Board approved rates of pay. All rates/salaries listed do not include fringe benefits.

LICENSED STAFF

Extended Contract

Susan Iverson, Family and Consumer Science Teacher, Tech High School, effective December 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026, Lane MA, Pay Level 7 (.2 FTE of a full-time contract). Ms. Iverson's salary for this assignment will be \$4,231.54.

Scott Skaalerud, SPED Special Learning Disability Teacher, Kennedy Community School, effective October 6, 2025 through November 21, 2025, Lane MA+10, Pay Level 10 (.3 FTE of a full-time contract). Mr. Skaalerud's salary for this assignment will be \$4,196.66.

Samuel Nordby, Counselor, McKinley-ALC, effective for the 2025-2026 school year, Lane MA+40, Pay Level 11 (10 days of a full-time contract). Mr. Nordby's salary for this assignment will be \$4,884.43.

Samuel Nordby, Counselor, McKinley-ALC, effective January 5, 2026 through February 13, 2026, Lane MA+40, Pay Level 11 (.2 of a full-time contract). Mr. Nordby's salary for this assignment will be \$2,832.97.

Megan Taylor, Nurse, Quarryview Education Center, effective January 5, 2026 through March 31, 2026, Lane MA+10, Pay Level 7 (.2 FTE of a full-time contract). Ms. Taylor's salary for this assignment will be \$4,361.40.

Megan Taylor, Nurse, Oak Hill Community School, effective January 12, 2026 through March 31, 2026, Lane MA+10, Pay Level 7 (.1 FTE of a full-time contract). Ms. Taylor's salary for this assignment will be \$1,985.99.

Extended Contract Correction

Lisa Gapinski, Physical Therapist, District Wide, effective August 25, 2025 through February 27, 2026, Lane MA+40, Pay Level 11 (.4 FTE of a full-time contract). Ms. Gapinski's salary for this assignment will be \$24,129.09.

Leave of Absence

Jon Benson, Social Studies Teacher, South Junior High School, effective January 13, 2026 through January 23, 2026.

Janella Finkbeiner, Early Childhood Teacher, Oak Hill Community School, effective January 5, 2026 through January 21, 2026.

Katherine Kruger, Nurse, Talahi Community School, effective December 9, 2025 extended through March 25, 2026.

Kara Lund, Counselor, McKinley-ALC, effective January 5, 2026 extended through February 16, 2026.

NON-LICENSED STAFF

New Hire

Talita Helberg, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Madison Elementary School, effective January 29, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Gabrielle Bertram-Helmin, Early Childhood Instructional Paraeducator, Clearview Elementary School, effective February 9, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Zachary Yeager, Security Officer, Tech High School, effective February 9, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$19.00.

Chloe Schaeffer, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Discovery Community School, effective February 9, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Emily Sarff, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Apollo High School, effective February 9, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Nimo Nuur, Kitchen Helper, South Junior High School, effective February 3, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$16.49.

Amina Mohamud, Kitchen Helper, Tech High School, effective February 3, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$16.49.

Alexandria Homsombath, Clerical Class II (10-Month), North Junior High School, effective February 2, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$19.29.

Jose Cruz-Meza, EL/ESL Instructional Paraeducator, Apollo High School, effective February 2, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Jishari Tureaud, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, South Junior High School, effective February 9, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Hani Ali, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Talahi Community School, effective January 29, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Renee Johnson, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Madison Elementary School, effective February 2, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Lisa Nelson, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Discovery Community School, effective February 3, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Tinika Woolridge, Level 4 Advanced SPED Instructional Paraeducator, InStep, effective February 12, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$20.50.

Tanya Williamson, Clerical Class III (12-Month), North Junior High School, effective February 2, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$21.24.

Samira Jama, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Oak Hill Community School, effective February 3, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Ebony Roach, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Roosevelt Education Center/Journey, effective January 29, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$18.50.

Rehire

Erika Kuikka, Kitchen Helper, South Junior High School, effective February 11, 2026, at an hourly rate of \$16.49.

Leave of Absence

Donald Trebtoske, Groundskeeper, Apollo High School, effective March 6, 2026 through May 29, 2026.

Filis Adan, Early Childhood Instructional Paraeducator, Discovery Community School, effective February 2, 2026 through March 13, 2026.

Kimberly Wunderlich, Kitchen Helper, North Junior High School, effective February 26, 2026 through April 17, 2026.

Resignation

Lori Newman-Bible, Student Support Paraeducator, Westwood Elementary School, effective February 20, 2026.

