

Work Session of the St. Anthony-New
Brighton School Board
Tuesday, December 16, 2025 5:30pm School
Board Retirement Social, Work Session
6:00pm

MS/HS Media Center
3303 33rd Ave NE
Entry available at door #16
St. Anthony, MN 55418

Agenda

1. Board Retirement Social (5:30pm)
2. Call to Order School Board Work Session (6:00pm)
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
3. Approval of Agenda
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
4. Approval of Consent Agenda
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
5. Report: SAMS Eagle Bluff Trip
Speaker(s): 8th Grade SAMS Students - Jude Anderson, Errol Caines, Lucy Carlson, Mirabel O'Malley, Alex Rice
6. Report: Q-Comp Update
Speaker(s): Heather Berndt, District-Wide Q-Comp Advisor & Nancy Terry, CORE Colleague Coordinator
7. Discussion Items
 - 7.1. Ramsey County Elections Contract Renewal
Speaker(s): Laura Oksnevad - Director
 - 7.2. Policy First Reading: 213 - School Board Committees
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
 - 7.3. Policy Second Reading: 704 - Development and Maintenance of an Inventory of Fixed Assets and a Fixed Asset Accounting System
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
 - 7.4. Library Book Review Final Disposition
Speaker(s): Dr. Renee Corneille - Superintendent
8. Reports
 - 8.1. ISD282 District, Program, and Building Report
Speaker(s): Dr. Renee Corneille - Superintendent
 - 8.2. Board Reports
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair
9. Adjourn School Board Meeting
Speaker(s): Dr. Cassandra Palmer - Acting Chair

**SCHOOL BOARD CONSENT AGENDA
12/16/2025**

PRESENTER(S): School Board Chair

1. Personnel

Hires

Last Name	First Name	Position	School	Date Effective
Haracz	Allicia	Food Service Worker II	SAMS/SAVHS	12.15.2025

Resignation/Separation(s)

Last Name	First Name	Position	School	Date Effective
Kathleen	West	Language Arts	SAMS	01.16.2025

Retirement(s)

Last Name	First Name	Position	School	Date Effective
Lawson	Robert	Van Driver	District-Wide	01.02.2026

Contract Update(s)

Last Name	First Name	Position	School	Date Effective
Stanley	Jaimee	Assistant Director of Literacy and Learning	District-Wide	07.01.2026
Guerrero	Laura	Assistant Director of Student Achievement	District-Wide	07.01.2026

2. Payment of Bills Checks Paid 12/03/2025

01- General Fund	\$271,862.27
02- Food Service Fund	\$23,269.62
03- Transportation Fund	\$3,424.22
04- Community Serv Fund	\$5,285.91
05- Capital Expenditure Fund	\$49,578.22
08- Agency Fund	\$500.00
09- Trust Fund	\$556.90
25 - Student Activities	\$5,144.78

Total: \$	\$359,621.92
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3. **Minutes** - 12/2/25 Regular Meeting Minutes (see BoardBook for document)

**Truth in Taxation + Listening Session + Regular Meeting
of the St. Anthony-New Brighton School Board**

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

St. Anthony Community Services (Council Chambers), Community Services, 3301
Silver Lake Road NE, St. Anthony , MN 55418

Listening Session 6:00pm

Regular Meeting 6:30pm

www.isd282.org/discover/school-board

Minutes

Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM.

Laurel Hood:	Present
Laura Oksnevad:	Present
Mike Overman:	Present
Cassandra Palmer:	Present
PJ Striker:	Present
Daniel Turner:	Present

1. Truth in Taxation Presentation (6:00 pm)

2. Listening Session (6:30 pm)

3. Call to Order School Board Regular Meeting (7:00 pm)

Discussion: Acting Chair Palmer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Staff in attendance include: Superintendent Dr. Renee Corneille, Hope Fagerland, Destiny Sparks, Jada Richard

3.1. Ceremonial Oath of Office

Discussion: Director Turner recited the ceremonial oath of office and was welcomed by Acting Chair Palmer and the board.

4. Approval of Agenda

Action(s) :

The recommended motion is to approve the 12/2/25 Regular Meeting agenda as presented. This motion, made by Striker and seconded by Hood, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood:	Yea
Laura Oksnevad:	Yea
Mike Overman:	Yea
Cassandra Palmer:	Yea
PJ Striker:	Yea
Daniel Turner:	Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0


St. Anthony New Brighton
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 282

5. **Approval of Amended Consent Agenda**

Action(s) :

The recommended motion is to approve the consent agenda as presented, including: minutes from the 11/18/25 Meeting, personnel, and payment of bills. This motion, made by Oksnevad and seconded by Overman, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea

Laura Oksnevad: Yea

Mike Overman: Yea

Cassandra Palmer: Yea

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

6. **Report: Human Resources**

Discussion: Human Resources Coordinator, Destiny Sparks, shared results from the fall Human Resources Employee Engagement and Retention Survey with an ongoing commitment to systemically improve the employee experience.

