

District Parent Council
February 14, 2022
12:00 – 2:30pm on Zoom

Attendees: Sarah Allen, Liz Luyendyk, Jane Manfredi, Kelly Sundeen, Joy Magyar, Niki Robinson, Katie Cavanaugh, Mary Gebara, Karen Shapiro, John Hood, and Mark Fargo

Welcome and Introductions – Sarah Allen

Superintendent's Report – John Hood

- Bond: Steering Committee (parents, teachers, students, Community) almost done with Facilities Assessment and Listen and Learn sessions. Will bring it to the Steering Committee and then the Board soon. (Will it be new builds? Add on to current? Community needs). \$100-200 million can be generated on a no tax increase bond. Update on the 24th, by May have a plan for the bond and Master plan for the district's future.
- Equity Plan Rewrite: progressing. Researching tools to rewrite the Equity Plan to create clear objectives and measurable outcomes. Focus committees to be selected. Current weaknesses it is needing specific, measurable outcomes, accountability measures to the community, and assessment of if we are meeting our goals.
- Posted HS assistant principal position now, three positions will be opened up later including Principal (to get a bigger pool so no one has to leave mid year), at the HS, all interim administrators.
- Board will vote on the Okemos Wolves Mascot tonight. Tomorrow we will release process for student and community input for a sketch. Themes are to be directed in the drawings. Can select elements from each entry possibly. Graphic designer will pull all elements together in an Inclusive approach. Maroon and Carolina blue and white, wolves image, O, Okemos wolves (Gabe Viscomi, Okemos alumni will help). Mr Hood personally responds to all of the emails against the mascot change. One person watched the videos and rethought their position.
- Still looking for subs, food service, and bus drivers, doing wage studies and negotiation so hourly wages stay competitive.
- Draft calendar for next school year out in the next 3 weeks or so.
- COVID response:
 - numbers are down. Under 20 children were at the test to stay, today 10.
 - Ingham County Health Department has moved down to just recommending mask mandates. OPS mandated masks when it was just recommended by them earlier. We are staying with masks as distancing isn't possible. Mr Hood is recommending to board we keep with masks. Once masks are optional by Ingham County Health Department we will reconsider. CDC, Ingham County and MDHHS still recommending masks in school settings. Right now we are keeping with masks especially as those < 5 years aren't vaccinated – the more mitigation we can still do is helpful. OPM has 3 and 4 year olds in the classroom with 5 year olds.

- Question about requiring vaccinations? Those are state requirements for the state vaccination. Mr Hood will ask about if we can require if state doesn't. 96% of staff is vaccinated.
- Comment: Mary Gebara- vaccine is seen like the flu shot as per the government and not like the MMR. She doesn't foresee it being mandated.
- Emails to the board regarding this topic would be appreciated so a balanced view is presented.
- Comment: A lot of kids will still wear them even if the masks are dropped.
- Need Chippewa crossing guard, etc.
 - Questions were asked and answers were given:
 - Chief Plaga would do an assessment
 - Loop both Meridian Township and the Okemos Superintendent in when sending email

Board of Education Report – Mary Gebara

- Updates, self-assessment training session this week. Conducted by MI Association of School Boards. Ask questions about unintentional biases and responses. Reflect on board membership. Hasn't been done over the past 4 years. Looking forward to the bond and keeping all healthy and in school. Less COVID emails about necessary testing is great news.
- Questions:
 - Any board members feeling the strain? Any looking to step down? When next election cycle is?
 - All feeling strain. Voluntarily but hostile environment. Purpose never changed though.
 - Dean, Mary and Vincent up for re-election. Mary isn't sure yet about her plans.
 - Mr. Hood said the longevity of Superintendent relates to the healthy function of the board and helps with district leadership. Administrator turn over has progressed as it is so hard right now.
- Comments: Leadership of the mascot committee phenomenal.

Principal's Report – Kelly Sundeen, Montessori at Central

- Mr Hood introduced Principal Sundeen
 - She came from Leslie Public Schools (22 yrs) and had a lot of instructional leadership and had multi age classroom experience. She offers an outside lens to our district and is professional. Kelly shines in reflection, leadership, and growth. An MSU education graduate. She lives in Williamston.
- Lockdown Training: Local police training, in person. How to barricade the door, do we leave the building.
- Three teachers are going to the National Montessori Conference. They wrote a \$2,000 grant and PTO gave them money to allow them to go, and bring back professional development for her staff.
- Sundeen starts her montessori training soon.

