

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
September 28, 2020
Report 20-33

Present: Krauss, Mowen, Paez, Ochodnicky, Quick, Webster
Absent: Keyes

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle provided the participants with a few guidelines and procedures for the District's virtual school Board Meeting. The host of the District's virtual school Board Meeting was Curriculum Director Steve Brooks.

President Mowen called the Board of Education meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Due to Governor Whitmer's Executive Orders 2020-154 and 2020-176, the meeting was held virtually using Zoom video conferencing from the Washington Campus, 645 Alger Street, Owosso, MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

President Mowen requested the meeting's agenda be amended to move "Review/Reaffirmation of the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan" to "For Information." Mr. Mowen also requested that the meeting's agenda be amended to include the "Resolution for Emergency Powers for the Superintendent" under For Future Action items. Motion moved by Secretary Webster, supported by Trustee Krauss. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Krauss, Paez, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Webster. Nays: Quick. Absent: Keyes. Motion carried.

Building Reports

Board of Education Student Representative Tyler Hoag shared that the high school has adjusted well to the hybrid system. Student Government has an idea to celebrate Homecoming, although the traditional homecoming dance will not be occurring this fall. Mr. Hoag shared that spirit week is taking place. The students will be voting for Homecoming Court, which will be announced at the Friday, October 2, 2020 Varsity Football game against Clio Area High School. The King and Queen will be announced at the Trojan Marching Showcase on Tuesday, October 13, 2020. Student Government is hoping a school dance will occur in February but noted this is only if social distancing restrictions are lessened. Mr. Hoag commended the Music Department's adjustment to the hybrid learning system. Mr. Hoag shared that the choir will be hosting virtual concerts that are prerecorded. As mentioned, the Trojan Marching Showcase will occur at Willman Field so seniors are able to march on the field one final time. Mr. Hoag noted that school spirit is high among students. He expressed optimism for a great year ahead.

Transportation Director Renee Secor-Jenks recognized bus driver retirees Debbie Desser and Lorraine Pelikan. Debbie Desser served with the District for 12 years. Lorraine served with the District for 15 years. Ms. Secor-Jenks shared, "Lori and Debbie possess a fantastic work ethic and a wealth of knowledge. Both have built relationships with their students and their parents. They are both organized, skilled at driving, and I could count on them day in and day out. Both have been a tremendous asset to the department and OPS. I will miss them both, and I am happy for them and whatever their next adventures are. . . I will stay in touch with Lori and Debbie. We are not just coworkers at the garage. We are also friends. Good luck to them. They'll be missed."

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle thanked Mr. Hoag and Ms. Secor-Jenks for their reports. Dr. Tuttle expressed well wishes and gratitude to the retirees. Dr. Tuttle shared that OPS currently has

1,724 students in person and 1,272 students completing online learning. 26 5th year seniors are working both remotely and in person at their various schools. Dr. Tuttle commended staff, the administration team, bus drivers, food service, as well as students and families for the start of a successful school year. She noted that OPS has only had one COVID-19 case. It was an asymptomatic case that was contracted outside the district. OPS has had four quarantined teachers. The teachers all tested negative for COVID-19 but had been in close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive. There are currently no OPS staff members in isolation or quarantine.

Executive Order 2020-176 is set to expire October 9, 2020 and has precluded Board of Education meetings from occurring in person. Dr. Tuttle hopes the next Committee of the Whole meeting and regular Board of Education meeting will be held in person.

Dr. Tuttle provided an update on the OPS Bond Project, noting construction is going very well. The main building should be completed in December of 2020, and the performing arts center should be completed by May 1, 2020. Dr. Tuttle thanked high school staff for adapting to many changes.