7. **Action Items**

7.1. Levy Certification 2025 Payable 2026

Action(s) :

The recommended motion, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, the School Board of Independent School District 282 St. Anthony New Brighton, Minnesota is to authorize making the following proposed tax levies for general purposes: General Fund \$8,172,714.77 Community Services \$139,811.67 General Debt Service \$1,790,605.44 Total Proposed Levy \$ 10,103,131.88 Therefore, be it resolved by the School Board of Independent School District 282 St. Anthony New Brighton, Minnesota, that the levy be levied in 2025 to be collected in 2026 is set at \$10,103,131.88. The clerk of the ISD 282 School Board is authorized to certify the proposed levy to the County Auditors of Hennepin County and Ramsey County, Minnesota. This motion, made by Striker and seconded by Hood, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea

Laura Oksnevad: Yea

Mike Overman: Yea

Cassandra Palmer: Yea

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

7.2. Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025

Audit Approval

Action(s) :


St. Anthony New Brighton
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 282

The recommended motion is to approve and accept the audit report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025, as presented. This motion, made by Hood and seconded by Overman, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea
Laura Oksnevad: Yea
Mike Overman: Yea
Cassandra Palmer: Yea
PJ Striker: Yea
Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

Discussion: Bonnie Schwieger, from Abdo, presented the audited Annual Comprehensive Financial report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025. The audit results are an unmodified and clean report. The process was smooth, with no issues, and there were no instances of non-compliance. One item of note was that the Federal Single Audit was not available from the Federal government before the audit report was released. Abdo will be issuing a separate report for the board at a future date for approval.

7.3. Acceptance of HS/MS Restroom Renovation Project Bid

Action(s) :

The recommended motion is to approve the HS/MS Restroom Renovation Project Bid as presented. This motion, made by Oksnevad and seconded by Hood, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea
Laura Oksnevad: Yea
Mike Overman: Yea
Cassandra Palmer: Yea
PJ Striker: Yea
Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

Discussion: The school board approved the low base bid in the amount of \$364,000.00.

7.4. Legislative Platform Action

Action(s) :

The recommended motion is to approve the 2026 Legislative Platform as presented. This motion, made by Oksnevad and seconded by Striker, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea
Laura Oksnevad: Yea
Mike Overman: Yea
Cassandra Palmer: Yea


St. Anthony New Brighton
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 282

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

7.5. Policy Approval:

503 - Student Attendance

534 - School Meals

707 - Transportation of Public School Students

Action(s) :

The recommended motion is to approve policies 503, 534, and 707 as presented. This motion, made by Striker and seconded by Hood, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea

Laura Oksnevad: Yea

Mike Overman: Yea

Cassandra Palmer: Yea

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

8. **Discussion Items**

8.1. Compulsory Attendance Report

Discussion: Superintendent Corneille shared the Minnesota Department of Education required annual report of the total number of nonpublic children reported as residing in the district. The report has been submitted to MDE.

8.2. Effective Instruction (EI) Coordinators Contracts Discussion

Discussion: The contracts for EI coordinators are set to be negotiated. This was an initial discussion by the board and will come back for action at a future meeting.

8.3. Policy First Reading:

704 - Development and Maintenance of an Inventory of Fixed Assets and a Fixed Asset Accounting System

Discussion: This was a first reading of policy 704 - Development and Maintenance of an Inventory of Fixed Assets and a Fixed Asset Accounting System - and will come back to the board for further review.

9. **Closed Session in compliance with Minnesota Statute 13D.05 196 Subd. 3(a) . for Mid-year superintendent evaluation.**

Action(s) :

Recommended motion is to close the meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05 196 Subd. 3(a) for Mid-year Superintendent Evaluation. This motion, made by Oksnevad and seconded by Hood, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea

Laura Oksnevad: Yea


St. Anthony New Brighton
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 282

Mike Overman: Yea

Cassandra Palmer: Yea

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

10. **Closed Session in compliance with Minnesota Statute section 13D.03, to consider labor negotiations.**

Action(s):

The recommendation is to enter into a closed session for labor negotiations pursuant to Minnesota Statute section 13D.03, to consider labor negotiations. This motion, made by Hood and seconded by Overman, Carried.

Voting Detail:

Laurel Hood: Yea

Laura Oksnevad: Yea

Mike Overman: Yea

Cassandra Palmer: Yea

PJ Striker: Yea

Daniel Turner: Yea

Voting Summary: Yea: 6, Nay: 0

Discussion: The board moved to closed session at 8:14pm. The first closed session for negotiations began at 8:27pm and concluded at 9:39pm. The second closed session for mid-year superintendent evaluation began at 9:41pm and concluded at 11:00pm.

11. **Adjourn Closed Session**

Discussion: Acting Chair Palmer adjourned the closed sessions at 11:00pm.