Jeremiah Biggar, Student Support Paraeducator, Westwood Elementary School, effective February 10, 2026.

Denise Irish, Kitchen Helper, Oak Hill Community School, effective February 10, 2026.

Talita Helberg, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Madison Elementary School, effective January 29, 2026.

Sucado Ibrahim, SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Talahi Community School, effective January 9, 2026.

Termination

Emanuel Tarala, Level 4 Advanced SPED Instructional Paraeducator, Katherine Johnson Education Center, effective February 6, 2026.

Tasha Baldwin, Behavior Instruction Paraeducator, Kennedy Community School, effective January 29, 2026.

Award the bid for the Talahi Parking Lot Improvements to Knife River Corporation in the amount of \$608,326, based on low bid received meeting specifications.

Award the bids for the Multipurpose Athletic Facility Bid Package 2 as follows based on low bids received meeting specifications:

Contract 3A – Concrete – DRSC Concrete Inc. – \$829,845

Contract 3B – Precast Concrete – Tاراcon Precast – \$610,630

Contract 5A – Structural Steel (Material Only) – Ben’s Structural Fabrication – \$184,649

Contract 8C – Aluminum Storefront & Glazing – United Glass Inc. – \$86,013

Contract 9A – Gypsum Assemblies – Pinnacle Wall Systems – \$229,000

Contract 9D – Flooring – MCI, Inc. – \$375,900

Contract 21A – Fire Protection – Breth-Zenzen Fire Protection – \$172,060

Contract 22A – Mechanical – Lake Country Mechanical, Inc. – \$814,000 *

Contract 26A – Electrical – Design Electric Inc. – \$767,977

Contract 31A – Earthwork & Site Utilities – Joe’s Excavating – \$705,000

Contract 32A – Asphalt Paving – Knife River Corporation – \$187,700

Contract 32B – Fencing – Midwest Fence & Manufacturing Co. – \$243,050

*Low bid received was incomplete and did not include the complete scope of work in the bid. This bid is the lowest bid meeting specifications.

Approve entering into a contract with Turf Installation through the Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Contract – Sprinturf for the Multipurpose Athletic Facility in the amount of \$405,540 and Athletic Equipment through the Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Contract – H2I Group for the Multipurpose Athletic Facility in the amount of \$299,695.

On roll call, the following voted “aye”: Acevedo, Andreasen, Copeland, Dorholt, Fenton, Haws, Weems. Motion carried.

Moved by Fenton, seconded Andreasen to approve Consent Agenda Item D (Acceptance of Grant Awards and Donations).

Board member Copeland recused herself from this agenda item.

1. Donations to Tech High School:

- \$75 from Tech High School Alumni Association for Tech Athletics Program
- \$50 from Tech High School Alumni Association for Tech Band Program
- \$50 from Tech High School Alumni Association for Tech Choir Program
- \$1,000 from Kiwanis Club of St. Cloud on behalf of the Kiwanis Club of St. Cloud Scholarship
- \$1,500 from Ryan Alex on behalf of the Norm and Margaret Lindahl Memorial Scholarship

2. Donations to District 742:

- \$250 from District 742 LEAF for the Adopt-A-Classroom program for classroom supplies
- \$250 from District 742 LEAF for the Adopt-A-Classroom program for classroom supplies
- \$3,525 from UBS Financial Services Inc. for the Arise Program

On roll call, the following voted “aye”: Acevedo, Andreasen, Dorholt, Fenton, Haws, Weems. Abstained: Copeland. Motion carried.

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Early Childhood Update

Kate Flynn, Director of Early Childhood, and Barika Davis, Early Childhood Administrative Dean, provided an overview of the Early Childhood program with the goal to prepare every child to be successful when they enter kindergarten through high quality, inclusive and play-based early childhood learning experiences.

Early Childhood Family Education is the front door for families, offering parent-child classes and support. Our Preschool is a 4-Star Parent Aware rated program for 3- and 4-year-olds focusing on school success skills. Mandatory health and developmental screening identify needs early and connect families to resources.

Our Early Childhood Special Education Evaluation Team supports MN Child Find and Help Me Grow referrals in identifying young learners (0-5, not yet in kindergarten) in need of Special Education Intervention, year-round. They also partner with families to provide specialized instruction and coordination of services. Family support and coaching are at the center of this model.