Dr. Tuttle announced the foundation allowance remained flat this year. She shared this is very good news, as a \$500 cut was anticipated. There was also a one-time allocation of \$65/student.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared the following OPS Spirit Week schedule:

Monday, September 28, 2020 – Mask-Up Monday

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 – Color Day

Wednesday, September 30, 2020 – Wacky Wednesday

Thursday, October 1, 2020 – Fandom Day

Friday, October 2, 2020 – Blue and Gold Day

Dr. Tuttle stated the Homecoming Queen and King will be announced at the Trojan Marching Showcase at Willman Field on October 13, 2020 at 7:00 pm. At this time, band students are being given two tickets each to share with family/friends for the event; however, the number of viewers allowed to attend the showcase might increase in response to guidance from a new Executive Order.

Dr. Tuttle informed participants that Executive Order 2020-185 was passed on September 25, 2020. The Executive Order requires students in grades kindergarten and up to wear face coverings and takes effect on Monday, October 5, 2020. Communication regarding the new order will be sent to district families on September 29, 2020.

Dr. Tuttle also shared that regulations on non-residential gatherings has changed. For indoor gatherings, 20% capacity seating is allowed and for outdoor gatherings, 30% capacity seating is allowed. Willman Field seats approximately 2,700 people, and 30% capacity is approximately 900 people.

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks praised teachers for their excellent work contacting in-person and online students. To date, there have been almost 10,000 documented 2-way communications between OPS staff and students. Mr. Brooks shared the District is providing digital readers at the elementary level, as well as training to elementary staff on how to best utilize these digital resources. Training will be provided by reading expert, Dr. Taylor.

Mr. Brooks informed the Board that preparations are occurring for online assessments. Teachers have started assessing students using the Developmental Reading Assessment, and OPS will be

administering NWEA assessment to kindergarten - eighth grade students within the first nine weeks of school. Seniors who missed the SAT last year had an opportunity to take the test on September 23, 2020.

Public Participation

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded that they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

Public comment was heard from the following individuals:

Jackie Burzmor, teacher

CJ Michalec, former student

Ann Hall, community member

Tyler Hoag, student

Kimberly Baltimore, community member

For Action

- Moved by Ochodnicki, supported by Kraus to approve the August 24, 2020 Regular Board Meeting minutes, September 16, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes, current bills and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicki to authorize the Superintendent to sign the Head Start Purchase of Service Agreement between Capital Area Community Services (C.A.C.S) and Owosso Public Schools (OPS). Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to approve the hiring of Alexis Stuart as a Central Elementary School K-5 Teacher and to approve the hiring of Sarah Warren as an Emerson Elementary School 2nd Grade Teacher. Trustee Quick asked Dr. Tuttle for background relative to the new hires. Dr. Tuttle shared that Alexis Stuart has been an OPS building substitute teacher and has been doing an outstanding job. Dr. Tuttle stated that Sarah Warren served as a building substitute teacher in another district and was highly recommended to OPS when a full-time position opened. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Mowen, Ochodnicki, Webster Krauss, Quick, Paez. Nays: None. Absent: Keyes. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Paez to adopt Revised Policy 5200 – Attendance as a first reading. Dr. Tuttle shared that the policy was broadened to allow more flexibility from schools in response to COVID-19. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board of Education will be asked to approve the course listings presented for Owosso Middle School, Owosso High School, and Lincoln High School for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Tuttle noted that there are minor changes from last year. Astronomy was added to Edgenuity, and a litany of courses were added for 5th year students ranging from networking to AP Psychology and Microbiology.
- The Board of Education will be asked to approve the audit report for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Maner Costerisan, P.C. is anticipated to present at the October 19, 2020 meeting an “unqualified” opinion and therefore will indicate that the financial statements present fairly the financial operations of the District.

- The Board of Education will be asked to approve the Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent. Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that the resolution would grant temporary powers to the Superintendent, outside the current scope, to address the COVID-19 emergency throughout the duration of the 2020-2021 school year or until things return to “normal.” Dr. Tuttle explained that if the Board does not choose to approve the resolution, additional Board of Education meetings may be needed throughout the year to expedite decisions relating to the COVID-19 emergency. Vice President Ochodnicky asked if the Board could conduct votes via email. Dr. Tuttle responded that she is unsure but will review the policy. Mrs. Ochodnicky voiced concern about the resolution but also gratitude that the Board has further time to review the resolution before making a decision.