12. **Adjourn School Board Meeting**

Discussion: The board moved back to the regular meeting room at 11:02pm. Acting Chair Palmer adjourned the regular meeting at 11:02pm.

Approved by: School Board Clerk or Board Chair

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Why we should
continue to go to
Eagle Bluff!

Best week ever !!!!!

Introductory slide

Hello and welcome to our very formal slideshow about Eagle Bluff!

Different things we did that were fun !!!



We got to bunk with our friends which was so fun



We got to eat some yummy food 🌮 🍷 🍣

And chicken kebabs on top of "sloppy joes" they were not sloppy and burgers and potato salad yum!



We got to see skunks

We got to meet two skunks, which was fun! Until it wasn't...



Zip lining!!

We got to fly through the air and tore our way through the ropes course



Inclusivity!!!



Survival class



We got to make fires all by ourselves and we constructed shelters from sticks



GPS Class

We navigated the woods with a gps and it was really fun!



We also learned some lessons!

- I learned that you don't need technology to have fun!-Mirabel
- I learned the value of someone having your back-Alex
- I made new friends! Also, I learned that I am still scared of heights.-Lucy
- I learned that we don't always have to take a lot of food.-Jude
- I can make good food from ok food.-Errol

Archery

There was an archery class where we had a lot of fun shooting arrows at bullseyes and rubber animal targets!!



We went on night hikes and we did campfires!

One group did the campfire one night and made s'mores, and the other group did a night hike. Then the next night, we switched!



Pictures!





Ziplining!

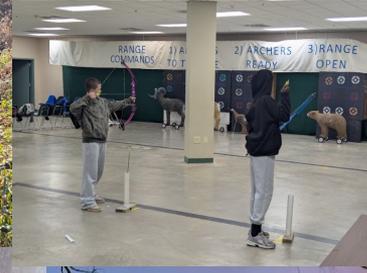
Best friends













Northern Lights Appreciation







THXX!!!!!!



Q-Comp Update

Heather Berndt, District-Wide Q-Comp Advisor &
Nancy Terry, CORE Colleague Coordinator

What is Q-Comp?

Teacher Practice (CORE)

Student Achievement Goal

Site Based Goal



Teacher Practice

Per the Q-Comp MOU (2024-26):

- \$1870 will be awarded to each teacher who successfully completes the required observations/evaluations/Points of Contact. “Successful observations/evaluations” is defined as at least 80% of the Developing and Proficient boxes checked on the McREL Rubric. Staff must also demonstrate growth on their personal growth goal.



Student Achievement

Per the Q-Comp MOU (2024-26):

- \$220 will be awarded to each teacher for demonstrated achievement gains in individual teacher-constructed classroom goals.



Site Based Goals

Per the Q-Comp MOU (2024-2026):

- \$110 will be awarded to each teacher for student achievement gains at a site that meets the site annual student achievement goal.



Q-Comp Goals 2024-25



Teacher Practice

Per the Q-Comp MOU:

- \$1870 will be awarded to each teacher who successfully completes the required observations/evaluations/Points of Contact. “Successful observations/evaluations” is defined as at least 80% of the Developing and Proficient boxes checked on the McREL Rubric. Staff must also demonstrate growth on their individual goal.

100% of staff met this goal for the 2024-25 school year



Student Achievement

Per the Q-Comp MOU:

- \$220 will be awarded to each teacher for demonstrated achievement gains in individual teacher-constructed classroom goals.

89% of staff met this goal for the 2024-25 school year



2024-25 Site Based Goals

Per the Q-Comp MOU:

- \$110 will be awarded to each teacher for student achievement gains at a site that meets the site annual student achievement goal.

Wilshire Park Site Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled in grades 3-5 at Wilshire Park Elementary for at least half a school year who are proficient on the MCA reading test will increase from 56.7% to 60% by the end of the 2024-25 school year.

Goal not Met.

SAMS Site Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled in grades 6-8 at St. Anthony Middle School for at least half a school year who are proficient on the MCA Reading test will increase from 56% in 2024 to 60% in 2025.

Goal Met.

SAVHS Site Goal: The composite score as measured by ACT will increase from 21.6 in 2024 to 22.0 in 2025.

Goal not Met.



Q-Comp Goals 2025-26



Site Based Goals

Wilshire Park Site Goal: Waiting for the official goal from Dr. Lee.

SAMS Site Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled in grades 6-8 at St. Anthony Middle School for at least half a school year who are proficient on the MCA Reading test will increase from 60% in 2025 to 63% in 2026.

SAVHS Site Goal: The reading subject test score as measured by ACT will increase from 21.1 in 2025 (prior year) to 21.9 in 2026 (current year).



Q-Comp Looking Ahead



Looking ahead:

Update to the Q-Comp MOU:

- Q-Comp committee has met and reviewed the current MOU to discuss updates that may be needed
- A subgroup of that committee has met to discuss the rubric currently being used. Further discussion with the full committee will occur after winter break
- Minor updates will be made to the CORE Handbook / district-wide goal forms that are being used



Questions?