As we plan ahead for the future, our focus remains on access and maintaining quality while increasing capacity and reducing wait lists. Community Partnerships deepen

collaboration with local organizations. Total preschool enrollment for 2025-26 is 767 students with solutions in place to remove 44 students off the wait list for 2026-27.

B. American Indian Education Update

Ayan Omar, Equity Services Director; Kip Perkins, American Indian Education Coordinator; and Misty Peterson, American Indian Education Cultural Liaison, provided an update on American Indian Education in District 742.

Per Minnesota Department of Education, our American Indian Education Program, with suggested input from the Native American Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC), designs programming and instructional activities that affirm the cultural identity of American Indian students and their families.

There are 234 American Indian students in the district with 109 in elementary and 125 in secondary. Elementary programming includes Ojibwe language games, weekly lunch groups at Talahi, Lincoln and Madison, 1:1 check in/check out, and recordings of three books that are in Ojibwe and Navajo for teachers to use in the classroom. Secondary programming includes upcoming college visits and a field trip to SCSU and manufacturing tours, along with weekly smudging and beading groups. We provide contracted tutors for subject help with assistance from SCSU, and host financial aid assistance. In 2025, 75% of American Indian seniors graduated with similar tracking for 2026.

Community events include Indigenous Peoples Day, an annual Powwow, Native American storytelling, round dance, drum making and other activities. Opportunities for educators include Minnesota Indian Education Association (MIEA) Conference and staff professional development.

IV. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

A. (DISCUSSION ITEM) – Native American Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC) Compliance Documentation

Ayan Omar, Equity Services Director, noted that a vital component of our American Indian Education program is the Native American Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC). In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.78, subdivision 1, any district with 10 or more American Indian students must establish a Parent Advisory Committee to ensure inclusivity for all Native Americans. NAPAC meets a minimum of twice per trimester with typically 8-10 parents and students in attendance. The committee serves a dual role of making recommendations to ensure district goals align with real needs of families and complying with the annual Resolution of Concurrence or Nonconcurrence, formally indicating whether the district is meeting the needs of the American Indian students. Their partnership allows us to be engaged and the opportunity to continue to improve. We are deeply grateful for their volunteer leadership.

Ms. Omar introduced NAPAC Chair Cora Chinander, NAPAC Vice Chair Lindsey Teller, and NAPAC Treasurer Ian Chinander as they each shared their Native American background and role with NAPAC. Ms. Cora Chinander began by acknowledging the past work the district has done to become more inclusive as well as the changes and positive things that have happened while watching the district grow. We are all here for the same goals and positive intentions to help empower our students and help them succeed. They also appreciate the district's core principle of clarity and NAPAC is committed to carrying that forward as we work together.

Ms. Lindsey Teller noted there are only two staff who work between 13 schools to assist 234 students and their families. While the goal of adding an additional staff person was to help balance working with students consistently, this has not occurred to contribute to the expected level.

Mr. Ian Chinander provided a statement before reading the vote by NAPAC. During his time in this role, he has been faced with numerous difficulties showing him that he needs to be here to create positive change for our students. He shared the perspective that NAPAC has been deprived of necessary information which diminishes the opportunity to show our students their culture and resources. Mr. Chinander then shared that NAPAC entered a vote of non-concurrence and provided the committee's recommendations. (1) compliance by providing the necessary information it needs to best serve the students and families they represent in consultation with the Curriculum Advisory Committee about the needs of American Indian children regarding testing and attendance data, graduation rates, funding balances, expended amounts of aid, and accurate student count information. (2) staff increase for a third person to have both cultural and education liaisons and create a leadership role in the chain of command, and (3) academic tutoring and academic incentives of a bead or smudging kit for students' success.

Board member Diana Fenton acknowledged the presentation by NAPAC and the vote of nonconcurrency. In her role as Chair of the Achievement, Integration and Equity Committee, she stated the district's work continues and the Board will draft a letter in response to the nonconcurrent vote that is due within 60 days.

B. (DISCUSSION ITEM) – 2026-2029 Achievement and Integration Plan Goals

Ayan Omar, Equity Services Director, provided an overview of the 2026-2029 Achievement and Integration Plan goals including key purposes and objectives: (1) pursue integration, (2) increase achievement, (3) create equitable opportunities, (4) staff development, and (5) targeted support.

The Multi-District Collaboration Council (MDCC) identifies shared goals and strategies to increase racial and economic integration across districts including Annandale, Foley, Becker, Holdingford, Rocori, Sauk Rapids/Rice, Monticello, Big

Lake, and Kimball. MDCC serves as a required community-based collaborative body that helps shape local A&I strategies for racially isolated districts.

