

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

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

CALL TO ORDER

President Dashner called the February 2, 2021 regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Anthony Abbate, Craig Dashner, Eric Kennedy, Martin Leftwich, Bridgett McDowell,
Jennifer Urtel, Dan Schwegler

Absent: None

Administration Present: Mr. Steve Archibald, Superintendent, Lisa Kudwa, Asst. Superintendent,
Stacy Witt, Asst. Superintendent

Administration Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board, administration and the audience joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered an opportunity for public comments. He reminded the audience of the rules when calling in comments. The following comments were received and read by President Dashner, Ms. Urtel and Mr. Abbate.

- *Mark Skrelja*, a board member for the Great Lakes Bombers called in and spoke regarding their field usage.
- *Heather Fox* offered comments regarding the Great Lakes Bombers facility use group classification request and felt it would be great to have fields that are local for this organization to use.
- *Nathan Westover* noted that the Bombers teams are made up of local kids. As local taxpayers, the participants in this organization should have access to the school fields.
- *Deanna Pauli* spoke to the Bombers requesting permission to use the South Lyon baseball fields.
- *Robin Oliver* commented on the Bombers relating to opening the fields for them.
- *Eric Yuhasz* urged the Board to approve the Great Lakes Bombers utilizing their 3A status on the athletic fields in South Lyon.
- *Katelyn Westover* asked the Board to approve the Bombers using the fields within the South Lyon school district.
- *Kevin Richards* asked the Board to approve the Great Lake Bombers request to use the district's fields and facilities.
- *Michelle O'Donnell* is thrilled there is a proposed plan to get secondary students back into the classroom but is curious as to the plan for those kids that must quarantine.
- *Erica Grochowski* spoke regarding the Great Lakes Bombers.
- *Cayden Sleek* called in to speak in opposition to 100% in-person student learning.
- *Carter Sleek* also called in to speak in opposition to 100% in-person student learning.

- *Kelly Darty* feels that secondary students need to return to class 5 days a week. Virtual learning is not good enough academically or mentally. It has been too long, and it is safe for their return.
- *Michelle Youngblood* would like the Board to consider secondary students going back to school 4 full days like elementary.
- *Lindsay Adkins* would like to see secondary school resume 4 full days a week in person. Isolation is hurting our kids.
- *Jessica Garnick* questioned if there was a plan for quarantined students. Every day the parents are receiving notices of positive COVID cases at all of the schools. The loss of learning at the secondary level will make it difficult for the students to keep up if there isn't an option for lessons to be accessed virtually. She supports in-person learning as long as there is a plan in place.
- *Rebecca Pennill* noted that there is an option to do all virtual if anyone doesn't agree with kids going back to 4 days of in-person learning.
- *Kimberly Lindstrom* stated this is not about what the parents or the Board wants. This should be 100% about our children. Science and data support the fact that our children should be in school full-time. Our government and health departments also now support the fact that our children should be in school full-time. It is time to put our children first.
- *Amy Schuyler* thanked the Board, Superintendent, teachers and staff for their hard work during the most challenging of times. She has noticed new skills, work habits and perseverance during these strange times. She appreciates the countless hours teachers have put into learning new ways to teach kids virtually.
- *Don Barwig* commented that there are many families that left the district in 2020 that are watching how the Board and administration will handle the return to school for secondary schools before deciding what to do next year. This is the last chance for the Board to do the right thing and get ALL children back in person full time. Should the Board not do the right thing, many will choose to remain in private school in 2021-22. You owe the people that live in this community.
- *David Girardot* stated that it is time for ALL kids to return to school. This closure has gone on for too long, and the children are paying the ultimate price. They are creating isolation, depression, and suicide. Science has proven this virus has a high survivability rate and transmission in schools is minimal. Stop living in fear and start setting a better example. Reopen our schools!
- *Tracey Katcherian* had questions relative to what data was used to determine that February is the appropriate timeline to transition to 4 days a week without the ability to socially distance, what safety procedures will be implemented to help prevent outbreaks, especially during lunch when students remove their masks and if hybrid students will still have the option to attend classes remotely.
- *Laura Pennycuff* asked the Board to consider allowing the in-person high school and middle school students an option of attending virtually past the March 1 date that has been proposed for safety of staff and students. This will allow students that are quarantined to have access to the curriculum, as well as students who don't feel comfortable to attend in person.
- *Heidy Herrera* was scheduled as a call in but did not respond when Board president acknowledged her.
- *Morgan Kovalak* called in and spoke to school reopening full time.
- *Pam Nielson* stated that kids need to be back in school. Most of the kids are disinterested and have checked out. The Board and administration have done a huge disservice to these kids. The option of in-person was never offered. Act now to return them to 100% in person!
- *Tory Showek* wants the kids back in school immediately on a full-time basis. Kids are being robbed of a quality education because of a virus that has little to no impact on their demographic. Neighboring districts are conducting 4-day face to face classes without incident.