Orig. 1996

Rev. 2007, 2019

Rev. Dec 2025

Local Control/Recommended

213 SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES

I. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this policy is to provide for the structure and the operation of committees or subcommittees of the school board

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the school board to designate school board committees or subcommittees when it is determined that a committee process facilitates the mission of the school board.
- B. The school board has determined that certain permanent standing committees, as described in this policy, do facilitate the operation of the school board and the school district.
- C. A school board committee or subcommittee will be formed by school board resolution which shall outline the duties and purpose of the committee or subcommittee.
- D. A committee or subcommittee is advisory in nature and has only such authority as specified by the school board.
- E. The school board will receive reports or recommendations from a committee or subcommittee for consideration. The school board, however, retains the right and has the duty to make all final decisions related to such reports or recommendations.
- F. The school board also may establish such ad hoc committees for specific purposes as it deems appropriate.
- G. The school board reserves the right to limit, create or abolish any standing or ad hoc committee as it deems appropriate.
- H. A committee of the school board shall not appoint a subcommittee of that committee without approval of the school board.

III. DESIGNATION OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. The school board shall have the following standing committees:
 - 1. Audit.
 - 2. Policy.
 - 3. ~~Negotiations Committee(s) for various employee groups.~~

- B. The school board will establish, by this policy, each standing committee or by resolution each standing or ad hoc committee, the number of members, the term, and the charge or mission of each such committee.
- C. The school board chair shall appoint the members of each standing or ad hoc committee and designate the chair thereof.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES

- A. All meetings of committees or subcommittees shall be open to the public in compliance with the Open Meeting Law, and notice shall be given as prescribed by law.
- B. A committee or subcommittee shall act only within the guidelines and mission established for that committee or subcommittee by the school board. Individual board members, or any two or three board members appointed to any committee, have no authority to bind the board on any matter unless such authority is expressly granted by the entire board.
- C. The committee or subcommittee shall designate a secretary who will record the minutes of actions of the school board committee.
- D. The power of a committee or subcommittee of the school board is advisory only and is limited to making recommendations to the school board.
- E. A committee or subcommittee of the school board shall, when appropriate, clarify in any dealings with the public that its powers are only advisory to the school board.
- F. Committee members will not hold a meeting of a committee outside the presence of administration and no committee meeting may be held without providing three day prior notice.
- G. Committees will not stray into management work, and do not oversee or direct any school district staff, and do not have the authority to direct school district staff to take any specific actions or duties. Only the administration or the full school board may direct school district staff.

Legal References:

- Cross References:*** Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D (Open Meeting Law)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 201 (Legal Status of the School Board)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 203 (Operation of the School Board – Governing Rules)
 MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin “C” (Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law)
 Other References: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Policy 213.1 School Board Committees Procedure Appendix

EXPECTATIONS FOR AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES OF SCHOOL BOARD
STANDING COMMITTEES

V. Audit Committee

A. General Statement of Role

1. The main purpose of the Audit Committee is to work with the consulting audit firm to provide financial oversight, understand the financial reporting process, and understand district internal controls.

B. Committee Composition

1. The audit committee consists of three board members: the School Board Chair, Treasurer, and one additional School Board Member.
2. The additional School Board Member is appointed by the Board Chair.

C. Meetings

1. Audit Committee meetings will be held a minimum of once a year at the completion of the annual audit report.

VI. ~~Negotiations Committee~~¶

~~A. General Statement of Role~~¶

- ~~1. The negotiating committee works collaboratively with the district bargaining units to meet the priorities of the school district through a structured process. The purpose is to advocate for an agreement that reflects the mission and vision of the school district and stewardship of public resources.~~¶

¶

~~B. Committee Composition~~¶

- ~~1. The committee will consist of two or three board members, the Superintendent and additional members of the administration.~~¶
 - ~~a) The School Board Members are appointed by the Board Chair.~~¶
 - ~~b) Additional administrative members are designated by the Superintendent.~~¶

¶

- ~~2. The Committee may utilize additional experts invited by the School Board or the administration to provide related information~~

or skills.

¶

~~C. Meetings~~¶

~~VII. Meetings will be scheduled as needed and published according to School Board processes.~~

VIII. Policy Committee

A. General Statement of Role

1. The committee reviews existing policies and writes new policies to provide broad governance guidance and address changes in legislation, statutes, case law and legal decisions, as well as district social and educational issues.
2. Board policies act as guidelines for the internal procedures of the district.
3. The committee stays abreast of local, state and federal laws and regulations to determine and apply implications for district policy development and revisions.
4. The committee works closely with the appropriate staff to draft new or refine current policies, processes, and protocols, that are then brought to the board for formal action.
5. All district policies should be reviewed according to the calendar set by the committee.
6. If policy changes will have a major community impact, the board and district should seek community input and have a communications plan for the public. This will be based on best practices outlined in the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. This will happen via online survey/sign-up.
7. Policies that are ready for updating should be brought to the board for consent, discussion, or approval, depending on what phase they are in.

