

**Okemos Board of Education**  
**Okemos, Michigan 48864**  
**REGULAR MEETING APRIL 11, 2022**

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4-11-2022

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Gebara at 7:00 p.m.

Call To Order

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

Members Absent: Dean Bolton

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

Superintendent Hood and the team from TowerPinkster and Christman presented an update on the steering committee's work on a potential November, 2022 bond. Superintendent Hood reviewed the purpose of the update and the current status including the committee's approach to developing the scope of the bond, their approach to the number of elementary buildings, prioritization, and community survey feedback. He reminded the community that the bond would be a zero-tax increase that would generate approximately \$270 million.

Bond Update

The approach to determining the number of elementary buildings was discussed and the recommendation is based on enrollment and the accompanying impacts to transportation, redistricting, class sizes and financial.

The process and criteria used to prioritize projects to be accomplished by the bond was described and is distinguished as "big rocks versus small and medium rocks". Examples of big rock projects include a new Cornell Elementary building, major renovations to Kinawa and Chippewa Middle School including a possible shared auditorium, a new or significantly renovated Okemos Public Montessori building, and a community natatorium. The committee evaluated each project to narrow down to just a few "big rocks".

Feedback from a resident survey was shared and indicates the majority of residents would support a no tax increase bond, as they agree buildings are inadequate. Respondents were asked about specific projects proposed within the bond which helped inform the committee's decision-making. Next steps were outlined including an upcoming board work session.

Members discussed the following: summary documentation to concisely communicate the work so far; summary of what the 2019 bond accomplished; factors considered in the decision-making process; cost comparison of the different scenarios; identify the where of a new Cornell building; security measures to be included; what other small and medium projects are being considered; sustainability; additional details needed; timeframe for projects to be implemented or finished.

DEI Director Lara Slee provided an update as it pertains to the rewriting of the district's Equity Plan and equity initiatives. Dr. Slee reviewed the process and approach including questions that will guide the Equity Plan's development. She described the CRSE framework that will be used to evaluate each goal and strategy. Action steps and community forum input will also be included. Next steps and timelines were reviewed.

Equity Update

Members inquired about the following: connecting the Equity Plan and Strategic Plan; looking for volunteers to participate in a variety of capacities; developing a truly inclusive process that has multiple perspectives.

Dr. Slee provided an update on other DEI initiatives throughout the district including: justice leaders collaborative professional learning; leadership council participating in EMU course; student name change process; District CRPBIS for K-4; and a mental health support grant to provide additional SEL lessons.

No one addressed the board.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: third-party custodial RFP; third-party food service review and upcoming recommendation; collaboration with Earth Club for recycling and composting; possible security grant; introduced new varsity football coach Efe Scott-Emuakpor; and current work to operationalize the Strategic Plan; board policy work; BoardBook software; and Covid guidance.

Assistant Superintendent Bailey provided an update regarding 5-8 social studies curriculum review and possible adoption, as well as revisions to the elementary report card.

Assistant Superintendent Keskes provided an HR update regarding staff interviews being conducted by a third-party, and the hiring of the Cornell and High School principals.

Finance Director Lentz provided an update regarding transportation to afternoon athletic events.

Members inquired about equity and safety as it pertains to athletic transportation.

High School Student Representatives Zainah and Berelian reported on the following: upcoming PSAT, SAT and m-Step assessments; NHS induction ceremony; upcoming MiPhy survey; commencement ceremony of June 5<sup>th</sup>; Prom; the spring musical tuck Everlasting; senior projects; and a recent Robotics Team award.

Member Lyon-Callo inquired about the number of tickets each family is allowed for commencement.

President Gebara acknowledged correspondence from the following: Steve Zimmerman regarding the logo; and Sunmee Han concerning the volunteer conviction disclosure form.

Member Cavanaugh reported on a resolution she is working on regarding waiving the State attendance requirement for the 21-22 school year; and petition drive that is circulating Michigan that would create taxpayer funded educational savings accounts.

Member Taylor also spoke about advocacy efforts of the board, suggesting a place on the website and regular updates to the board and community.

President Gebara provided an OEF update and the availability of Apple Awards.

MOVED by Melanie Lynn SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board approve items 1 through 3 for immediate implementation and appropriate action.

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 14, 2022;

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of March 14, 2022;

Item 3: Approved the requested leave of absence for Molly Hughey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher at Cornell Elementary for the period of April 14, 2022 through November 2, 2022; Tarah Miller, Science Teacher at Chippewa Middle School for the period of April 29th through June 11, 2022; and Amanda Whittico, Science Teacher at Chippewa Middle School for the period of May 20th through September 23, 2022.

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

MOVED by Vincent Lyon-Callo SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board acknowledge receipt of the February financial statement and approve payment of bills for February.

Financial  
Statement

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

MOVED by Jayme Taylor, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board waive the reading and adopt first reading of board policies: 1119/4119 Firearms and Weapons; and 5146 Violation of Weapon-Free School Zone.

Board Policy:  
First Reading

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

Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz provided information regarding the development of the 2022-2023 budget including preliminary assumptions, as well as discussed a revision to the 2021-2022 budget. Specific information regarding childcare programming, funding and relief grants was shared. Revisions to the 21-22 budget were discussed as well as the impact on the general fund and carry forward impact on the 22-23 budget.

2022-2023  
Budget  
Development

Updated 2022-23 budget assumptions were provided and include revisions to special education funding, savings from retirements, and childcare stabilization grants. The impact on the general fund is approximately a positive \$1,077,772 before impending budget discussion such as negotiations, state aid revisions, and the state budget.

Members inquired about childcare enrollment trends and budget priorities.

There was no public comment.

Public Comment

A reminder of the April 26<sup>th</sup> special meeting for the purpose of a board work session regarding the bond.

Other Matters

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Jayme Taylor that the board adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations.

Closed Session

Roll Call Vote

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

AYE: 5 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 2 **MOTION CARRIED**

The board adjourned to executive session at 9:54 p.m.

The board reconvened from executive session at 10:15 p.m.

Reconvene

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

Members Absent: Dean Bolton

Administrators: Superintendent John Hood; and Assistant Superintendent Stephen Keskes

Adjourn

President Gebara adjourned the regular meeting at 10:16 p.m.

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Jayne Taylor, Secretary