- *Jason DeMink* stated that science and data support children being back in school full time. It shouldn't take six months to formulate a plan for returning secondary children back to school. Put our kids back in school!
- *Christine Succurro* said that she represents her daughter but did not leave a comment.
- *Michelle Felts* stated the plan did not address live streaming. Her hope is that this does not go away when the students are back in school 4 full days. If there is a question about whether a child may have been exposed to COVID, it would be easy for them to stay home, get proper tests, quarantine if needed and still not miss much schooling. If the live streaming is an option and assignments are posted in Google classroom, this would be the best way to fight this.
- *Cristin Cumberland* asked the Board to consider letting the Bombers use the South Lyon fields. The Bombers is a South Lyon based travel ball organization that has the coaching/pitching certifications and skill set to develop our kids. Please don't penalize the children who live in South Lyon and not let them utilize the school fields that are in their own community.
- *Chris Campo* shared the excitement of the community of knowing the Board and administration is considering getting the kids back in school 4 days. School is essential, and we need to get back to in-person learning. Virtual learning is not a good fit for the majority. Please vote to approve the plan as outlined in the agenda.
- *Scott Cumberland* stated that South Lyon produces some very high-level athletes. The Great Lakes Bombers organization provides the type of instruction and coaching that these athletes need in their own hometown. The organization will enrich the community and put much needed dollars back into the local economy. The organization is based with the rosters at 90% residency. Approval of III A status should move forward with access to our fields.
- *Amy Taylor* emphasized how important it is to allow the kids of South Lyon from all organizations to play baseball/softball. It has been shown to be an activity that can remain safe from COVID, and it is critically important to get the kids outside, active and interacting with other kids for both their physical and mental health.
- *Jen Adam* indicated that educators not only teach math and science, but also teach students how to handle life's difficult situations. The current model is Be Afraid, Avoid, Be the Victim. The mission statement of South Lyon Community Schools is to provide the highest quality educational process so that all students can excel as individuals and become contributing members of society. Be leaders, rise up and let the students go face to face 5 days a week!
- *Amy Marie* questioned if there will be any planned virtual period district wide for kids the week after mid-winter break similar to the week after Christmas break in case families are participating in activities that may result in potential for increased exposure over mid-winter break.
- *Amy Goodridge* stated that based on the latest studies regarding the COVID positive cases in our county, it makes logical sense to bring the kids back to face-to-face learning.
- *Crystal Nowka* shared the importance of classifying the Great Lakes Bomber team as a Group III A. This group's hometown is South Lyon. The players attend South Lyon Schools. It is common sense that a team representing South Lyon should have equal access to the community's facilities and public places including school grounds and parks.
- *Lisa Czajkowski* asked the Board and administration to listen to the science and allow those that want to be back in the classroom to do so. Other districts and entire States have been able to keep kids in their classrooms. Our kids are suffering because we don't have a plan in South Lyon. Please vote yes to return to face to face.

- *Angie Roush* stated that all staff must be vaccinated. It is common now for schools in the district to have open classrooms daily, due to the lack of guest teachers. Students, at least, have some in-person learning. If the Board decides to bring the district back to 100% without vaccinating all staff, students will face more interruptions in learning than they currently do. She urged the Board not to change the current plan until the district vaccinates all staff members.
- *Allison Ritter* supports in-person education. Health experts say it is safe with precautions in place. We have those precautions in buildings and buses. It is time to get on with educating. Vaccination of employees may help ease staff fears. Reach out to the Health Department for a plan to fast-track teachers, bus drivers, etc. in carrying out a vaccination plan. Kids have suffered long enough. It's time to get back in the classroom.
- *Morgan Lecrone* called in regarding her concern with 100% return to in-person instruction days. There is no way that social distancing can be maintained in the classroom and cafeteria and on buses.
- *Kristin Campbell* indicated that our children's mental health matters. They need in-person school and to be around their friends and actually learn something. It is sad that nobody is taking into consideration the mental health of our kids. Get our kids back in school.
- *Lisa McPhee* wants our kids to go back to school. Brighton and other communities have been going back since September and have not had an increase in cases.
- *Jennifer Downs* fully supports the new plan that allows our secondary students to return to school 4 days a week. This step not only provides increased in-person instructional time, but also is a step towards a greater sense of normalcy for our kids. If students have to quarantine due to possible exposure or illness, they should still be able to attend classes remotely via livestream and Google classroom. Students shouldn't be marked absent and have to play "catch up" for following quarantine protocols.
- *David Gorajek* supports the secondary schools returning to full time. Infection data backs this up and surrounding districts have proved it can be done safely. If district leadership chooses to continue the remote learning option that defies public opinion and science, and further delays the full-time learning option, we need to be told WHY. Please do what's best for the students and get them back in school.
- *Ann Rimanelli* thanked the superintendent for submitting a proposal that supports face to face learning. It follows the science, has the support of the governor and will support the educational, mental and social well-being of our children. She appealed to the Board to be the voice of the children who wish to be face to face and the parents who accept the responsibility that goes along with it.
- *Jennifer Gomori* called in regarding the change in the secondary learning plan. She indicated that the CDC states in-person can be safe if done with 6' social distancing and other established COVID protocols. She stated that Governor Whitmer said that all schools should offer some form of in-person learning by March 1 with proper protocols. South Lyon is already doing this. She asked what the district plan is for social distancing in the lunchroom. 100% in person would greatly reduce safety, especially with South Lyon COVID cases on the rise since school reopened this year. She was in favor of a plan that helps vaccinate our educators and put more dollars into classrooms so that we can get our kids back in school safely while staying focused on protecting public health. School districts must balance instructional continuity, student social emotional needs and health and safety. The Hybrid Plan accomplishes all three. A 100% in person only meets one.