B. Committee Composition

1. The policy committee consists of two board members; the School Board Clerk and One School Board Director, and an administrator appointed by the superintendent.
2. The committee chair is appointed by the board chair.
3. Board members are appointed annually in January at the organizational meeting or by resolution during the rest of the year, if necessary.

4. The Committee may invite a student(s) and/or a community representative(s) to provide feedback during the policy review process

C. Meetings

1. Meetings are held monthly.

IX. Committee Assignments

- A. Unless otherwise specified, board members will be assigned or appointed to committees or boards by the board chair in consultation with the board. Board members will be assigned to committees or boards no later than the second regular board meeting in January. Each board member should be assigned to at least one (1) committee.
- B. Appointment to a committee should take into consideration, but not be limited to, the following:
 1. equitable distribution of committee assignments among board members;
 2. expressed interests of board members;
 3. a board member's training, education and/or experience with the purpose of the committee;
 4. continuity of service and historical knowledge;
 5. availability for meetings;
 6. the need for diversity;
 7. the needs of the board; and
 8. the proven ability to work effectively in a committee environment.
- C. Should one or more representatives of the board be needed to attend a committee meeting prior to the board's adoption of committee assignments, the chair is authorized to temporarily appoint board members to that committee.
- D. Assignments to a committee are effective until either the following year's approval of committee members, or board removal or absence for another reason.
- E. If an absence is created on any committee, the chair may assign another board member to represent the board at a committee meeting for any duration.

Orig. 1995

Rev. 2025~~2~~

Local Control/Recommended

704 DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF AN INVENTORY OF FIXED ASSETS AND A FIXED ASSET ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the development and maintenance of an inventory of the fixed assets of the school district and the establishment and maintenance of a fixed asset accounting system.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The policy of the school district is that a fixed asset accounting system and an inventory of fixed assets be developed and maintained.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF INVENTORY AND ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

The superintendent or such other school official as designated by the superintendent or the school board shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of an inventory of the fixed assets of the school district and for the establishment and maintenance of a formal fixed asset accounting system. The accounting system shall be operated in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards for Minnesota School Districts (UFARS): with a capitalization level that equals or exceeds \$5,000. [1]Group purchases for technology, furniture, or other equipment that is purchased as a per quantity that otherwise may be below the individual item threshold, the total threshold is \$25,000. - ~~In addition,~~ ~~†~~The inventory shall specify the location of all continued abstracts showing the conveyance of the property to the school district; certificates of title showing title to the property in the school district; title insurance policies; surveys; and other property records relating to the real property of the school district.

IV. REPORT

The administration shall annually update the property records of the school district and provide an inventory of the fixed assets of the school district to the school board.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.02 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (Boards of Independent School Districts)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.51 (Schoolhouse and Sites; Uses for School and Nonschool Purposes; Closings)

[GASB Implementation Guide 2021-1](#)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 702 (Accounting)

Memorandum

To: St. Anthony New Brighton School Board

From: Superintendent Renee Corneille

Date: Dec. 16, 2025

Subject: Library Book Review Committee Final Decision

This memorandum serves to formally inform the School Board of the final decision regarding the banning of the book *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe, at the Middle School/High School Library. Following the review process executed by the Library Materials Review Committee (the "Committee"). The administration confirms that the review adhered to Policy 606.5 (Library Materials), ensuring a fair, objective, and legally defensible outcome.

The specific request regarding *Gender Queer* was as follows: *Please remove access to this book for students under age 16 per new policy guidelines. This book does not meet the criteria of being developmentally appropriate for all children under 16 and should require parental permission for access.*

Adherence to Policy 606.5 and Committee Formation

The reconsideration process was executed with fidelity to Policy 606.5, Section VII (Reconsideration of Specific Library Material)

A. Committee Composition and Mandate

The Committee was appointed as mandated by Policy 606.5, Section VII.D.2, ensuring diverse representation to achieve an objective review. The voting and non-voting members included:

- Superintendent's Designee
- School Board Member
- Two Teachers
- One Involved Library Media Specialist
- One Uninvolved Library Media Specialist
- Two Community Members
- Student Representative

B. The Objective Review Process

Each Committee member was bound by clear instructions (Phase I: Independent Preparation)

1. Read the Material in its Entirety: Members were required to read *Gender Queer* in its entirety to ensure a full understanding of the work's overall context and artistic intent, explicitly prohibited from relying on summaries or excerpts.
2. Policy and Legal Review: Members were required to read Policy 606.5 V. (Selection of Library

Materials), as well as core American Library Association (ALA) principles (The Freedom to Read Statement and The Library Bill of Rights), which define the legal and professional standards for collection development.

