

Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 28, 2022

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Gebara at 7:03 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

Closed Session

Piotr M. Matusiak, from Thrun Law Firm, and William Shinoff, from Frantz Law Group, a California law firm discussed the nationwide mass action lawsuit by schools against Juul and other vaping product manufacturers. The lawsuit alleges that these vaping companies are intentionally marketing their products to children, therefore bringing harm to the community. Currently, there are 650 districts nationally and 100 Michigan districts involved in the suit. There are no upfront costs to the district. Any attorney fees would be collected only if there is a recovery. Any funds recovered would cover vaping-related cost such as the installation of vape detectors in bathrooms, education, addiction resources, student supervisors etc. The board will consider a resolution to join the suit at its next meeting.

The team from TowerPinkster and Christman presented an update on the progress of the Bond's steering committee including decision making criteria, the facilities assessment overview and next steps outlined for the Board and Community. The proposed 2022 bond is an opportunity for a zero tax increase bond to accommodate enrollment, address facility needs and re-imagine the districts future facilities. The steering committee's guiding principles and criteria for decision-making were reviewed and include flexibility, financial stability, equitable access etc. The most recent facilities assessment was shared, as well as what this assessment is, how it is developed, key terminology and big picture observations. Each component of the assessment is graded based on its condition, and a renovation cost attached. The cost is to bring the component up to good condition, not expand or enhance.

Reconvene

Members discussed the following: what about buildings in the middle of the scale provided; property the district owns; and buildings that it is suggested the district doesn't invest in.

Therapy Dog Program

Recent listening sessions were reported on as well as key themes and takeaways including sustainability, security, accessibility etc. The approach to identifying the priorities to address first was reviewed. Timelines were provided including the recommendation to the board in May.

Members discussed the following: separating the administration building from Central elementary; different models including a 5th elementary school; communication with the community; outdoor spaces; impact on community and traffic; more details as the focus narrows; sustainability; 21st century technology capabilities.

Assistant Superintendent Bailey presented an update on recent assessment data, including past trends, other data points for consideration and what actions may result from the data as a result. Mrs. Bailey first explained the MICIP – the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process, as well as the MTSS structure and reviewed core components. Benchmark data is collected using Fastbridge for math, reading and social-emotional learning. She also explained what the district learns from this data, and how it is

Citizens Address
Agenda & Non-
Agenda Items

used at the student, classroom, building and district levels. Subgroup and trend data, as well as anecdotal reports from teachers and RTI coaches was also shared. In general, most grades and groups experienced less proficiency when compared with fall data.

Members discussed the following: assessment of the program; handler responsibilities and selection process; potential for issues; cleaning protocols; and student expectations and instruction.

Wesley VanVleck addressed the board regarding masking.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: possible mass action lawsuit and upcoming discussion regarding participation; thoughts to former board member Ron Styka and family; mascot and logo next steps and process; upcoming policy committee meeting and discussion regarding using a policy service; backpack policy implementation; masking policy and updated Covid and quarantine protocols; bond update including recent listening sessions; and transportation preparedness.

Members inquired about the masking policy.

High School Student Representatives Zainah and Amulya reported on the following: backpack policy implementation; hygiene products supplied; Covid cases; mascot logo submission; recent snow days; deadline for AP class applications; upcoming diversity assembly; and the upcoming Touch of Class fundraiser to benefit Okemos Cares.

Student
Representative
Report

President Gebara acknowledged correspondence from the following: Nathan Mahn and Sheree Jungwirth concerning Covid response protocols; Suzanne Kim regarding enrollment; Jace Harper requesting an interview; Jill VanHof concerning student voice and processes; Char Simons, Ashlyn Beland and Miko Matsumura regarding the mascot; Beth Bowen regarding providing menstruation products; Dray Chase and Sheree Jungwirth regarding spectator limits.

Board Reports &
Request

Members discussed the following: board advocacy committee and legislative advocacy regarding the 75% attendance requirements; ISOA minutes distributed and recent meeting; community forum regarding school funding and input into board priorities; masking policy and decision-making regarding Covid protocols; and a recent parent council meeting.

MOVED by Andy Phelps SUPPORTED by Melanie Lynn that the board approve items 1 through 5 for immediate implementation and appropriate action.

Consent Agenda

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 24, 2022.

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 31, 2022;

Item 3: Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of January 31, 2022;

Item 4: Acknowledge receipt of the leave of absence report and approve the leave of absence request for Christina Abbott, Science Teacher at Okemos High School for the period of January 31st through February 21, 2022; and Deborah Clay, Science Teacher at Kinawa for the period of February 24th through March 24, 2022.

Item 5: Acknowledge receipt of the January financial statement and approve payment of bills for January.

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

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Jayme Taylor that the board approve the recommendation for the new mascot and adopt Wolves as the new Okemos Public Schools mascot.

New Mascot

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

MOVED by Jayme Taylor, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board approve the following recommended number of PPK-8 Public Montessori school-of-choice openings for potential enrollment: Kindergarten-1 opening; Grades 1 and 2- 1 opening; Grades 3 and 4- 2 openings; Grades 5 and 6 - 10 openings; and Grades 7 and 8 - 10 openings.

Montessori
School of Choice

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

The vote to approve first reading of board policies: 1119/4119 Firearms and Weapons; and 5146 Violation of Weapon-Free School Zone is postponed until legal counsel can be consulted and possible additional revisions made.

MOVED by Dean Bolton, SUPPORTED by Melanie Lynn that the board approve the following new high school courses to be offered beginning the 2022-2023 school year: Python (computer science elective); Beyond Connection (SEL elective); Investing 101 (elective); and Fundamental Music for All (elective).

Course
Recommendation

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

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board approve the following revision to the high school graduation requirements beginning the 2022-2023 school year: Eliminate the chemistry and/or physics requirement to graduate and allow physical/earth science, biology and one other science course to fulfill the science graduation requirement.

Graduation
Requirement
Change

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

Roll Call Vote

Dean Bolton	Yes	Vincent Lyon-Callo	---
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Andrew Phelps	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Jayne Taylor	Yes
Melanie Lynn	Yes		

MASB Board of
Directors

Board members have received information on candidates seeking election to the board of directors of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB). The election ballot must be completed and returned by March 2, 2022. Okemos may vote on candidates from Region 7, which this year is for one, three-year term. Members discussed their selection on to vote for. Members agreed to vote for Mr. Guillermo Lopez at their February 28th meeting.

Public Comment
Other Matters

Frank Ochberg addressed the board regarding weapons.

A reminder of the Board Work Session on February 16th for the purpose of a self-assessment.

Board members received a proposed timeline in the development of the 2022-2023 budget to review.

Adjourn

Melanie Lynn inquired about the board policy recommendation and including a DEI lens in the policy review process.

President Gebara adjourned the regular meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Jayne Taylor, Secretary