- *Gino Rimanelli* made a point of clarification from the January 22 board meeting stating that many families chose the hybrid option. His family did not vote for the hybrid learning model but settled for it. It was Plan B, Option 2 and not his first choice. He asked the Board to not make the mistake of referring to the Hybrid plan as their choice and rewrite history.
- *Juliann Sleek* called in regarding the return to 100% capacity plan. She stated that it is the district's job to educate the children and the parents' job is to parent the children. It takes effort from the parents to make this work. They want the school district to educate and raise their children. The parents are in charge of ensuring the mental and physical well-being and health of their children. She is not in favor of kids returning to school at this time. The risk is too great. She asked the Board to put their decision off for another month so they can meet again to discuss data before sending the kids back 100%.
- *Melanie Toth* stated the flu is more dangerous to children than this virus. Follow the science. Children need regular schedules. They need to be in school, be social and be active. Keeping children home is more damaging than the virus. Those at high risk should stay home. Low risk children need to have a choice.
- *Ann Rimanelli (for Natalia Rimanelli)* – Her daughter is an 8th grader at MMS. She stated that having all of these classes and learning through a screen all day is hard. There are less distractions in school when she can see her teachers and be with her friends. She would rather go back to school 100%.
- *Michelle Roslinski* asked the Board to approve the Great Lakes Bombers request to be Group III A to use SLCS baseball fields. The group is primarily made up of South Lyon kids who will go to South Lyon high schools.
- *Matthew Admiraal* indicated that he is a teacher at MMS and would like to encourage the Board to approve the plan for reopening the secondary schools as presented by administration. He has heard comments from many parents and students that they struggle learning at home because they can't focus well. Students learn best at school.
- *Jeff Lundy* strongly supports returning our kids to school 4-5 days a week as soon as possible. The CDC states that schools help to mitigate health disparities by providing critical services. Having kids stay home is not risk free.
- *Lauren Bockin* asked the Board and administration to make the change to face to face instruction for all students 5 days a week. Students are suffering, and parents are losing their jobs trying to accommodate learning from home. Other districts are doing this successfully.
- *Cristin Cumberland* asked the Board and administration to please let our kids be face to face in school. Being virtual for most of the school year has been detrimental to their learning experience. It is extremely frustrating to know that school systems in close proximity to South Lyon find a way to have their kids in person. We have to do better.
- *Cristin Cumberland* asked the School Board to kindly consider letting the Great Lakes Bombers organization use the South Lyon fields. This organization is a South Lyon based travel team that has the coaching/pitching certifications and skill set to develop her children's skills. Do not penalize the children who live in South Lyon by not letting them use the school fields that are in their own community where their parents pay taxes.
- *Ryan Cartmill* shared his concerns with 1) teachers not being fully vaccinated yet, 2) new strain of more contagious COVID spreading, 3) seems unwise to increase in-person school near a long school break, 4) worried about lack of social distancing in school, 5) lack of remote availability for students that have been told to quarantine due to exposure or positive test, 6) per Oakland County Health Dept., SLCS has the highest per capita number of school associated COVID cases in all of Oakland County.

- *Robin Blair* shared that the CDC stated schools are the safest place for our children. The science backs this up. Please vote to open the schools.
- *Kristen Unti* is a speech language pathologist in the district and also a parent of a HS junior. She teaches students 5 days a week at the Early Childhood Center and has been doing so since late September. It is time for all students to be back in the classroom.
- *Craig Skalski* is in support of secondary students going 4 days in person starting February 8. Surrounding districts have shown that it can be done safely and with minimal disruption due to cases. He also recommended that Wednesdays are in person using the block schedule and alternate classes each week. If SLCS cannot make this plan work for this semester, he is concerned about the prospects for the fall. If the Board does not approve their proposed plan, he may need to consider alternate school options.
- *Angie Badish* indicated that social distancing is impossible at the secondary level at 100%. It is impossible in most classrooms, lunchrooms, buses and the hallways. There will be COVID spikes at 100%. There will be students, classes and even buildings that have to quarantine disrupting our instructional continuity. Keeping the face to face at 50% works. It meets the needs of the community and the students. Its structured. We need to make everyone safe more than we need to make them happy.
- *Karen Mikola* called in stating she is not opposed to kids in school, but the CDC and Michigan guidelines clearly state for students to be safely in school they need proper protocols. Why ignore best practices with kids in school now.
- *Patrick Maguire* urged the community and Board alike to remember that we are in an ever-changing pandemic. This requires that we be flexible and open to the idea that, while face to face may be safe today, that may change tomorrow.
- *Amanda Berman* strongly urged the Board to continue with the hybrid model. She asked them to recognize that the current model allows for CDC required social distancing and most importantly, continuity and equal access to instruction for ALL students. She wanted the community and the Board to realize that we are still in the midst of a pandemic, that the hybrid model keeps students AND staff safe and gives our students the most stable routine.
- *Mrs. Oliver* asked the Board to vote YES to return all students face to face immediately. Current recommendations from government agencies are saying this should happen. We've watched many school districts make this happen safely and effectively since August. Our kids deserve the effort involved, and they deserve to feel important enough for our district to make this happen.
- *Matt & Christy Stevens* commented on the Great Lakes Bombers field usage request.
- *Gina Hochgraber* would like all students in school 4-5 days a week. Make our kids a number one priority. Our district has suffered enough from this debacle. People are moving out of the district. Don't disappoint the students and taxpayers again and again.
- *Chris Costa* called in and shared his thoughts and concerns regarding the proposal to return to 100% face to face instruction. He indicated that if this occurs, we will lose the inability to maintain the educational continuity that we now have in place. Currently a student who is ill or quarantined has the opportunity to still receive live instruction. They simply log into Google Meet and receive instruction from their teacher. That will not be the case if we return to 100% as Google Meets are not going to be an expectation that teachers must do. Students meet live in our current mode of instruction with their teachers five days a week with two being in person with the flexibility to stay home if they are not feeling well and get live interactions with their teachers. If the Board makes the decision to move to 100% face to face, they should be prepared for the large increase in more students needing to be quarantined. The students will then lose the live interaction of the delivery of their education. Although neighboring districts have returned to full in-person learning, many

