

DECEMBER 14, 2020

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DISTRICT #63-240 COUNTIES OF
OAKLAND, LIVINGSTON AND WASHTENAW**

CALL TO ORDER

President Hanshaw called the December 14, 2020 virtual special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Anthony Abbate, Randy Clark, Craig Dashner, Carrie Hanshaw, Eric Kennedy, Bridgett McDowell, Jennifer Urtel,

Absent: None

Administration Present: Steven Archibald, Superintendent
Lisa Kudwa, Assistant Superintendent
Stacy Witt, Assistant Superintendent

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and administration joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Hanshaw offered an opportunity for public comments. She shared the following comment.

- *Holly Neal* stated that a board member indicated that there is no answer to “how to educate children during a pandemic”. She added that our district is unsuccessful when compared to other districts. She questioned if there were any changes made to be successful for hybrid learning in January. She asked if our district has reached out to other districts who have been successful.

UPDATE TO POLICY 1002 – MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. Kudwa explained that the district contracts with Miller Johnson, our legal firm, for policy services. Miller Johnson has provided an update to our Policy 1002 (Meetings of the Board of Education). The updates are necessary in order for the district to be in compliance with changes to Michigan’s Open Meetings Act. The updates provide flexibility, in terms of the Board conducting public meetings electronically or individual Board members participating remotely for the outlined reasons. The Policy Committee reviewed these changes on December 7. The updated policy was brought to the December 7 Board of Education meeting, and no changes were requested. She asked the Board to approve Policy 1002 (Meetings of the Board of Education) as presented.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Mr. Clark to approve updating Policy 1002 - Meetings of the Board of Education as presented.

Roll Call: Ms. Hanshaw-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Clark-yes, Ms. McDowell-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes. Motion carries 7 – 0.

SLCS EXTENDED COVID-19 LEARNING PLAN RECONFIRMATION

Mr. Archibald provided a recap. He recalled the reasons for the pause in in-person instruction was due to the significant increases to cases prior to Thanksgiving. He was concerned over the incubation period following Thanksgiving. There is an operational strain on our system as it has impacted our instructional program. He stressed the importance of consistency and routines at the elementary level. The Oakland County Health Department has reviewed our preparedness and response plan and confirmed that the mitigation measures being implemented are providing a safe environment for our schools. There has been a common theme when reaching out to other districts as to whether they are remote or in person. There has been a shortage of guest staff. Our district has found additional third parties to provide guest bus drivers, employed a number of guest teachers as well in anticipation of support needed there. We have also found additional providers for guest paraprofessionals. This will be an ongoing effort to continue to provide an education either in person or remote in this pandemic environment. In person instruction is preferred to remote instruction. He added that we also have reviewed our cleaning procedures and made adjustments there. He noted that this was not an issue or problem, but it was something with the opportunity during our remote period to revisit and pick up additional efficiencies with respect to our cleaning as well as the utilization of our staff. Resuming in-person instruction on January 11 is consistent with the new CDC guidelines with respect to the quarantine period. Mr. Archibald emphasized that in-person instruction serves the greatest benefit to our students for their social emotional and academic needs. It is what benefits our students the most. He is counting on families, students and staff to continue to follow the identified safety protocols and mitigation measures so that we are able to not only welcome our students back to in-person instruction on January 11, but to sustain it.

Mr. Archibald stated that administration is recommending tonight to continue with remote instruction through January 8, 2021 as previously approved by the Board with a scheduled return to in-person instruction for all students to the hybrid in-person. Those on the hybrid in-person remote pathway are effective Monday, January 11. Upon that return, we will follow the same schedule at the elementary and secondary levels that we were in prior to Thanksgiving. That is four days per week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with a 100% of our elementary students in attendance and Wednesday being a fully remote day. At the secondary level, it will be a 50% hybrid with Wednesday being fully remote

Mr. Archibald asked the Board to approve the instruction delivery method as presented.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Mr. Dashner to approve the COVID-19 Learning Plan instruction delivery method as presented.

Ms. McDowell questioned Mr. Archibald as to what is different in January that would allow face to face instruction. She is very uncomfortable making a decision in mid-December about what things might look like a month out from now. She would rather see a more conservative approach being taken where the pause is pushed one week out and allow for a face to face to begin on January 18. Mr. Archibald explained that being remote has given the district the opportunity to reset and provide additional staff and guest staff members to assist. Weekly reports provided by the health department indicated they were optimistic based on the first reporting cycle following the holiday and where the numbers were at. Numbers of cases within the South Lyon boundaries have decreased which indicates that the community is responding, and the numbers are moving in the right direction. Mr. Clark offered his support for anything that we could do to get our students back into a face-to-face environment. For that reason, he also offered his support for Mr. Archibald's proposed plan to get us back into the environment on January 11.