3. **Individual Scoring:** Each member independently scored the book using a six-criterion rubric, assigning a score of 1 (Strong Rationale for Removal) to 4 (Strong Rationale for Retention) for each area. Scores were required to be defended by citing specific, documented evidence from the text related directly to the definition in the scoring column. This established the foundation for an evidence-based, objective discussion, explicitly separating the review from personal preference.

Final Determination and Scoring Rationale

A. Process for Determination

The Committee convened (Phase II: Applying the Standards) to find consensus on the overall educational suitability of the material. The process involved an objective deliberation on each criterion, culminating in a single, unified consensus score. Key to the process was the assessment of Legal Standards (Criteria 6), where the Committee diligently evaluated the content against the three-part Miller Test for legal obscenity and the standard for Pervasive Vulgarity. This step was crucial to ensure the final recommendation was not based on merely disliking the book's ideas, a potential violation of First Amendment principles (*Board of Education v. Pico*).

B. Committee Recommendation and Decision Guidelines

The collective scoring resulted in an average score that fell within the 15-19 range. Pursuant to the Decision Guidelines established within the review framework, this score corresponds to the action: **Retain with Advisory Note/Relocation.**

Total Score Range	Recommended Action
15-19	Retain with Advisory Note/Relocation (Minor concerns may be addressed by advising students/parents or moving the book to a higher-grade section)

The superintendent's final decision is to Retain, but Restrict Access to the material.

Summary of Deliberation and Policy Rationale

A. Summary of Deliberation

The key points of discussion and debate centered on a fundamental tension between the material's intellectual value and its developmental appropriateness for the youngest segment of the high school/middle school student body.

- Value of Representation (Criteria 5 & 4): The panel generally agreed that the book possessed literary/artistic merit (scores mostly 4s for Criteria 4) and was a valuable resource for diverse

viewpoints (scores mostly 4s for Criteria 5). It serves as an important resource that allows students to feel seen and heard in the library, which aligns with the district's purpose to meet the needs of all students.

- Obscenity vs. Maturity (Criteria 6 & 2): The discussion concluded that the material was graphic and contained mature themes, but was not pornographic. The challenged explicit pages were deemed essential to the work's theme (Criteria 3: scores mostly 3s/4s) but presented a significant concern regarding the age of some students (Criteria 2).
- Age and Restriction: Acknowledging the fact that *School Library Journal* recommends the book for grades 9 and up (ages 14 to 15 and older), concerns were specifically situated in grades 6 and 7. This external standard provided critical context for applying the restriction. The existing "YA" (Young Adult) spine label in the library was seen as an advisory step already.

B. Explanation of Final Recommendation (Superintendent's Decision)

The recommendation to **Retain, but Restrict Access** upholds the principles of Policy 606.5 by balancing intellectual freedom with parental and pedagogical concerns.

The decision to **Retain** the material emphasizes that its educational and literary value, taken as a whole, outweighs the specific concerns raised, aligning with the policy's purpose to "meet the needs of all students". The material was found to conform to the primary Selection Criteria (Policy 606.5 V.A.4 and V.A.5) by possessing high standards of quality (Artistic Quality and Educational Significance) and reflecting the needs of a diverse student population who may be exploring gender identity and social development. Critically, the material was found to not meet the high bar for removal as legally obscene or pervasively vulgar.

The decision to Restrict Access directly addresses the Committee's finding that certain content is beyond the emotional and social development of younger students, particularly those in grades 6-7. This action implements the policy's function to address "Minor concerns" by either "advising students/parents" or placing the book in an advisory section, thus limiting access to older students (e.g., Grades 9 and up) as recommended by professional sources. This measure also proactively supports the right of parents and guardians to determine their children's access to library materials (Policy 606.5 II).

The rigorous adherence to Policy 606.5 and the objective use of the scoring rubric ensured that the final decision was a product of a collaborative, evidence-based review, thereby reinforcing the integrity and transparency of the district's reconsideration process.

Appendix A: Directions and Rubric for Book Review

APPENDIX A

School Library Book Reconsideration Rubric

Book Title: Gender Queer

Grade/Age Level Range of Library: MS/HS

Date of Review: Nov. 17, 2025

Name of Reviewer: _____

Directions for Reviewing a Challenged Library Material

Instructions for the Reconsideration Committee Member

Your role on the Reconsideration Committee is vital. You are tasked with setting aside personal beliefs to objectively evaluate the challenged book against the established criteria in the Materials Selection and Reconsideration Policy and the rubric provided. This review ensures decisions are fair, consistent, and adhere to professional and legal standards. This is not about your personal feelings, but rather your ability to evaluate the material being reviewed against objective standards. Please let us know if you don't believe you can remove your personal beliefs from the task. [Committee Member Conduct](#).