are unaware of the lack of consistent instruction those students who need to be quarantined who are ill received. Consistency and routine are key to a student's well-being and success. He urged the Board not to move to 100% and continue to keep the current mode of instruction for the betterment of all students.

- *Sue Young* spoke regarding the Great Lakes Bombers and Mr. Skerilli's comment about over-usage. If SL Jr. League kids move to the Bombers, those spots will be taken up in the SL Jr. League by other kids who otherwise might not have had a chance to play. It wouldn't be a 1:1 replacement. The number of kids would most likely increase and there would be over usage and scheduling conflicts.
- *PJ Szewczyk* stated that SLCS need to be in person as much as possible. Most everyone agrees that children learn best by in-person learning. It is time to get all kids in the classroom 4-5 days per week. Surrounding districts are doing this. The science is in support of kids in school.
- *Jill Adams* wants to keep hybrid students in school 2 days per week.
- *Matt & Christy Stevens* offered their support for the Great Lakes Bombers. They urged the Board to approve the usage of baseball fields for their program. The majority of Bombers live in South Lyon and attend South Lyon Schools. These players will then move on to play baseball either at SLHS or SLEHS. Please approve the request and keep our kids playing baseball at the fields in our community.
- *Valerie Harrison* stated it was far too early to bring secondary students back to 100% in-person learning. Considering the SL school district is the worst of all Oakland County school districts for positivity rates and the fast spreading variants, this move puts our children, teachers and citizens at risk.
- *Jean Keady* stated the Virtual Pathway is available for those families who are not comfortable sending their children to school. All other families want their kids back in school with in-person instruction for 180 days. Schedule professional in the summer months.
- *Erin Wilson* asked the Board to vote in favor of administration's proposed plan for secondary students. Families who chose the hybrid model knew the goal was to get students back to school in person as much as possible. It is time to get our kids back in the classroom.
- *Ed Hardesty* encouraged everyone to stop with the politics. It is essential to have the kids back in school. Follow the science and make it mandatory to be at school and hold the parents accountable. We have to learn to live with this as we do with the flu, chicken pox and any other fear parents have. School is essential, and the fact that we are even at this point is absurd. Get it right!
- *Todd Slisher* stated that now is not the correct time to return to school full time.
- *Dan Argentati* called in and stated that anything less than 100%/5-day school is insufficient at this point when these kids have not been in school since last March. It is not too late to salvage the remainder of the year if we go to the normal school again. There is no reason to use an entire day for cleaning. The virus is transferred from people, not stationary structures that are being cleaned. Other school districts in the state are on five days. Please allow the kids to get back to a normal 5-day week.
- *Jenn Gundersen* questioned why there is an objection to our secondary students returning full time just as our elementary students have been safely doing without smaller class sizes and social distancing. Support our administration's plan to return our secondary students in school full time.
- *Kelley Haynes* asked the Board to continue to allow the Hybrid option and allow the current schedule that blends in-person and at-home learning. Don't undo the work we've done with only 3 months left in the school year.

- *Aidan Moorehead*, SLHS sophomore, indicated the reasons to return in person don't outweigh the dangers. We don't have the infrastructure to deal with a 100% return to school. In his first hour, there are 32 students. There is barely enough room to fit that number of students in a classroom ignoring the need for social distancing. Returning 100% would be far more harmful than maintaining this model until vaccination.
- *Jim Mikola* indicated that schools are responsible for public health and safety every day. The decision of how safe falls directly on the district. If you know you can prevent an incident from happening or intentionally making things worse, shouldn't that be the goal?

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Mr. Leftwich, supported by Mr. Kennedy to approve the agenda as presented.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Mr. Leftwich to approve the January 19, 2021 Organizational/Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

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

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Moved by Mr. Schwegler, supported by Mr. Abbate to approve the February 2021 Bond Bills as presented.

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

CHECK SIGNATURES

Mr. Dashner explained that at the January 19, 2021 Organizational Meeting, names were used for the positions in the motion rather than just the positions themselves. This item is being brought back to clean the language up and just have the positions named. This way if someone were to leave their position, they no longer have the authority to do the items that were stated. He is looking for a motion from the Board that would include the positions that are able to do the payroll checks, accounts payable and bond expenditures.