Roll Call: Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. McDowell-no, Mr. Clark-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Ms. Hanshaw-yes. Motion carries 6 - 1.

PURCHASE OF IXL – INTERACTIVE ONLINE MATH LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR GRADES JK-2

Ms. Kudwa explained that IXL is an Interactive online math learning program. The district will purchase 18-month licenses for students in Junior Kindergarten through second grade. The program will provide differentiated mathematics content to support student growth in mathematics. Teachers will be able to tailor the content to meet individual student needs and will support both in-person and remote learning. The purchase price includes licenses for 1,900 student and professional development for staff. The total cost is \$31,885.00 and the purchase will be fully funded through the federal CARES funds. Deadlines for CARES spending necessitate bringing this purchase for action at this time. Ms. Kudwa asked the Board to approve the purchase of IXL for the use with students in grades JK-2 for a cost of approximately \$31,885.00.

Moved by Mr. Clark, supported by Mr. Kennedy to approve the purchase of IXL for the use with students in grades JK-2 for a cost of approximately \$31,885.00.

Roll Call: Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Clark-yes, Ms. McDowell-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. Hanshaw-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes. Motion carries 7 - 0.

PURCHASE OF SECOND STEP – SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

Ms. Kudwa explained that Second Step is a social-emotional learning resource. The district will purchase two early learning bundles for use at the Early Childhood Center along with a K-5 learning bundle for each elementary school, and school licensing for each middle school. The resources will be utilized by district social workers as they support individual students, small groups and classes as needed. The total cost is \$34,959.60 and the purchase will be fully funded through the federal CARES funds. Deadlines for CARES spending necessitate bringing this purchase for action at this time. Ms. Kudwa asked the board to approve the purchase of Second Step for the use with students at the Early Childhood Center and in grades JK-8 for a cost of approximately \$34,959.60.

Moved by Ms. Urtel, supported by Mr. Abbate to approve the purchase of Second Step for the use with students at the Early Childhood Center and in grades JK-8 for a cost of approximately \$34,959.60 as presented.

Roll Call: Ms. Hanshaw-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Clark-yes, Ms. McDowell-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes. Motion carries 7 - 0.

PURCHASE OF NEARPOD – SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE FOR GRADES 6-12 TEACHERS & STUDENTS

Ms. Kudwa explained that Nearpod is an online tool that allows teachers to convert their lessons into an interactive format for students who are learning both in-person and remotely. Nearpod integrates with our current technology in the district and also includes over 8,500 lessons that are aligned to Michigan standards. Nearpod can be used to conduct formative assessments as well. Nearpod has flexibility built in for teachers which allows them to use the program to teach live, post student-paced lessons and/or teach remotely. Nearpod also gives teachers detailed engagement reports so teachers are able to see how long students are engaged with the lessons and what work they have completed. These reports are given in real-time to the teachers so they can use this information to plan for the next day's instruction.

She added that the purchase price includes licenses for all secondary staff and students and includes the additional SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) lesson package and professional development for staff. The total cost is \$25,083.00 and the purchase will be fully funded through the federal CARES funds.

Ms. Kudwa emphasized that the deadline for CARES spending necessitates bringing this purchase for action at this time.

Moved by Ms. Urtel, supported by Mr. Kennedy to approve the purchase of Nearpod for the use with students and teachers in grades 6-12 for a cost of approximately \$25,083.00.

Ms. McDowell questioned whether there was anything that the district could offer to support secondary teachers who already purchased the license for their classroom themselves out of pocket for this service. Ms. Kudwa did not believe they could do anything because the cost is better than what you could get for the individual price because you are buying for a full district. She noted that the district did purchase a level at which they might not have been licensed so they might still be getting a discount within that product beyond what they purchased on their own.

Roll Call: Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. Hanshaw-yes, Ms. McDowell-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Clark-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes. Motion carries 7 - 0.

2020-21 BUDGET AMENDMENT #1 PRESENTATION

Ms. Witt explained that she is presenting the 2020-21 Budget Amendment #1 as information only. It will be brought back to the Board for approval at the January 19, 2021 organizational meeting.

Ms. Witt noted that on December 7, the Finance Committee was presented with line item details of the 2021 Budget Amendment. They reconvened on December 10 to review changes in the revenues and expenses vs. the original 2020-21 budget. The committee discussed maintaining the budget cuts that were included in the original budget. They also discussed enrollment, 2020-21 Superblend state aid funding calculations, forecast projections and possibly suspending the fund balance policy to prepare for the next few years.