Goal 1 – Graduation rates for students who identify as Black, Hispanic, American Indian, or two or more races will reach 85% by 2029.

Goal 2 – Increase Grade 3 MCA reading proficiency rates for our Black (non-EL), American Indian, Hispanic, and two or more races to 50% by 2029.

Goal 3 – Increase the representation of students of color in dual enrollment courses (AP, PSEO, college-in-schools) from 11% to 25% by 2029.

Goal 4 – Increase the racially diverse teacher workforce from 8.5% to 9.5% by May 2029.

C. (ACTION ITEM) – Review and Approval of Tentative Contract Agreements

Amy Skaalerud, Executive Director of Finance and Business Services, reviewed the details of the tentative agreement with the Paraeducators Unit of School District 742 for 2025-2027. The total two-year cost is 6.09%, which is within the budgeting parameters established by the School Board for settlement with this employee group.

Moved by Fenton, seconded by Copeland to approve the agreement between the Paraeducators Unit and St. Cloud Area School District 742 for 2025-2027.

On roll call, the following voted “aye”: Acevedo, Andreasen, Copeland, Dorholt, Fenton, Haws, Weems. Motion carried.

Board member Andreason requested an update on how the Paid Family Leave applications are going. Amy Skaalerud noted Administration will get back to him on this.

V. **REPORTS**

A. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Laurie Putnam shared there is much to celebrate as it is post-season time for so many of our sports and activities, and so many of our teams are headed to state and even national tournaments. We have nineteen Robotics teams competing at nationals, even at the elementary level, which is just amazing. As we speak, Girls’ Crush Hockey is playing at the state tournament in St. Paul vs. Breck, and this is the first time girls’ hockey has ever gone to a state tournament, so we wish them the very best of luck. In addition, we have state music competitions, both vocal and instrumental, two students competing at state in gymnastics, and so much more. Please go to our website to see all our amazing students as they perform and excel at their very best.

Donna Roper, our Director of Research, Assessment and Generative AI Integration, has been named the Minnesota Outstanding Central Office Leader by MASA, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. This award recognizes a leader who is willing to take risks and be a progressive change agent, setting high expectations for herself and others, which certainly defines Donna. She is very deserving of this honor, and we are grateful Donna is here at St. Cloud Area Schools working with and for us; always putting students first, front and center, exactly as it should be. Congratulations to Donna on all your hard work.

Dr. Putnam also gave a shout out that we have two semi-finalists for the Minnesota Teach of the Year: Devon Bowker, an extraordinary science teacher at Apollo High School, and Paige Janorschke, an amazing Grade 4 teacher at Lincoln. We know they both deserve to move on to the finals, but regardless of the outcome, our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to them.

Finally, congratulations to Paul Bates, who has been named to the Minnesota Tennis Coaches Hall of Fame. Paul is a long-standing teacher and coach for our district and, again, so deserving of these accolades. We are so proud to see him join that famous wall of exceptional coaches.

B. Board of Education Standing Committee Reports

1. Diana Fenton, Chair of the Achievement, Integration and Equity Committee, noted the committee met today and reviewed (1) American Indian Education program and NAPAC's nonconcurrent vote, and (2) Special Education Update which will be presented at a board meeting in March.
2. Heather Weems, Chair of the Board Finance Committee, noted the committee met on February 9, 2026, and discussed (1) Multipurpose Athletic Facility Joint Purchasing Contracts, (2) Apollo Project Budget Update and Timeline, and (3) Multipurpose Athletic Facility Exterior Signage, and (4) April Finance Committee meeting will meet on April 6 at 1:00 p.m.
3. Natalie Copeland, Chair of the Board Personnel Committee, noted the committee met on February 17, 2026, and discussed (1) 26-27 Staffing timelines, (2) Administrative structure for 26-27, (3) Business Services consultation, and (4) Executive contracts.

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Haws noted the March 11, 2026 Board Meeting/Work Session topics will include:

- Boys' Volleyball Co-op
- Approval of 2026-2029 Achievement and Integration Plan Goals
- Approval of Tentative Agreements

- Special Education Update
- Policy Readings
- Schools Update

VII. ADJOURNMENT OF BOARD MEETING

Moved by Copeland, seconded by Heather to adjourn the Board Meeting at 8:01 p.m. All Board members stated “aye”.

Heather Weems, Clerk

These minutes are not official until reviewed and approved by the Board of Education.