- Payroll Checks – Bd. President, Bd. Secretary & Asst. Superintendent for Business and Finance
- Accounts Payable – Bd. President, Bd. Secretary & Asst. Superintendent for Business and Finance
- Bond Expenditures – Bd. President, Bd. Secretary & Asst. Superintendent for Business and Finance

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Mr. Kennedy to approve the changes as noted on the agenda.

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

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FOR HIRE

Superintendent Archibald stated that Mallory Buda has been hired for the 2020-21 school year to replace a recently retired teacher. Ms. Buda has a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from the University of Michigan, Dearborn. She comes to us with three years of experience teaching a variety of mathematics courses, one year at the Charyl Stockwell Academy and two years most recently at Howell High School. She also brings with her some coaching experience in cross country and track and field. He noted that she has already started, and the district is delighted to have her on board at South Lyon High Schools as well as with the district. He asked the Board to approve the hiring of the educator effective January 21, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Ms. Urtel to approve the hiring of Mallory Buda effective January 21, 2021 as presented.

There was a question from Mr. Schwegler relative to the state of replacing teachers.

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

MASB BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

Mr. Dashner noted that there is a vacancy on the 2021 Michigan Association of School Boards Board of Directors for Region 8. The bios of the four candidates have been provided to the SLCS members of the Board of Education for their review. He noted that he shared the proposed process for doing this earlier in the week, which would be for each board member to list their top candidate. Scores would be tallied. A runoff would take place on the top two. If there are ties, they will do tie breaker votes. There were no concerns expressed with the process being used.

Mr. Dashner stated they will go through the roll call, and each board member will respond with their candidate of choice. The follow four candidates are running for a three-year term:

- *Sandra Duhkie, Ferndale Public Schools*
- *Mary Hanser, Oxford Community Schools*
- *Birgit McQuiston, Lake Orion Community Schools*
- *Gina Walker, New Haven Community Schools*

The following is the first roll call of votes:

- Mr. Abbate – *Ms. McQuiston*
- Ms. McDowell – *Ms. Duhkie*
- Mr. Dashner – *Ms. McQuiston*
- Mr. Kennedy – *Ms. McQuiston*
- Mr. Schwegler – *Ms. Duhkie*
- Mr. Leftwich – *Ms. McQuiston*
- Ms. Urtel – *Ms. McQuiston*

Ms. McQuiston has 5 votes and Ms. Duhkie has 2 votes.

Mr. Dashner proposed that as a Board they nominate Ms. McQuiston since a runoff would probably have the exact same results of the current top two. Mr. Schwegler offered his support.

Moved by Mr. Schwegler, supported by Mr. Abbate to nominate Ms. McQuiston for the Region 8 seat on the MASB Board of Directors.

Mr. Leftwich asked for an opportunity to take a pause and look back at the two candidates a second time. He added that he has worked a little bit with Ms. McQuiston. After a short discussion, they agreed to proceed with the final vote.

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

Ms. Wiemer, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent will submit the official ballot of the Board on behalf of the district to MASB electronically and also confirm the ballot.

GREAT LAKES BOMBERS FACILITY USE GROUP CLASSIFICATION REQUEST

Ms. Stacy Witt explained that the Great Lakes Bombers has submitted a request to the District to be approved as Group III A and was presented to the Board at the January 19 meeting. Since the school district recognizes that the primary purpose of school facilities is to implement the instructional programs for all students, the Board of Education has approved the classifications Group I, Group II, Group III A, Group III B and Group IV, based on priority, for the purpose of allowing the scheduling usage of school facilities. For each group, there is a different usage fee structure, as well as different requirements. In order for an athletic league to obtain Group III A status, the organization must be approved by the Board and meet the administrative guidelines. She asked the Board to vote on the Great Lakes Bombers obtaining Group III A status.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Mr. Abbate to approve the Great Lakes Bombers facility use group classification request.

There were comments from the Board.

- *Ms. McDowell* did not feel the Bombers reached the III A defining status as other organizations in that group. She will not support this.
- *Mr. Schwegler* had a few clarifying questions on the group classifications. If the Bombers group is primarily comprised of our students, the Board should support them. If they are their own organization, they should have to supply their own equipment to maintain the fields, bases etc.
- *Ms. Urtel* asked if it would be a board policy requirement if they were to ask for a yearly audit of all the teams to make sure they meet the 75% status. Ms. Witt stated the district can request that information from groups with current Group III A status. Ms. Urtel supports the Junior League and knows how much they have put financially into the community with both the schools, parks and municipalities in the area.
- *Ms. Witt* stated that they will have some scheduling hindrance on the current Group III A status for their elementary softball fields. The Bombers and the Junior League will have to share the fields.
- *Mr. Dashner* commented that it was his assumption that this is going to create some issues within our organization because now we have two competing organizations on the same level looking for the same locations at the same time, and it will put Ms. Witt or Mr. Bullinger in a position of trying to figure out how to split access between two entities.
- *Ms. Witt* indicated that currently there is only one sport team in all of our Group III A organizations that have been approved. This will be the first time with one sports team having two teams. She and Mr. Bullinger will come up with a fair way to accommodate their requests with them being on the same level.

- *Mr. Dashner* mentioned that the Board has received comments from the public via email that they are showing the Bombers group as having access to our fields for practices, things of that nature, when they haven't ever contracted for the use of our fields. It is a bad look for a community organization that's looking for a benefit for being a community organization. It gives him a little bit of a pause on their actions.