Review Committee Timeline: *Timeline is subject to change*

Dates	Weeks	Actions
Oct. 13-24	Week 1-2	Reach out to committee members Distribute book materials to committee members Confirm committee meeting date(s)
Oct. 27-Nov. 14	Weeks 3-5	Committee members read challenged materials Committee members rate book based on objective standards
Nov. 17-Nov.28	Week 6-7	Finalize meeting dates Nov. 17 and Nov. 20 Meet as a committee Determine if additional meeting is needed (Nov. 20) Smaller group meets to finalize recommendation report to superintendent
Dec. 1-Dec. 12	Week 7-8	Superintendent finalizes recommendation
Dec. 15-19	Week 9	The superintendent presents a final recommendation to the requestor and school board. Dec. 16, 2025

Phase I: Independent Preparation (Prior to the Meeting)

Complete these steps **before** the committee meets:

1. **Read the Material in its Entirety:** You must read the **entire challenged book**. Do not rely on summaries, excerpts, or reviews to form your judgment. You must understand the work's overall context and literary intent.
2. **Read “606.5 V. Selection of Library Materials”, the ALA Freedom to Read Statement, and The Library Bill of Rights (linked in 606.5):** This information is the foundation of our district's libraries and reflects American Library Association best practices.
3. **Review the Challenge Form:** Familiarize yourself with the specific objections raised by the complainant.
4. **Complete the Rubric (Individual Scoring):** (*Rubric is attached*)
 - Independently score the book using the provided rubric, assigning a score of **1 to 4** for each of the six criteria.
 - Base your score for **Criteria 4 (Literary & Artistic Merit)** on your own assessment of the quality of the writing, characterization, and originality as it relates to the standards in the rubric.
 - Be prepared to defend your scores by citing **specific evidence from the text** that relates directly to the definition in the scoring column (e.g., specific examples of curriculum alignment for Criteria 1, or context for mature themes for Criteria 3). It is essential that you provide specific examples from the text to support your scores.

Rubric -

Criteria	Score 4 Strong Rationale for Retention	Score 3 Generally Supportive of Retention	Score 2 Concerns Noted (Needs Further Discussion)	Score 1 Strong Rationale for Removal	Score
<p>1. Educational Suitability <i>(Curriculum Relevance)</i></p>	<p>Directly and substantially supports the curriculum, state standards, or common educational objectives.</p>	<p>Offers valuable enrichment or supplementary information that relates to the curriculum or educational goals.</p>	<p>Relevance is tenuous, marginal, or only for a very specialized topic/class.</p>	<p>Has no discernible link to the curriculum, educational objectives, or student learning needs.</p>	
<p>2. Age & Maturity Appropriateness <i>(Student Development)*</i></p> <p><i>If there is a School Library Journal review, what age range do they give the book?</i></p>	<p>Content, themes, and complexity are well-matched to the typical middle school student's emotional, social, and intellectual maturity.</p>	<p>The work is suitable for most students in the intended age range, though some mature themes may require minor guidance.</p>	<p>Content contains themes or graphic elements (e.g., violence, sexual content) that exceed the developmental level of a significant number of middle school students.</p>	<p>Content is overwhelmingly inappropriate or emotionally harmful for the target age group's maturity level.</p>	
<p>3. Overall Context <i>(Work as a Whole)</i></p>	<p>The objected-to elements are essential to the work's theme, message, or artistic purpose and are</p>	<p>The work's overall value and message significantly outweigh the impact of the isolated challenged</p>	<p>The objectionable elements, though few, are gratuitous or sensationalized and distract from the work's primary</p>	<p>The objected-to material is pervasive, dominant, or fundamental to the exclusion of any significant merit.</p>	

	integrated seamlessly.	parts.	purpose.		
4. Literary & Artistic Merit <i>(Quality & Professional Review)</i>	Recognized as a work of high quality ; has received multiple positive and strong professional reviews (e.g., <i>SLJ</i> , <i>Booklist</i>), and/or has won literary awards.	Generally considered a solid, well-written work with positive professional reviews, though not necessarily a classic or award winner.	Quality is marginal; professional reviews are mixed or scarce; plot, characterization, or writing style are weak.	Has no recognized literary or artistic merit ; is poorly written, factually inaccurate, or professionally condemned.	
5. Representation of Diverse Viewpoints <i>(ALA Principle)</i>	The work significantly contributes to the diversity of the overall library collection by offering varied perspectives, experiences, or a voice not otherwise represented.	The work supports intellectual freedom by presenting a legitimate perspective on a social, political, or historical issue.	The viewpoint is narrow or propagandistic, limiting its value in presenting a broad range of opinions .	The work primarily serves to promote a single, narrow, or biased ideology with little educational value.	
6. Legal Standards <i>(Obscenity/Vulgarity)</i>	The work contains no material that meets the legal definition of obscenity or is pervasively vulgar to the point of being educationally unsuitable.	Any mature language or themes are handled with care, authenticity, and moderation , serving a clear literary purpose.	Language or descriptions are frequent, though not legally obscene, which might necessitate age restriction or placement in an advisory section.	The work is pervasively vulgar or legally obscene , rendering it unquestionably unsuitable for a school setting.	