For Information

- Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported that the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan (the Plan) must be approved by the RESD. It will be in the agenda at each Board meeting until the district has returned to normal operations. The Board will not be asked to approve the Plan at each Board meeting, as the Plan only requires the Board’s reaffirmation. The Plan is presented at each Board meeting in order for the community to have a chance to participate in discussion on the Plan. Trustee Quick expressed belief that the Board should have more input in the Plan. Mrs. Quick expects the Board to continually review the Plan and engage in discussion on the Plan. Mrs. Quick further noted concerns about students not wearing their masks in school and not social distancing. She stated that OPS staff members are doing what they have been asked but she is concerned about the risk to their health and safety. Mrs. Quick asked the Board to adopt a COVID-19 response plan similar to that of the Durand or Ovid-Elsie school district. She asked the Board to adopt a plan that addresses not only student concerns, but also staff concerns. Dr. Tuttle responded that Durand’s and Ovid-Elsie’s plans have nuances that distinguish their plans from what Owosso can do. Dr. Tuttle shared the Plan must balance the needs of students, families, and teachers. She stated that she is not void of listening to new plans or ideas, but they must be comprehensive. Dr. Tuttle also shared that the district is looking at hiring online only teachers at the elementary level. She feels there may be assumptions that she does not care about OPS staff and stated this could not be further from the truth, but she also cares for the community and OPS students. Dr. Tuttle shared the Plan is adjusting, and she is willing to listen to new plans that factor in all elements, such as busing, childcare, and food service. Dr. Tuttle asked Trustee Quick to clarify what Durand and Ovid-Elsie are doing that she would like OPS to adopt. Trustee Quick responded that the districts are having one day a week consist of all virtual learning. Mrs. Quick recognizes OPS has shorter in-person days but believes there is a better way to accommodate the needs of teachers. Dr. Tuttle mentioned concerns about having one all virtual day per week, such as parents who cannot provide care to their younger children on all virtual days, lack of technology devices at the elementary level, and lack of Wi-Fi access for some OPS families. Mrs. Quick questioned why the Plan was moved to a “For Information” agenda item. Dr. Tuttle responded that she is following the law that the Plan needed to be approved by the RESD and reaffirmed every month. Dr. Tuttle affirmed that she will always do what is best for OPS students and has OPS staff at heart when making decisions. OPS put out a comprehensive plan that provides all-day opportunities for kindergarten – fifth grade students. Dr. Tuttle noted that some districts are providing half days, but every plan has ramifications. Dr. Tuttle is concerned about parents who cannot stay home with their children and not having enough technology devices for such a plan. She noted that the district is willing to purchase enough electronic devices, but the devices are not available. She emphasized her willingness to discuss comprehensive adjustments to the plan.

- Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported the following personnel changes:
 - Accepted Positions
 - Danielle Deines has accepted the 52-week Secretary position at Owosso High School.
 - Maddie Krantz has accepted the Monitor position at Central Elementary.
 - Susan Reich has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary.
 - Kaitlin Bockh has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Emerson Elementary.
 - Kristen Riley has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Central Elementary.
 - Olivia Arend has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary.
 - Cassidy Shaydik has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Owosso Middle School.
 - Travis DeVoe has accepted the Bus Driver position.
 - James Rigoulot has accepted the Bus Driver position.
 - Dennis Tomlinson has accepted the Bus Driver and Transportation Assisted (Fueller) position.
 - Katy Voorhies has accepted the Office Secretary position at Bryant Elementary.
 - Resignations
 - Jennifer Haber, Emerson Teacher has submitted her letter of resignation effective October 2, 2020.
 - Jacqueline Hatfield, Monitor at Emerson Elementary has resigned.
 - Jeanne Peterson, Food Service Worker at Owosso Middle School has resigned.
 - Angela Rowell, Paraprofessional at Lincoln Alternative High School has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Tammy Shurlow, Bus Driver has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Janena Kregger, Paraprofessional at Owosso Middle School has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Heather Bingham, Food Service Worker has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Michele Bingham, Food Service Worker has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Kathleen Zemcik, Paraprofessional at Bryant Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Chelsie Mishler, Paraprofessional at Bryant Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Carrie St. John, Paraprofessional at Bryant Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Alicia Lonteen, Special Education Teacher at Bryant Elementary has resigned.
 - Sharry Little, Monitor at Emerson Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.
 - Matthew Klump, Special Education teacher at Owosso High School has resigned.
 - Valerie Street, Monitor at Central Elementary has resigned.
 - Retirements
 - Debbie Desser, Bus Driver has submitted her letter of retirement after 12 years of service with the district.

