

**Okemos Board of Education**  
**Okemos, Michigan 48864**  
**SPECIAL MEETING AUGUST 16, 2021**

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The Special meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Bolton at 7:24 p.m. Call To Order

Members Present: Dean Bolton, Katie Cavanaugh, Mary Gebara, Melanie Lynn, Vincent Lyon-Callo, Andrew Phelps and Jayme Taylor

Administrators: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Assistant Superintendent Stephen Keskes; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz

Superintendent Hood and representatives from The Christman Company interviewed potential architects and engineers as part of bond planning for 2022. Administration is recommending TowerPinkster Architecture, Engineering and Interiors. Representatives from TowerPinkster presented information regarding their services, approach to the work, as well as the scope of the work. Architect & Engineer Selection

Members inquired about timelines; how social-emotional learning, diversity, equity, and inclusion values are integrated into the work TowerPinkster does; difference between architect and construction management services; and green and sustainable options.

Administrators presented the proposed changes to the elementary, Kinawa 5-6, Chippewa Middle School and Okemos High School student-parent handbooks. Most revisions were minimal with the most substantial changes addressing the student dress code policy. Other proposed changes included Parent-Teacher conference language; testing out; final experience versus final exam; early college language; and prom. Significant time was spent reviewing the handbooks through the equity lens, specifically the dress code portions. A committee of administrators, staff, students, and parents met to review and revise the dress code. The conversation was facilitated by Dr. Rema of Eastern Michigan University with the purpose of aligning the policy with the districts DEI values. Student-Parent Handbooks

The Covid19 Supplement Handbook was also updated to reflect current policy and practices conforming with the Safe Return to School Plan. Once approved, handbooks will be distributed electronically to families as well as available on the district web site.

Members inquired about specific allowable items in the dress code.

Superintendent Hood and Assistant Superintendent Bailey discussed the approach to full in-person instruction. The following was also reviewed: external virtual schooling options including Lansing Public Schools K-12 Online School available to Ingham County residents; breakfast, lunch, and snacks; what the guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics instructs; and other homebound options available to families. It was reported that the state is no longer waiving certain pupil accounting rules, therefore the district is no longer able to offer remote learning. Prevention strategies including vaccine promotion; masking; distancing when possible; testing if available; ventilation; hand washing and sanitizing; and contact tracing were outlined. Mr. Hood explained the current visitor policy; and addressed recess; quarantining; communication with families; how to stay academically engaged while in quarantine; athletics, band, choir, and extracurricular masking policies. Safe Return to School Plan

Members discussed the following: mask enforcement; volunteer policy; Lansing Public Schools virtual option; percentage of vaccinated students at the high school; plexiglass;

substitute teachers; and testing for athletes.

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The following individuals addressed the board: George Platsis addressed the board regarding the equity plan; Frank Aki Ochberg regarding resources and priorities; Wesley Vanvlek regarding safety protocols; Nathan Mahn regarding enrollment and return to school planning; Gwenn McAuliffe concerning safety protocols; Jane Manfredi regarding safety protocols; Phoebe Liu safety protocols, gifted and talented programming, and Asian-American history; Tom Buffet regarding the vaccine status of staff; Gustavo De Los Campos regarding safety protocols; Sue Yang regarding safety protocols and flexibility; Rakesh Ranjan and Burcu Tasoluk regarding safety protocols.

Citizens Address  
Agenda & Non-  
Agenda Items

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: recent administrator retreat at the Nokomis Learning Center; groundskeeping maintenance; purchase of additional picnic tables for outside eating and learning opportunities; upcoming discussion regarding the road construction projects; and welcomed new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Stephen Keskes.

