

District Parent Council Minutes

September 21, 2020 12:00 pm – via zoom

Attendance:

Sarah Allen, Lynne Thatcher, Kristin Arnett, Carley Patel, Niki Robinson, Karen Shapiro, Katie Cavanaugh, Nathan Schuster, Janet Philips, Amy Burton, John Hood (arrived at 12:30 pm)

Welcome and Introductions – Sarah Allen, DPC President, welcomed everyone and people introduced themselves.

School representatives and building reports:

- Reps were asked to go back to their Parent Groups to try to find a second rep if they did not currently have one. Sarah will reach out to the remaining reps from last year who were not in attendance today. Building reports will be gathered moving forward during COVID online meetings only if the school has something to report of interest to the other buildings.
- **OHS** – *Niki Robinson* – Football is happening. No one is allowed to stand around the gates to watch the game. Only two visitors in stadium per student. PSAT and SATs happening soon.
- **Chippewa** – *Kristin Arnett* – Parent group discussed providing food and notifying teachers the day it is available in case they want to come in to get some.
- **Kinawa** – *Karen Shapiro*– Zoom PTO meeting had great attendance. It was an evening meeting. Big fundraiser, Keep Kinawa Moving, will be in mid-November. Will have a week long event done virtually; Get Moving Crew will assist. They have added a week long tracker online for each activity. Book fair will be November to December online. Using Scholastic because they will send ordered books to people’s homes. Also, discussed on how to support teachers.
- **Cornell** – *Liz Luyendyk* – No rep present.
- **OPM** – *Katie Cavanaugh* – Parent group is brand new (other than one person). Suggested that reps bring back to their parent group meetings to keep up with the weeding at the school buildings.
- **Bennett Woods** – *Janet Philips; Nathan Schuster* – Fundraisers on hold for now. Focused parent group meeting on supporting teachers and what can be done to support them in this online learning environment. Talked about dropping treats off but not all teachers are in the buildings.
- **Hiawatha** – *Carly Patel; Amy Burton* – HawkWalk (fundraiser) has been postponed to Spring for now. May cancel completely. Book fair is also unknown and undecided.

Additional reps.

Niki – OHS, Chippewa, Central

Sarah - Kinawa

Superintendent’s Report - *John Hood*

- Administration changes – Director of Media and Technology, Errin Chapman, left the district and was replaced by Tom Isom. Todd Sharp left his position as Transportation

Director and was replaced by Corrinne Karpinski. Steve Lathrop, Director of Operations, will retire in December, so his position will be posted soon. Cheri Meier retired the end of July – her position was absorbed by others and will not be replaced.

- Equity forum happened which led to some actions including handbook changes regarding hate symbols like the Confederate Flag. Discussion happening regarding the Chieftain as a mascot. Logo was changed in the past, but now there is discussion about changing the name too. Discussion about diversity and using a very wide lens to update the equity plan.
- Working on safe return to school plan. Gathering data on Hopes and Fears from parents and older students. Four committees are working on this plan (Steering, Wellness, Instructional, Operations). DPC provided parents for these committees. We have an extended learning plan and a COVID preparedness and response plan from the Governor. District got help from MSU and some parents regarding training of teachers to provide the best online learning as possible.
- Stacey Bailey is working with a Mental Health task force. A new screening tool will be rolled out in the next month or so. Parents will have the option to use this or not. It may identify students who are struggling mentally.
- District is training teachers on using their equity lens when teaching online. Thinking about cameras on or not, not all students have a quiet place for school, not using terms like house.
- School is online until at least October 30th. Will use three weeks to transition to in person learning if moved to Phase 5. Plan is online fully while state is in Phase 4 and an in person and an online option when moved to Phase 5.

Board of Education Report – Katie Cavanaugh

Commented that the Board feels that they made the best decision for teachers and students. They were hoping to offer consistency by having the same schedule each day.

OEF Report - Lynne Thatcher

The OEF is committed to helping the school district fill in budget gaps. Working with John Hood and Mary Gebara to identify the needs. Fundraising is happening with t-shirt and sign sales. Commitment to Excellence awards were announced, but the banquet has been postponed until April. Tentative date is April 29, 2021.

New Business:

- Online link options – Zoom and Google Meet. Sarah will investigate Google Meet which can be used through the District Parent Council Gmail account. Lynne offered using her Zoom account for now.
- Discuss building reports and locations each month while online.
 - **Future DPC Meetings – Date and Building**
 - September 21, 2020
 - October 19, 2020 Chippewa MS
 - November 16, 2020 Bennett Woods Elementary

- December 14, 2020 Cornell Elementary
 - January 11, 2021 Okemos HS
 - February 8, 2021 OPM Central
 - March 15, 2021 Hiawatha Elementary
 - April 19, 2021 Kinawa
 - May 17, 2021 Administration building
- Discussed meeting times for future online DPC meetings. Noon is difficult for parents with younger children (lunch time, etc.). Discussed early morning, but some parents commented that they must help their young children with online class. Discussed meeting at 1:00 pm. Sarah will send out a survey.
- It is time for DPC to review the Applications for the PHASE advisory board. Lynne briefly explained the process and time commitment. The following reps agreed to review the applications and pick the new members – Sarah Allen, Janet Philips, Karen Shapiro.
- **Presentations while online** – It was discussed whether or not presentations would be feasible while meeting online. Time constraints may limit presentations.
 - Ideas:
 - Equity presentation and report.
 - Behavior and mental health professionals. Plans to help kids transition.
 - Introduce new Administration members.
 - How to integrate safety into public life to create a larger safety culture. Maybe a representative from different areas.
- Discuss October meeting to interview School Board candidates
 - Discussed moving the meeting to evening depending on Matt’s scheduling ability and the candidates’ availability.
 - Questions from previous interview to consider:
 - Why do you want to be on the Okemos school Board? What are your top three priorities if elected, including budget considerations?
 - Talk about your past two years of support and involvement in the Okemos Schools and in the Okemos School District.
 - What do you envision is the role of an Okemos School Board Member? What will you bring to the School Board? What would you do to learn your role?
 - Where do you stand on our current equity plan? What does equity mean to you? If elected, how will you implement the plan?
 - How would you reach out to the Okemos community and actively engage them in accomplishing our district’s goals?
 - Are there any changes you would like to propose as an Okemos School Board member?
 - All questions were approved for the October meeting.
 - Sarah will contact Matt Ottinger to run the technology and to tape the interview.

- Sarah will send out an invite to the School Board candidates with the list of questions.
- Items left open when Covid-19 hit in March 2020 - Where are we at with?
 - *Best Practices with Finances in Parent Groups*
 - *Healthy options for School Lunch – any research found?*

Adjourn

Next Meeting: October 19, 2020 online – Topic: School Board candidate interviews

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