Roll Call: Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Leftwich-no, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Dashner-no, Ms. McDowell-no, Mr. Schwegler-yes, Ms. Urtel-no. Motion fails 4 - 3.

SLCS EXTENDED COVID-19 LEARNING PLAN RECONFIRMATION

Mr. Archibald offered a few brief comments to acknowledge the students who called in earlier before turning it over to members of the CITA Department for their brief presentation prior to the vote. He noted that administration has received numerous communications over the past several weeks regarding in-person instruction. The common theme is that everyone seems to recognize the benefits and trying to maximize in-person instruction for students. He emphasized that there is a considerable difference of opinion for valid reasons on both sides with respect to the how and the when following the mitigation strategies from the road map. Although the roadmap is no longer in force, the mitigation strategies which the district has implemented remain effective and remain in place, along with the protocols outlined in the State of Michigan guidelines for operating school safely. We do believe that the schools can be a low risk environment. He felt that the proposal that is being brought forward this evening balances the concerns that have been shared, and it does provide for a transition period to move to in-person learning.

The extended COVID-19 Learning Plan was presented to the Board of Education on September 21, 2020. The Oakland ISD approved the district's Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan on September 30, 2020. Ms. Kudwa explained that districts are required to reconfirm, once every month thereafter, the instructional delivery method along with reviewing the weekly two-way interaction rates.

At this time, the administrative team is recommending increasing secondary in-person instruction days, as detailed in the plan. The weekly two-way interaction rates are included in the report and are well above the required 75%. Ms. Kudwa noted that there are no plans to make any recommendations that change anything at the elementary level. Ms. Kudwa with the help of Kelley Engblom (elementary) and Kristin Weber (secondary) offered a slide presentation which provided a recap of where we are currently today as we approach this new recommendation.

Moved by Ms. Urtel, supported by Mr. Schwegler to approve the extended COVID-19 Learning Plan as presented.

There was Board discussion.

- *Mr. Schwegler* expressed his concern with the plan presented with the change to 100% on March 1 as opposed to having an alternative for going 100% in person. He was always under the assumption that at the 50% level, many students were attending when they were supposed to go in person. He is now hearing often and consistently that the number of students attending on their day is significantly less than 50%. His concern is when the kids are quarantined at home, how do they get a level of education that is comparable to what they are getting today. He likes the transition period because it serves many people's wants and needs.

- *Ms. McDowell* stated that she had visited Hardy, MMS and SLHS, and it was wonderful to see lots of space. The middle schools have a higher rate of students attending on those 50% days. If more flexibility is allowed at the middle school, it is reasonable to assume that middle school would essentially move to 90% attendance during the transition period. She expressed her concern with spacing at that point.
- *Mr. Kennedy* stated that his concerns are still with class sizes, spacing, availability of the vaccine and the ability to keep our buildings staffed. He feels that the plan proposed to open up two more days at the secondary level as a step in the right direction for the next month given the data and mitigation procedures we have in place at this point.
- *Ms. Urtel* indicated that she has a higher percentage of voting for this next month's plan than not. She believes that having the kids in school is a benefit. She likes the hybrid plan.
- *Mr. Abbate* remarked that the district has gone on a long time with the 50/50 plan and it has worked in all kinds of ways due to the tremendous staff. In Oakland County, the daily cases have been on a steady decline. The numbers are where they were in October. There needs to be a point where we start taking a step down that road to bring our kids back. He wouldn't be opposed to take a look at things as we approach March 1. He is content with the transition plan.
- *Ms. Urtel* stated that she is getting the feeling that a lot of people are liking the February transition, but a little concerned about going back 100% mandated for March 1. She noted the next meeting is March 2. She asked if the 100% decision could be moved to March 8 to allow the Board to have the March 2 meeting date to see how the month of February went.
- *Mr. Dashner* noted that the motion on the table would have to be amended to include the March 8 date in lieu of the March 1 date. Mr. Archibald did not have a problem with that. Mr. Dashner asked the Board to finish their discussion before amending the date.
- *Ms. McDowell* remarked that one of the chief complaints that the Board has heard at their meetings and in emails is the idea that the online delivery of instruction is inadequate compared to in person. She asked what the CITA Department has done specifically to support our teachers in adapting their methods as opposed to just providing resources for teachers to use.
- *Ms. Kudwa* responded that they did provide training for staff on all of the curriculum days so far this year around the different resources that were provided. The resources were identified by our instructional teams, which includes teachers, what they thought would be most beneficial for their content area for the year or for their grade levels for the year in order to make that transition. Once resources were identified, ongoing staff training was provided. She reiterated that there has been a lot of support in time and put into providing teachers with the resources that they need in order to be successful.
- *Ms. McDowell* shared her concern that this transition plan doesn't have any metrics tied to it. It doesn't have any real guidance to the Board other than logistics and comments from the public. She would like the Board to have some kind of data to inform their decision. She felt she could not support this without at least two consecutive weeks of school data with metrics.