- Monthly Antibias and Anti-racism conversations with Dr. Slee. Discuss/reflection group.
- OPM won the state chess championship, student gold medal in chess, and another silver medal.
- OPM is welcoming volunteers in a non-student contact role (egs. New reading program readers need to be organized, work in the copy room, all vaccinated and have background checks).
- Positive behavior plan is being developed with Dr. Slee.
- Need a lunch supervisor
- March 7-18 Parent Teacher Conferences- Virtual
- Contact tracing- teachers have been intentional. They are careful who kids sit by, including lunch and snacks. They are coordinating so that those kids can sit next to each other during work time as well. Also coordinating with special teachers to keep them in the same groups, eg. Some close contact as small as 3.
- Need a PE teacher, Miss Danielle is moving to Heartwood School to do adaptive PE the whole time. Some candidates will be interviewed and working with Chippewa.
- Mileage Club Registration occurring
- Upper Elementary class meeting at Nokomis
- Flash Dash; big fundraiser, coming up
- Bridge closed southbound. (Northbound another day). Kinawa was fine but Dobie congested.
- PTO March 7th 7:30 zoom
- Okemos has been very welcoming of all new principals.
- Concern Chippewa/Okemos road crossing. Flashing light. Crossing guards there? Mr Hood said Chief Plaga? Talk to Mr Hood. And joint funded by Mr Hood and the police. Reminder to parents to slow down in school zones for our walkers- to be put into the newsletter. Parents can help too. Email Mr. Hood and plaga@meridian.mi.us

Presentation – Mark Fargo – Director of Operations

- Liz introduced Mark and asked him to provide background of what he does and also give a bond update.
 - Lots of little stuff needs replacement.
 - They're identifying what needs are for the bond.
- He has been in school systems for 21 years (previously in Grand Rapids).
- Doors need to be replaced. Meetings with the Steering Committee, they've done assessments for all the buildings and are compiling the information.

QUESTIONS:

- CORNELL walk through- tight on space, carline and busline issue. Will lines be painted on the pavement to space out cars? Signage or painting can help don't stop or don't park, yellow cross hatch. Helps school and the community. Bring a bus over and see what needs to be marked.
- BW Family council wants to help pay for some blacktop. Once the Blacktop is cleared, and can be seen, he will meet us over there. And he can get us an estimate for repair.

- Ventilation- ionization process going when he started- the companies state the ionization units are ok and meet safe national standards for low emission of acceptable levels of ozone.
 - In rooms- ionization in the unit by the blower. And drawn through All merv 13 filters. If unit breaks it isn't not running, separate room air filter, \$2000 to accomplish what we do for short term.
 - He can monitor for rooms air readings for the week. CO2 and VOC but it is Limited.
 - Filters light in the unit green if working properly.
- New cleaning company, Peckham. Are you happy? Yes he is happy. Principal happy too (Sundeen saw the VP of the company vacuuming her office).
- Grounds issues- Chippewa and Kinawa (tennis courts unusable).
- Salting huge parking lots of \$\$
- Carline issues at the high school and Montessori flow concerns, can we reevaluate.
- Question – with the TicTok challenge regarding the bathroom soap dispensers, did we have to buy new? Costs? Fixtures are free from the vendor. Costs was for the maintenance person time and reattachment.
- mark.fargo@okemosk12.com

Building updates

OHS – *Niki Robinson and Sarah Allen*

- Conferences signup soon. Virtual. Teachers and parents are liking the versatility of virtual conferences.
- March 18 – Diversity assembly
- March 10 – Touch of Class, fundraiser for Okemos Cares
- Touch of Class
 - The 22nd annual student-organized Touch of Class charity luncheon will be held on Thursday, March 10 during the lunch periods.
 - All proceeds will be donated to Okemos Cares (assisting OHS students in financial need).
 - In 2020, we raised over \$4,000 and sold over 550 tickets!
 - Tickets will be sold during the lunch hours between February 16-25, for a discounted rate of \$5 each and then are \$7 each from February 26-March 8.
 - Beginning Monday, February 14, you can use a credit card and purchase them online:
 - [Touch Of Class 2022 TICKETS](#)
 - This year's luncheon is sponsored by Olive Garden and Tasty Twist.
 - The event is chaired by a very dedicated and hardworking executive committee: Devin Reome, Sarah Hamel, Jackson Davis, Kate Farnum, Raj Singh, Nylah Cannon, Hannah Alstrom, Bethany Hartman, Max Wakefield, and Mrs. Sermak.
 - We hope that your student joins us for this spectacular event!
 - If a student has a financial need and would like to attend, please contact a counselor.
- Parent Group

- Upcoming Parent Group Meetings:
 - Wednesday, March, 9 at 8:45am
 - Wednesday, May, 11 at 8:45am
 - The zoom link will continue to be sent out in future OHS updates and posted on Okemos High School Parent Group Facebook page.
- Post Prom: Parent Group is still looking for parents to help with post prom. We need help planning this event. Specifically, we need a parent to chair the food (food will be handled differently than in previous years) and someone to chair ticket sales, which will be overseen by our Treasurer. If you are able to help, contact Michelle Renfrew at ohsparentgroup20@gmail.com.
- Post Prom will run from 11pm - 2am and all students must check in by 12am. Tickets are \$25 per person and can be purchased during lunches in May, dates TBD - this is just a heads up!