Superintendent's  
Report

Mary Gebara inquired about air conditioning and air flow concerns, Cavanaugh – possibly using tents, covid funds usage, mask requirements

Board Reports &  
Request

President Bolton acknowledged correspondence from the following: Nathan Mahn, Chris Dana, Christine Mason, Nicole and Wesley VanVleck, Scott Imberman, Jane Manfredi, Jason Nicholas, Marisssa Collins, Ana Vazquez, Gregg Howe, Kate Stevenson and Dr. Jan Liu, Carmelita North, Sheree Jungwirth, Yangfan Liu, Kristen Brooks and Scott Schopieray, Dayna Christians regarding safety protocols and procedures; Sharon Zenker, Sarah Engmark and Carmelita North concerning the mascot change; Chen Jing, Wen Huang, Zhen Qiu, Chen Xu, Jun Gan, Jing Gao and Wen Huang, Junyan regarding virtual learning opportunities; Tim Potter concerning a FOIA request; Jamie Hope requesting an interview; Brittany Govorchin with a button idea; and Amy A concerning childcare issues for single and dual working parents.

Member Lyon-Callo reported on climate change and intentional changes the district could make. Jayme Taylor commented on vaccination rates and handbooks. Member Lynn asked that the board receive the correspondence being distributed to families.

Consent Agenda

MOVED by Melanie Lynn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board approve items 1 through 3 for immediate implementation and appropriate action:

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 26, 2021.

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of July 26, 2021.

Item 3: Acknowledge receipt of the leave of absence report and approve the requested leave of absence for Nicole Fitchett, Phys Ed Teacher at Kinawa, for the period of August 18th through September 20, 2021; Amy Olivarez, 2nd Grade Teacher at Hiawatha Elementary for the period of August 18, 2021 through November 12, 2021; Melissa Sainz, ELL Teacher at Hiawatha Elementary for the period of September 27th through November 8, 2021; Cynthia Trygier, Exploratory Teacher at Hiawatha Elementary for the period of August 24th through November 16, 2021; and Alexandria Williams, Science Teacher at Okemos High School for the period of November 25, 2021 through February 17, 2022.

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

MOVED by Dean Bolton, SUPPORTED by Mary Gebara that the board approve the employment of William Hackbarth, 51% Exploratory Teacher at Kinawa 5-6 at Division I, Step 1; Brittney Hall, Librarian at Okemos High School, at Division II, Step 4; Katy Hall,

Employment –  
Certified

ELL Teacher at Central Montessori at Division II, Step 8; Kendra Hixon, 3rd Grade Teacher at Cornell Elementary at Division II, Step 4; Heidi Nussdorder, 6th Grade Math Teacher at Kinawa, at Division I, Step 5; Julianna Putman, Speech & Language Pathologist for the District at Division II, Step 8; Andrea Tousignant, 3rd Grade Teacher at Cornell Elementary at Division I, Step 1; and Kristen Warner, School Psychologist for the District at Division III, Step 8 of the teacher salary schedule, effective August 18, 2021 in accordance with sections 1230 (2) and 1230 a (2) of the Revised School Code conditioned upon receipt of acceptable criminal history checks and criminal records checks.

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

MOVED by Mary Gebara, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board waive the 30-day waiting period requirement; and waive the reading and adopt final reading of board policy 4116.2/5116.2 Title IX Sexual Harassment.

Board Policy:  
Final Reading

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

MOVED by Jayme Taylor, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the waive the reading and adopt first reading of new board policy: 4121/5121 Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Against Students

Board Policy:  
First Reading

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

MOVED by Mary Gebara, SUPPORTED by Vincent Lyon-Callo that the waive the reading and adopt the ratification resolution detailing the terms and conditions of the Okemos Public Schools 2021 Refunding Bonds.

Resolution:  
Refunding Bonds

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

Technology Director Tom Isom discussed our ongoing technology bond and replacement of high school computer class and computer lab devices including timelines and bid process. Administration is recommending the purchase of 100 Lenovo Desktop Computers to be awarded to Trafera and funded through the district's Facilities/Technology/Security/Transportation and Capital Outlay Bond.

Technology  
Purchases

No one addressed the board.

Public Comment

There were no other matters.

Other Matters

President Bolton adjourned the regular meeting at 11:00 p.m.

Adjourn

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Katie Cavanaugh, Secretary