- *Mr. Leftwich* stated this is a very emotional and difficult decision. He thanked Mr. Archibald, the cabinet team and building administrators for all the work that has gone into this. He intends to support it but would rather support the March 8 date just because it gives an additional week for adjustment. He added that he would not be able to support a plan like this to support a face to face at 100% at this time. It is time for the district to move forward.
- *Mr. Abbate* thanked Mr. Leftwich and Ms. McDowell for their perspective.
- *Mr. Dashner* added that if this plan does get approved and we move forward, it really takes the community's focus on the screener questions every day. You have to make sure those are being honestly considered every day. If COVID doesn't come into our school, we do not have the impacts of quarantines. If a student is being tested, keep them out of school until the results come back. We can make this work if we follow the best practices. There have been many comments in the last couple days relative to funding from the federal government that would help reduce class sizes. When you reduce class sizes, you need more classrooms and teachers. Money can hire teachers, but it is not going to do anything for classrooms in any short amount of time. He asked Mr. Archibald if he saw anything that money would help change the situation.
- *Mr. Archibald* indicated that staffing or any type of renovation type changes could be a little bit slower moving. But again, if we have the dollars, we need to be creative to be making the best use of them as quickly as we can to support our teachers, staff and students.
- *Mr. Dashner* asked Mr. Archibald what his thoughts were about the concerns over hallway passing times. Mr. Archibald stated that in the times when he has been in the buildings, he has not seen a lot of congregating. It's not a typical school year. He has tremendous confidence in our students to work with administration and follow their directions.
- *Ms. Kudwa* shared that it is 15 cumulative minutes over a 24-hour period in within six feet of the same person and that person has to be COVID positive. Passing time really very rarely is going to move somebody into that category. Students are moving very quickly in most cases. They have their backpacks with them and are not stopping at lockers or chatting with their friends like they would in a typical school year. We don't anticipate that being a factor as we increase the student population in the buildings.
- *Mr. Dashner* asked Mr. Archibald when we see outbreaks from the state, does that mean that we've got spread happening in school and a bunch of people are getting COVID in school.
- *Mr. Archibald* clarified that it means that you have two cases that are similar in time and place. It does not necessarily mean that those two cases were that one was transmitted to the other.
- *Ms. Susan Toth* explained that it's that definition of those two or more contacts, that are identified as being connected without being in the same household.

Moved by Ms. Urtel, supported by Mr. Kennedy to amend the original motion to approve the Extended COVID Learning Plan as presented with an adjustment to the date of beginning 100% from March 1 to March 8 for 100% instruction.

Roll Call: Mr. Leftwich-yes, Ms. McDowell-no, Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Schwegler-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes. Motion passes 6 - 1.

LEGISLATION

Mr. Archibald indicated there was nothing to share this evening.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Dashner acknowledged the following board committee reports:

- **Legislative** – nothing new to report.
- **Policy** – An upcoming meeting is scheduled.
- **Finance** – They met yesterday and hopefully, getting their first look at the final revised budget at some time in late April or May. Mr. Schweidler indicated that extra ESSER funds are coming our way from the federal government. There is the potential for the state to approve additional funds as well to be used along similar guidelines. These are funds we would potentially get to help with COVID related expenses. There are parameters on what we can use them on, and we find creative ways to make sure those funds are used up and don't come out of our general fund.
- **Facilities Planning** – They met this afternoon. They reviewed some progress that the architects and construction manager made with the pool addition at South Lyon High School. They had some options for elevations and adjustments to floor plans. They will be taking the comments back and making some tweaks and adjustments. They also got it right down on a couple of projects as they've progressed into different levels of schematic and design development gone to the construction manager for some tighter budgeting and estimating. The good thing is that most projects are coming in very close to the original estimate. There are some variances one way or the other. The next big one in terms of getting and estimate will be for the pool. Once the architect gets some elevations and materials nailed down, we'll see where we are at with the budget as well.
- **Curriculum & Communications** – They have not had a meeting. Their next meeting is scheduled next Thursday, February 11.
 - *Ms. McDowell questioned when the Board can expect an update about the expenses that the Board approved in December that came from the Curriculum & Communications Committee. She asked when the Board can expect a public update on how those monies were being used.*
 - *Mr. Kennedy responded that he is sure they could get that information from Ms. Kudwa.*
 - *Ms. Kudwa explained that it is not the typical role of Curriculum & Communications. Curriculum & Communications looks at what is being proposed and they provide support for the motion, but they don't get an ongoing update of what percent of staff or students are using items that have been purchased. That is not a historic role they've used.*
 - *Ms. McDowell indicated that the Board approved a lot of money to be spent on buying these licenses for teachers and wanted an update on how this is going.*
 - *Ms. Kudwa and Mr. Kennedy will discuss that.*
- **Oakland Schools Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – Ms. Urtel confirmed there was a meeting last week, but she was unable to attend. There has been some correspondence and links to some goal setting and discussion points that have been sent out since so they must have discussed some different tools and points to review.
- **Oakland County Health Dept. School Board Update** – Ms. Urtel confirmed there was a meeting last week, but she was unable to attend. There has been some correspondence and links to some goal setting and discussion points that have been sent out since so they must have discussed some different tools and points to review or guidance on how to implement diversity and inclusion in the educational setting.

OTHER

Mr. Archibald had no other information to share.