Ms. Witt indicated that total revenues come to \$95,026,621. Total expenditures of \$94,073,284. The district has a net operating income of \$1,799,337. Transfers to other funds are \$846,000, which puts a net increase to the fund balance projected at the end of this year of \$953,337. Changes from the proposed budget approved in June were increased to state aid due to the flat foundation from 2019-20 where we maintained the \$8,111 that we were receiving last year. In the original budget, we budgeted for a \$500 cut and also adjusted in this budget is the Superblend count formula. We increased the COVID revenues with CARES funding by approximately \$4.4 million. We also updated the Grant budgets to the 2020-21 approved amounts. Ms. Witt stated that our overall per pupil allocation in 2019-20 was \$8,111, and she did not foresee a per pupil increase in 2020-21.

Ms. Witt does not expect any funding this year on enrollment as many public school districts have experienced a loss. We are using four different counts to do the Superblend: 2019 Spring student count of 8,600.18, 2019 our Fall student count of 8,773.28, 2020 our Spring student count of 8,725.08 and our 2020 Fall unaudited student count is at 8,187.09. The calculations for the Superblend count for the 2021 fiscal year were shared with the Board.

Changes from the proposed budget in the expenditures were identified. In the financial forecast, Ms. Witt emphasized that student count is a major factor in projections. In 2020-21, the Superblend formula preserved our budget, but she was not certain what the student blend formula will be in the forecasted years of 2021-22 through 2023-24. We may not meet our budget policy of 10% plus or minus one with the fund balance.

Ms. Witt stated that this year we are looking at projecting a million dollars to the fund balance. We don't want to spend that. We need to keep in mind that we don't know what the next few years are going to look like with this pandemic. It is going to continue to hurt us. We don't know the federal funding that will come in, and we do want to stay more on the conservative side.

There were questions and comments from the Board regarding the depth of budget information the board members should receive in their packets. Mr. Dashner clarified to Ms. McDowell that the function of the Board is to approve the budget as a whole. The Board is not approving the line item budget and every single account under that. The Board is approving the wrap-up of the budget. He emphasized that the Finance Committee reviews the line item details. Ms. Witt has done a tremendous job of explaining information within the Finance Committee and any board member can approach Ms. Witt or any board member on the Finance Committee if they had any questions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- *Kimberly Argentati* asked what the Board's plan is for 100% face to face for middle/high school students. She questioned what criteria they will be using to get the kids back into school full time. She also wanted to know if they talk to other districts that are face-to-face, such as Howell, on how they handle outbreaks/positive cases.
- *Chris Duprey* stated that this has taught him that the community needs to understand the ideologies of board candidates. Board elections appear inconsequential, buried on the ballot below the Wayne State trustees. It is not enough to have kids in the district and that you want to serve. Boards used to approve large invoices for purchases. Now they are making value judgements that are impacting the education of their kids. Who besides Mr. Clark is doing anything other than yielding to the will of the Superintendent?
- *Steve Brummer* (former board member who served 2010-2016) called in and wished the Board his best in these tumultuous times and thanked them for the opportunity to speak. He has served with Mr. Abbate, Don Beagle, Dave Taulbee, Justin Gusick, Barb Murphy and Doug Curry and respected all members even though they had different points of views at times. He respects them all. They were always able to work things out. He emphasized that none of the members were as great as Ms. Hanshaw. He first met Ms. Hanshaw shortly after he was elected to the Board in 2010. She came to him to discuss some issues that she was having with special education at the time. They hit it off having some common interests with improving the district in this specific issue. He was lucky enough to make such a great friend and then have someone he could coach in the running for a board seat the following election. The past and current board members would agree, there is only one rule working with Carrie on the board. It's simply all about the kids. She has never gotten political in their decision making. She asks what is best for all the kids. She has always been well studied, prepared and passionate when she debates. She is thoughtful and open-minded. She is respectful, honest and well-intended on the Board even in tumultuous times when members of the public or even members of this board would question her motives. She has set standards on how members need to conduct themselves, and the brand of work ethic that is needed on this board. He thanked Carrie for a job well done and for her years of service she has given to this community.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Hanshaw offered an opportunity for board comments on the last board meeting of the year.

- *Mr. Clark* expressed his gratitude to the community for their support and trust they placed in him for his six-year term. He hoped he provided the best decisions to support the South Lyon Community Schools community. He also reached out to their executive assistant, Judy Wiemer, for her counsel during the term that he was president was invaluable. He hopes that she and her husband both will have an opportunity to enjoy some retirement soon. He encouraged the other board members to hold their heads high, make the best decisions and remember they are here to support the whole community.

- *Ms. McDowell* thanked Ms. Hanshaw and Mr. Clark for all their years of service to the district. She has been trying to study and catch up on what each of them have accomplished. There is a lot to learn. She wished the community a happy holiday.
- *Ms. Urtel* thanked both Mr. Clark and Ms. Hanshaw. The two years she has been on the board have been interesting, exciting and scary. She is going to enjoy the next four years knowing that she has learned quite a bit from both of them and take that information moving forward. She wished the community, teachers and staff in the district a happy holiday. Enjoy their two weeks off. All have worked incredibly hard under very difficult circumstances and have done the absolute best they could have done for their students and families. Enjoy your time off with your family. Put some smiles on your own children's faces and hopefully they will put smiles on your face. Happy holidays to everybody and good luck to Ms. Hanshaw and Mr. Clark.
- *Mr. Dashner* thanked Mr. Brummer for calling in with that public comment. He thought it was very nice and very appropriate and appreciates him doing that. He thanked Carrie and Randy for the service they provided to the district. He has enjoyed the viewpoints that both of them have offered on different occasions, and it will be a great loss to no longer have either of them on the board. On a sad note, he shared that the South Lyon East High School assistant swim coach, Kacie Paul, passed away early Sunday morning unexpectedly. He extended his deepest condolences to the VanBuskirk and Paul families on the loss of Kacie. His heart breaks for all the South Lyon swimmers past and present, their coaches and our girls swim team that just finished their season and had a banquet with her Friday night. She impacted a lot of lives and touched a lot of people and it will be very tough getting over the next few weeks without her. Everyone needs to support and watch out for each other.
- *Mr. Kennedy* thanked the community for helping out and stepping up and doing what we do. Let's continue to keep those numbers down. This is his 4th year on the Board, and he has learned a lot from every one of his fellow board members with Mr. Clark and Ms. Hanshaw included. He wished them both a happy retirement from the Board and wished them nothing but the best in the most heartfelt thank you for your service and the passion that they provide. It is much appreciated.
- *Mr. Abbate* echoed what Mr. Dashner said. Our hearts go out to the VanBuskirk family for such a tragic loss. It is terrible news, and he is sure the family, the athletes and coaches are all hurting tonight. The coaches are undoubtedly providing leadership for their athletes and appreciates that and is really sorry to hear the news. He wished Mr. Clark well in his post board endeavors. It's been quite an adventure. He thanked him so much for his service. He told Carrie Hanshaw, his colleague and friend, that Mr. Brummer had to call in and just steal all his thoughts. He said a lot of nice things, and he said a lot of true things. Carrie has been engaged in board business for eleven years, which predates her actual election to the Board by three years. She has been a tireless advocate for kids. She keeps the Board well organized and is strong, especially during this pandemic answering many, many emails and trying to keep everything going for everybody. She has been the best for the Board for quite a long time, and it is going to be hard to not have her with them and provide her leadership. Well played, Ms. Hanshaw for your really great work over all these years. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year everyone!

- *Ms. Hanshaw* shared that it has been an emotional couple of days. Much love to Kacie's family and Julie's family. She thanked Mr. Clark for his years of service. It has been a great eight years, and she is just happy that she has played a small role in South Lyon over that time. The Board has gone through a lot of interesting times, but she looks forward to seeing great things from this district again. They are in good hands both with our current administration, as well as our current Board and our Board that will be starting in January. Good luck to everyone and have a wonderful holiday and a much-needed break.
- *Mr. Archibald* expressed his thank you to Ms. Hanshaw and Mr. Clark. Their years of loyal, dedicated and faithful service to the entire school community does not go unnoticed. Both of them have given unselfishly of their time, energy and their talents. It is not easy to be a good and effective board member. From what he has experienced, they have given their all in that regard and our community has benefitted from it. On a personal note, it is his loss to not have a longer opportunity to work with them both. It is also his hope that neither of them changes their cell phone number and that he is able to reach out to them. There is still much for him to learn from them that will be of value. On behalf of the district, he thanked them both immensely and wished them both nothing but the best going forward.

ADJOURN

Mr. Abbate apologized as he had to step into another the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Ms. Urtel took over for Mr. Abbate and called the roll.

Moved by Mr. Clark, supported by Mr. Dashner to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Roll Call: Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. McDowell-yes, Mr. Clark-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Ms. Hanshaw-yes. Motion carries 6 - 0.

THE BOARD WISHED EVERYONE A HAPPY HOLIDAY!

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony Abbate, Secretary
Board of Education