

Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 9, 2020

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Call To Order

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Bolton at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Dean Bolton, Katie Cavanaugh, Mary Gebara, Melanie Lynn, Vincent Lyon-Callo, Tonya Rodriguez and Sarah Wohlford

Administrator: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz

The board continued its discussion regarding the Safe Return to School Plan. Superintendent Hood provided an overview of updates including the process for standalone courses, course selection, class size considerations, metrics for reopening and accompanying timelines.

Safe Return to
School Plan

Assistant Superintendent Bailey briefly reviewed the recommended instructional model B, and explained that while model B would be the base model for the majority of the district, other models would be used as appropriate. She explained the process for evaluating which model to use for single instructor courses including identifying the courses, staffing considerations and student choice. Class size considerations were also reviewed and include contract language, staffing and student choice. Preparations for implementation were provided including technology needs, training, 3rd party software etc.

Superintendent Hood laid out timelines and the recommendation window of implementation. The earliest the Safe Return to School Plan could be implemented is January 4th, and the latest is March 5th. After March 8th, the district would need to reconsider its approach.

Members discussed the High School's January schedule; possibility of changing teachers; district-wide return approach versus by building, program or grade level; class size distribution process; and single instructor courses provided online.

Superintendent Hood provided for board discussion metrics to be implemented in the Safe Return to School Plan, as well as current in-person programs such as special needs, childcare, athletics, extracurriculars and student supervision. The proposed metric would help inform the decision about when to return to in-person learning, as well as when to reduce in-person programming. The metric utilizes multiple data sources and trends across Okemos specifically, Ingham County, region and state. Measurements used in the metric include: new daily case numbers; new cases per million; cases per 100,000; positivity rate; and other considerations from the Ingham County Health Department.

Metrics

Mr. Hood explained that the targets are conservative and would need to be consistent over a period of time to prevent back and forth. He also described the opportunities and challenges presented with the metric. Opportunities include: uses multiple data sources; provides for consistency; includes data over time; and is a measured approach. Challenges include: not all districts will utilize the same metric; is a judgement call by the Superintendent; conservative approach; timing issues; and what to do if some targets are met, but not others.

Superintendent Hood also presented the metric to be used for current and future in-

person programs or learning and whether a decision to reduce the program or return to remote learning needs to be made. Current in-person programs include special education, athletics, student supervision, childcare etc. The metric uses the same data sources and also incorporates a chart for determining risk level at a building or program level. Other considerations to take into account include; medical concerns; mitigation strategies; known outbreaks; staffing; scheduling; and density reduction measures. Additional opportunities include transparency, and ability to evaluate individual programs, sport or building. Additional challenges include different outcomes for different activities and the metric may need to be revisited with changing health recommendations.

It is administrations recommendation that the superintendent have the authority to utilize the metric and proceed as applicable using a positivity rate of 5% and 200 cases per million as the most significant targets to reach. This metric system would allow opportunities when safe and would allow a continuum of reduction – delay – cancel for each activity. These metrics, as well as a Covid case dashboard can be found on the district’s website.

Members discussed the following: which data sources and target are more significant indicators; stability of the metric; hospitalization rates; reducing everything versus by building or program or sport at a time; impact on positivity rate; athletics; community input on metric; process at other districts; and voting on this metric at the same meeting.

The following individuals addressed the board: Jamie Ianni, Charles Cook, Jacqueline Semerly, June Cook, Samantha Grant, Jennifer Carr, Haley Henion, Liam Carr, Erin Smith, Carmelita North, and Matt Diemer concerning athletics; Josh Smith and Elizabeth Deliyski regarding student mental health; Deep Grewal regarding the Safe Return to School metrics; Fiore Leo and Jayme Taylor regarding the Safe Return to School Plan.

Citizens Address
Agenda & Non-
Agenda Items

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: Congratulated Members Cavanaugh and Lynn for being re-elected to the school board, as well as Andrew Phelps and Jayme Taylor on their election to the board; thanked Members Rodriguez and Wohlford for their service on the board; introduced new Operation Director Mark Fargo; Food Service Director hiring update and commitments with other districts; teacher shortage and impact on OPS; and student activities and groups currently offered.