Notes:

*** School Library Journal gives Gender Queer a recommended age range of grades 9 and up, or typically ages 14 to 15 and older, citing that it is appropriate for middle to high school students. They note that the memoir is suitable for high schoolers due to its mature themes and sensitive topics. Grade range: School Library Journal recommends the book for grades 9 and up. Age range: This generally corresponds to ages 14 to 15 and older. Context: The recommendation places the book in the middle to high school category, reflecting its mature and sensitive subject matter.

Individual Scoring and Determination

A. Scoring Summary - Individual

Criteria	Score (1-4)	Notes
1. Educational Suitability		
2. Age & Maturity Appropriateness		
3. Overall Context		
4. Literary & Artistic Merit		
5. Representation of Diverse Viewpoints		
6. Legal Standards		
TOTAL SCORE (out of 24)		

Phase II: Applying the Standards (During the Committee Meeting)

The meeting will focus on finding consensus using the rubric scores and documented evidence.

- Address Overall Context (Criteria 3):** Begin by discussing the book **as a whole**. Review challenged passages by asking: "Is this content essential to the work's theme, character development, or artistic purpose?" The final evaluation must weigh the work's overall value against the objectionable elements.
- Evaluate Criteria Individually, with Legal Guidance:**
 - For each of the six criteria, briefly share your individual score and the evidence supporting it.
 - Engage in an objective discussion, focusing only on the **standards defined in the rubric**, not personal preference.
 - Focus on Legal Standards (Criteria 6):** When assessing a challenge based on explicit content, refer to these legal concepts:

- **Legal Obscenity (Unprotected Speech):** To be legally *obscene* (and thus potentially removable under any policy), the work, **taken as a whole**, must satisfy **all three** parts of the Supreme Court's *Miller Test*:
 1. The average person, applying contemporary **community standards**, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the **prurient interest** (a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion).
 2. The work depicts or describes sexual conduct in a **patently offensive way** as defined by applicable state law.
 3. The work, taken as a whole, **lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value**.
 - **Pervasive Vulgarity (Educational Unsuitability):** If the material does not meet the *Miller* standard, it can only be removed if the vulgarity is so **pervasive** that it renders the book **educationally unsuitable**. This is a high bar and should be used cautiously.
 - **First Amendment Restriction:** Remember that removing a book solely because committee members or the community **dislike the ideas** it expresses is a violation of First Amendment principles (*Board of Education v. Pico*).
3. **Determine Consensus Scores:** After discussion, the committee will agree on a **single, unified consensus score** (1-4) for each of the six criteria. Record these scores in the Rubric Summary section.

Committee Scoring and Determination

A. Scoring Summary - Committee Shared Score

Criteria	Score (1-4)	Notes
1. Educational Suitability		
2. Age & Maturity Appropriateness		
3. Overall Context		
4. Literary & Artistic Merit		
5. Representation of Diverse Viewpoints		
6. Legal Standards		
TOTAL SCORE		

B. Decision Guidelines

Total Score Range	Recommended Action	Rationale for Recommendation
20-24	Retain in Collection (Unrestricted)	The work meets all selection criteria and aligns with principles of intellectual freedom and educational value.
15-19	Retain with Advisory Note/Relocation	Minor concerns may be addressed by advising students/parents or moving the book to a higher-grade section (e.g., 8th grade only).
10-14	Conditional Retention or Restriction	Significant concerns indicate the material's value does not clearly outweigh its appropriateness issues. Recommend removing from lower grades, restricting access, or reviewing for potential removal.
6-9	Remove from Collection	The material fails to meet core selection criteria and contains content that is not educationally suitable or appropriate for the age group.

Phase III: Final Recommendation and Documentation

1. **Calculate the Total Score:** Tally the six consensus scores (Maximum 24 points).
2. **Consult Decision Guidelines:** Use the Total Score to inform the final recommended action (Retain, Restrict, or Remove).
3. **Draft the Rationale:** The committee must draft a clear, evidence-based rationale. This is the official statement of the decision and is crucial for transparency and accountability.
 - o The rationale must explicitly reference the **objective criteria** used in the rubric.
 - o If recommending **Retention**, explain how the book's educational suitability and literary merit outweigh any concerns.
 - o If recommending **Removal**, clearly state which criteria the book failed to meet (e.g., not age-appropriate, pervasive vulgarity, no educational suitability).

C. Final Recommendation and Rationale

Based on the discussion and the above scoring, the committee recommends:

- **Retain** the material in the middle school library collection.
- **Retain, but Restrict** access (e.g., require parental permission, place in a specific classroom, or assign a higher age/grade restriction).
- **Remove** the material from the middle school library collection.

Rationale for the Final Recommendation: