

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2020
Report 19-221

President Jenc called the Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Due to Governor Whitmer's current Executive Order and the stay at home order, the meeting was held remotely at the Washington Campus, 645 Alger Street, Owosso, MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Secretary Ochodnicky conducted a roll call of members virtually present at the meeting.

Present: Tim Jenc, Sara Keyes, Ty Krauss, Shelly Ochodnicky, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster
Absent: Rick Mowen

Public Participation

President Jenc 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.

There were no comments from the public.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, if people want to participate in future meetings they should contact Ms. Clara Pitt at 989-729-5678 to obtain the telephone number and access code for the meeting. She explained that the Board of Education was sent an email that contained the meeting's agenda. Dr. Tuttle stated that this an informational meeting and time will be allotted after each agenda item for questions/comments from the Board.

Emergency Remote Learning Plan – Communication with Teachers

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared the Remote Learning Plan that was created by the District in response to the pandemic. Schools are expected to provide emergency remote learning to students until the school calendar ends on June 5. It was noted that the Remote Learning Plan was submitted to MDE and a copy was included in the packet for the Board's review. Prior to sending out the plan, information was gathered from staff in regards to student connectivity. The plan was sent out to staff two weeks prior and began that day. Each teacher has 30 students that they must check on weekly and they have been asked to have office hours from 9-11 am on Monday - Friday. Teachers are being asked to document all of their lessons so the District can showcase these to the state if needed. Paper and pencil packets are also being distributed to students that have connectivity issues in conjunction with food deliveries. Any student that needs an electronic device to complete their studies have been asked to contact their building administrator. Families have been given options for connectivity and as a last resort, the District is working to provide connectivity in the high school parking lot in the near future.

Marlene Webster asked how many students do not have connectivity. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that teachers were asked to call families and it is believed that this effects approximately 20% of students. Mrs. Webster remarked that these same students may also have transportation issues. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that teachers were asked to inquire about transportation issues also when they contact their students.

Sara Keyes stated that she believes Charter is offering free internet for students that do not have connectivity. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that the telephone numbers for Charter and Day Starr have been provided to families.

Olga Quick remarked that Charter will only provide service if the family does not have an outstanding balance. She complimented the staff of OPS on an incredible job of reaching out to students.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle praised the Child Advocacy Center for supporting and assisting the District. The District's Liaison Officers are also conducting student wellness checks. Teachers have been asked to inform their administrator if they have students that they are unable to contact. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that the lessons provided to students are not mandatory and it is the District's intention to advance all student to the next grade level. The teachers of Owosso Public Schools were praised for their desire to help kids during this unprecedented time. Students also have the option to reach out to their teachers if they want to try and improve their grades.

COVID Response Plan

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared the Continuity of Learning and COVID 19 Response Plan that will be submitted to the SRES. She stated that the plan is still in draft form and thanked Julie Omer and Steve Brooks for answering questions specific to the plan.

Parent Questions and Answers

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that the District remains committed to providing clear communication to our families, community, and staff members. It is understood that families have many questions at this time. A document has been provided to families that answers many of the questions that have been received to date, following Governor Whitmer's Executive Order to close schools for the remainder of this school year. The Board was encouraged to review this document.

Bond Update

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that a conference call took place the week prior with Clark Construction. Prior to the pandemic, the goal was to have grades 6-8 students in the new building beginning in the fall of 2020. Unfortunately, this has now been moved to December 2020. Under the Governor's Executive Order, the construction has stopped. The Board was provided a timeline that covers every element of the construction. Everything currently hinges on when construction can resume.

Ty Krauss asked if the District is incurring a cost for every day that the job is not completed. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed Mr. Krauss that there is no additional cost to the District.

Sinking Fund Bid Opening

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported that an addendum that extends the sinking fund bid openings to April 15th at 3 pm was provided. This will be a virtual bid opening and at least two representatives from Spicer will participate. District and contractors/public may participate as well. An invitation will be emailed to all plan holders for the project. The bid date was pushed back a week to answer contractor questions and to solicit more interest in the bid.

Graduation

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that they have received a lot of communications from parents in regards to graduation. She explained the glitches that have occurred during previous attempts to get the information out to students and their families. Some parents would like the District to postpone commencement. A traditional graduation option on the original scheduled date does not appear to be an option at this time. Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared an alternative graduation option with the Board. The option would include WOAP/Sparty Nation hosting this through their own donation in the OHS parking lot and feature a parade through town. Details of this option and the proposed letter that would be sent to the graduates was shared with the Board.

Shelly Ochodnicki commented that she appreciates the proposed letter and feels it was well thought out and written. She remarked that the District has received a lot of pressure about developing a graduation plan.

Ty Krauss stated that he also likes the proposed letter and feels that it is appropriate.

Sara Keyes commented that she has a senior. Students are upset because they feel it is a “drive-thru” graduation and they were not given an opportunity to provide their input. The students want a traditional ceremony and have started a petition to hold it at a later date.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle remarked that she can appreciate where everyone is coming from and realizes that seniors are missing out on a lot. Due to the Governor’s Executive Order we cannot make any promises. Dr. Tuttle commented that she wants the graduates to know that they have earned a graduation and wants them to experience it. The District is thinking of everything that can be done to make this possible.

Marlene Webster stated that she has a nephew that is graduating in another state and there is no plan for their graduation ceremony. If families understand the full weight of gatherings they will accept this. A formal event cannot happen and may not be able to happen until later in the fall.

Tim Jenc remarked that he listened to the Governor earlier that day and believes she is going to add another extension beyond May 1.

Olga Quick commented that she appreciates the energy that has been put into the plan. One of her concerns is to have closure for the students so they can say goodbye to their teachers.

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that she is open to any thought out plans that will bring closure for the graduates.

Ty Krauss stated that he appreciates the efforts and being proactive in coming up with a plan for graduation. This shows the community that an effort is being made to accommodate the seniors.

Essential Employee Letter

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that a letter has been drafted for essential employees to carry in their cars in case they are stopped by police when traveling to their job.

Food Distribution

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle shared a flyer containing important details about food distribution. Beginning on Tuesday, April 14 food distribution will occur at the middle school on Tuesdays and Fridays only from 10 am – 12 pm. Delivery service will continue. A tremendous amount of volunteers has made this possible. Marlene Webster was thanked by Superintendent Dr. Tuttle for coordinating the volunteers that are delivering to the homes of students that cannot pick up the food.

Marlene Webster stated that they are delivering food to approximately 80 homes, which includes about 264 kids. The District is serving about 1,100 meals a day to our kids with about one-half on the delivery schedule and the other half picking up. She remarked that it has been an incredible effort by the OPS staff. This has meant a whole lot to families and their wellness.

Letters of Agreement for Teachers and Support Staff

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that Letters of Agreement (LOA) have been drafted for the Continuity of Learning Plan that is due to the extended COVID 19 school closure. The LOA’s are currently being reviewed by District attorneys.

Negotiations

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle stated that due to the numerous unknown's negotiations are currently on hold. The 2020-21 school year is still slated to begin after Labor Day.

Compensation of Employees

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that one of the caveats of the Governor's Executive Order, in order to continue to receive the full state aid for the K-12 education for the remainder of the year, is that the District must continue to pay their employees. The plan that has been worked out by the District was shared with the Board.

Liaison Officers

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle explained that the Liaison Officers are paid out of At-Risk funds that include a lot of stipulations for students that are at risk. The officers are assisting the District with student wellness checks and continue to be paid.

Review April 27 Board Meeting Agenda

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reviewed the proposed April 27th regular meeting agenda with the Board. She explained that the 2020-2021 student handbook revisions will be presented for future action. The meeting will be a virtual meeting similar to the committee meeting.

Adjournment

President Jenc adjourned the meeting at 6:49 pm

Minutes recorded by Clara Pitt

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Ochodnicky, Secretary