Superintendent
Report

High School Representative Catherine reported on the following: mental health screener; kick start activities; increased student stress; recent girls golf state championships; senior activities and feedback on the online learning experience.

High School
Report

President Bolton acknowledge correspondence from the following: Anirudh Agaram, Logan Paul, Garrett Rodriguez, Banks Lilly, Miles Bell and Aidan Godby regarding wrestling; Yingxin Zhou and Kristin Phillips regarding the return to school planning; Christina Salem and Crystal Scott concerning potential future cell towers; Meridian Township regarding a rezoning hearing; Sandy Fields regarding reinstating LMC hours; Annette O’Conner regarding board meetings; and Yingxin Zhou and Shawn and Gretchen Paige regarding athletics.

Board Reports
& Request

Member Cavanaugh provided the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services recommendation regarding sports.

President Bolton reported on the recent MASB Fall Conference.

MOVED by Sarah Wohlford, SUPPORTED by Melanie Lynn that the board approve items 1 through 4 for immediate implementation and appropriate action.

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 26, 2020;

Item 2: Acknowledge receipt of the October financial statement and approve payment of bills for October;

Item 3: Approve the request for a Leave of Absence for Megan Stadt, Science Teacher at Okemos High School for the period of December 14, 2020 through March 4, 2021; and Kortney Whitmyer, Social Studies Teacher at Okemos High School, for the period of November 23, 2020 through February 27, 2021; and

Item 4: Acknowledge receipt of the leave of absence report and approve the extension of a requested leave of absence for Whitney Duffield, Social Studies Teacher at Okemos High School through November 13, 2020.

Roll Call Vote

Dean Bolton	Yes	Vincent Lyon-Callo	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Tonya Rodriguez	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Sarah Wohlford	Yes
Melanie Lynn	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Sarah Wohlford, SUPPORTED by Tonya Rodriguez that the board adopt the district’s Safe Return to School Plan, including the instructional model and timelines.

Safe Return to School Plan

Roll Call Vote

Dean Bolton	Yes	Vincent Lyon-Callo	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Tonya Rodriguez	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Sarah Wohlford	Yes
Melanie Lynn	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Melanie Lynn, SUPPORTED by Sarah Wohlford that the board waive board policy 8344.1 Adequate Information to Proceed to accommodate the decision regarding the metrics for in-person programming.

Adequate Information to Proceed

Roll Call Vote

Dean Bolton	Yes	Vincent Lyon-Callo	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Tonya Rodriguez	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Sarah Wohlford	Yes
Melanie Lynn	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Sarah Wohlford, SUPPORTED by Mary Gebara that the board support the Covid19 metrics regarding in-person programming as presented by the Superintendent.

Covid19 Metrics

Roll Call Vote

Dean Bolton	Yes	Vincent Lyon-Callo	No
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Tonya Rodriguez	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Sarah Wohlford	Yes
Melanie Lynn	Yes		

AYE: 6 NAY: 1 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

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Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz provided for board discussion information regarding the 2020-2021 budget revisions. Updated assumptions included decreased expenditures due to unfilled positions and new staff prorated for less than a full year, to result in an approximate positive impact on the general fund of \$3 million before trigger language and level 1 priority considerations. Impending budget items were reviewed including community education funding, federal funding and other funding sources. Budget priorities were reviewed including adding a custodian, an HR director, a tech position and restoring LMC and Administrative Assistant hours.

2020-2021
Budget
Revisions

The board postponed the discussion regarding public participation at Zoom meetings until the November 23rd meeting.

Chris Nugent addressed the board concerning athletics.

Public Comment

President Bolton reminded the board of their December 1st special meeting for the purpose of the Superintendent's evaluation.

Other Matters

Member Lynn asked that Superintendent Hood address the student activity offerings during the superintendent report on November 23rd.

President Bolton adjourned the regular meeting at 10:38 p.m.

Adjourn

Mary Gebara, Secretary