- Lorraine Pelikan, Bus Driver has submitted her letter of retirement after 15 years of service with the district.

Public Participation

Public comment was heard from the following individuals:

Tom Manke, community member

Kimberly Baltimore, community member

Renee Secor-Jenks, Transportation Supervisor

Board Member Comments/Updates

Vice President Ochodnicki shared that she has heard positive remarks from several parents and students who are happy to be back in school. She thanked OPS staff for going above and beyond, giving special recognition to Special Education Teacher Mrs. Ireland. Ochodnicki thanked Dr. Tuttle, commending her leadership during these unprecedented times. She stated, “We all do truly care and look forward to hearing more positives as we are moving forward hopefully in a good way and the best that we can. I appreciate everyone and all that everyone is doing.”

Secretary Webster stressed the importance that the Board keeps a 10,000-foot view of the district and honors everyone’s roles and responsibilities during these challenging times. Teachers should express concerns to administrators, who should bring concerns to Dr. Tuttle, who in turn brings issues to the Board of Education. Mrs. Webster expressed trust in this system and asked fellow Board members to do the same.

Trustee Paez shared positive feedback she has heard from the parents of elementary students completing both in-person and online instruction. She agreed with Secretary Webster’s understanding that Board members should keep a 10,000-foot view and reminded fellow Board members that changes can be made to the Plan as needed.

Trustee Krauss congratulated the retirees and wished them the best in the future. Mr. Krauss thanked the administration, staff, and teachers for their efforts this year. He stated, “I want to touch base with those participated in the public participation piece of our meeting. You are heard. We do hear you. We do appreciate your thoughts and your opinions about what’s happening. We do consider what you have to say. It is important to us. . . When we entered into this . . . we did it with the mindset that if we needed to tweak it, we would make changes and adapt to what is happening around us. That has always been a part of the plan. That is what Andrea laid out for everybody, and that’s what’s happening. But I have to reiterate and piggyback on the other Board members. We do have to stay in our lanes. Please, if you have thoughts that you need to express, take it to the administration and they will take it to the superintendent, and she will take it to us. . . The Board serves as oversight to what is happening in the District.”

Trustee Quick stated, “Though I share the same role as you, as I do with everyone on this Board, I have different contacts, and I am not trying to undermine any of Andrea’s [Dr. Tuttle’s] work.” She noted that she respects Dr. Tuttle and thinks she is a good leader. She also explained that she will express any concerns and wants to be a part of the discussion regarding the COVID-19 Extended Learning Plan. She stated that the Board reviewed the plan, discussed it, and understood that they would have the opportunity to make suggestions and changes if needed. She does not want to move away from the Board having input in the Plan.

President Mowen noted his understanding that the extra efforts required of staff this year are frustrating and thanked all staff for the terrific job they are doing. He shared there have been

comments from parents who appreciate the options they were given with the current plan, and they appreciate the communication and efforts of teachers. Mr. Mowen stated, "My heart goes out to everyone during this time. If we all follow the rules in and out of school, in our free time as well as our work time, we can overcome this together."

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

October 12: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

October 19: Regular Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m. (note date change)

Important Upcoming Dates

October 06: LHS Parent/Teacher Conferences, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

October 13: Trojan Marching Band Showcase at Willman Field, 7:00 p.m.

October 22: Half Day for Elementary Students Only

October 22: Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Alexa Stechschulte

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Webster

Marlene Webster, Secretary