Chippewa – *Karen Shapiro and Kristin Arnett*

- CPG held its last meeting on Friday, 2/11.
- Students are now welcomed to attend after school sporting events.
- 7th grade camp will be substituted with a few field trips (“Winter Days”) and in-school programs 2/23 – 2/25. The 7th grade trips include sledding at Hawk Island, skating at Suburban Ice Arena, and a movie at Sun Theater. There will also be some special activities for the 8th graders in some activities since they missed 7th grade camp last year.
- The 8th grade trip to Cedar Point is planned again for this year.
- The 7th grade trip to East Lansing Aquatics Center will hopefully return this year.
- The spring walk/run event will be planned soon, and possibly including new ideas and events for this year, possibly soon after standardized testing is completed.
- End of year parties for 8th graders (and possibly 7th) are being considered (in brainstorming mode).
- Laura Slee, the Director of Equity & Inclusion, will be doing a training for staff at Chippewa on trauma and stress.

Kinawa – *Sarah Allen and Niki Robinson*

- February 16: KPG Chipotle Fundraiser for Kinawa
- February 17: Random Acts of Kindness Day
- February 20: Parent Teacher Conferences Sign Up begins at 2pm
- March 2: PTO General Meeting at 6:30pm
- March 7, 8, 10: Kinawa Spring Parent Teacher Conferences
- PTO approved to give money for cross country skis (Already started gym and exploratory)

Cornell – *Liz Luyendyk and Corinne Dyksen*

- PTO meeting this week 9pm zoom
- Early release, phone calls to parents helpful
- Valentines spirit week
- Mileage club

- Leave room for busses

OPM – *Katie Cavanaugh and Niki Robinson*

- Flash Dash – looking for donations, volunteers, sponsors.

Bennett Woods – *Jane Manfredi*

- The BW family Council was able to support a teacher's lunch from Pizza House.
- Teachers had safety training for lockdown situations and a future training in first aid is being looked into for the teachers and staff.
- BW is trying to build our leadership team with searches for a new behavior aid, a special education paraprofessional, and more lunch room supervisors.
- An in-person science night is being planned for spring, as well as hopefully a Fun Fair, as well as International night.
- Jen Rapson received a grant to help organize the front workroom.
- Mileage Club registration has been opened.
- Spirit week will be February 14th.
- Meridian Township Police will help alleviate the issues of people pulling into the middle lane.
- Carline discussion- newer but still backs up through the circle and with new housing development going up. Issue with many of our schools to be included in the bond.

Hiawatha – *Carly Patel and Joy Magyar*

- Mileage Club student registration is going on now through February 28th.
- Spirit week is February 14-18
- Next PTO meeting is March 10th at 7:00 pm on Zoom.
- In person Science night
- More volunteers in the school- non contact role
- Carline issues

New Business – general information

Lost and Found at the schools

- Kinawa offered the gym open from 4-5pm for parents to come claim their child's items.
- Bennett Woods did the same, they opened it up for parents to look over.

Online Covid reporting

- Peak COVID times, hard to update it. Some off some come on, some tell us last day of quarantine.
- Dashboard Only includes those with school notices/emails sent out. Send Steve Keskes, stephen.keskes@okemosk12.net, for issues.
- Update and due again or keep til next update? It was slow during the peak, but it is more rapidly updated now.

- Sub notice of close contact? can ask Steve

Professional Day Advisory Committee

- Jane and Niki can be on the Professional Day Advisory Committee. Email district email if people still needed.

Substitutes

Mary Gebara – comments:

- District is asking for substitute teachers, it's easy to register, college degree in anything. 90 credits of college. Training for sub is not difficult. www.edustaff.org Scroll down to the bottom and see MI, for subs, bus drivers, and others that work in the schools. You can really pick and choose.
 - Suggestion to add a line to the newsletters saying just need some college to help and maybe doing a half page sheet with easy directions.
- OEF- Okemos Education Foundation – looking for members to be a part of the foundation. All about giving back to the district. 1.5 hours 1 x month.

Next month: Music Program presentation; Media and Tech representative for questions.

Adjourn Next Meeting: March 21, 2022 – Hiawatha (online)

Email: Districtcouncil48864@gmail.com

Website: www.okemosk12.net – Families – District Parent Council