REPORTS

- **South Lyon Educational Foundation** – Mr. Abbate indicated that the application process has been opened for this year's Perseverance Award. The award is designed to recognize two South Lyon students (one from each high school) who have overcome significant obstacles in their lives or demonstrated dramatic academic improvement throughout their high school careers. There is no GPA requirement, only that eligible students must be accepted and plan to attend an academic, vocational or technical school or program in the fall. Applications are available on the website and are due by Thursday, April 22, 2021. The year's SLEF is focusing on engagement and connecting more with local businesses and the South Lyon community. SLEF recently joined the Kensington Valley Chamber of Commerce to network and support our local businesses. The SLHS audit transition program is selling SLHS umbrellas for \$25. Proceeds from each umbrella sold helps support the foundation. To purchase, go their website or Facebook page for more information. They would like to thank everyone that donated as part of the end-of-year fundraising campaign and gave Star awards for outstanding teachers. Star awards can be given any time of the year by going to their website. They also recognized the following individuals and businesses for their gold level donation – Mr. Steve Showerman, Michelle Tomei M3 Investment Services and Lincoln Investment Planning. They thanked everyone for their generous donations and noted that they will be put to good use. SLEF is looking to add a few more members to the foundation. If you would like to make an impact in our district and have experience in event planning or fundraising, please reach out to them. It is a great group!

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered a second opportunity for public comments.

- *Laura Kelly* asked the Board to support our secondary students going back to face to face learning. Those calling with objections to the plan have the virtual option to lean on. If parents understand the risk and still want their kids to return. they should have that option. The kids are falling behind and need face to face schooling.
- *Doreen Bradley* encouraged the Board to retain the current hybrid model of instruction. Consistency is very important and changing now will only insert added disruption to schools. Listen to the students and teachers who have voiced support for the current model. Changing now would only bring more learning disruption and unsafe environments for our community.
- *John Nichols* stated the 50% hybrid model is working well and doubling the capacity to 100% will lead to an increase in COVID cases accounting for the increased class sizes and lack of social distancing. Quarantined students will not have the option of live instruction. He urged the Board to consider this in their decision and keep the current plan of 50%.
- *Joanne Beardsley* stated she understands the Board's decision is very important. She considered the Virtual Learning Program for her sons but opted for the hybrid program. She will not support the proposal to return to 100% instruction, not only because it is unsafe, but also because the VLP model doesn't seem to be an equal alternative to the in-person model.
- *Michelle Makara* called in and expressed her support for the current hybrid model.
- *Cheryl Benson* would like the Board to extend the transition period to the end of the school year. She is comfortable sending her kids back but sympathizes with the parents who do not feel comfortable with sending their kids back full time and should therefore be given the option.
- *Jared Adams* questioned why it is being proposed to bring students back in school at 100% if they can't adequately socially distance them. It is crucial to realize that we are in a pandemic and nothing done will be 100% perfect, so safety should be the concern.

- *Alice Kondracluk* indicated that we need a balanced solution to ensure access to education for students who elected the hybrid/in-person option. A return to full capacity while also choosing to eliminate technology options for remote attendance will create more problems than it solves. A student may be exposed to COVID in school and forced to quarantine should continue to have access to Google Meet/Classroom for remote learning. Eliminating this is unfair and risks their education.
- *Mark Skrelja* shared his disappointment on the Board's vote to not allow the Great Lakes Bombers III A status as they met all the requirements. He doesn't understand why this is being looked at as a competition between the Bombers and the Junior League. It is just about South Lyon kids playing on South Lyon fields. This is their first year in existence, and that is why they haven't used the fields in the past. They will apply to use the fields as a III B group, as Ms. Witt said the III A group will book all the fields, and some will sit not used.
- *Juliann Sleek* stated that since the Board voted to send our children back to 100% capacity for in-person learning, they now need to experience some increased risk as well. They need to stop meeting virtually and start meeting in person immediately.
- *Becky Rapp* called in and thanked the Board for supporting secondary students returning to school. She asked the Board to hold SLCS accountable to the 1,080 instructional hours that are required by the State of Michigan. She understands that there are ways to get around these hours this year due to COVID, and South Lyon is taking advantage of this. However, next year this will not be the case. When the calendar comes up for approval next year, she is asking the Board to really look at it, examine it and make sure that our students are getting those hours. The instruction lost on the 12 half days that have been in our calendar for the last several years is ridiculous. Districts in the area do not have these half days of lost instruction. They are unnecessary, and any teacher knows half days are a waste of instructional time. If you are looking at what is best for kids, you'll examine this carefully when the time comes in the Spring. The three added Wednesdays off this year that they've just added in serve no purpose and is yet another waste of instructional time. She asked for transparency and put it on the website so residents can see these instructional hours and what they were for in this school year.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence for Mr. Dashner to acknowledge.

MEETING DATES

Mr. Dashner acknowledged the board meeting dates noting they have been moved to Tuesdays

- Tuesday, March 2, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 16, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 20, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 4, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 18, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 8, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 22, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

BOARD COMMENTS

- *Ms. Urtel* welcomed the new math teacher at the high school. She noted that there are probably a lot of families and kids disappointed that the Board did not support the South Lyon Bomber organization. They do have the ability to use our fields. She asked after listening to what Ms. Witt had mentioned that due to knowing there is another team in town, if the South Lyon Junior League is scheduling fields, they need to make sure they are going to be using those fields to allow some open time and open space

for other teams to have a chance at using those fields. She put out a shameless plug for Lyon Township. Any teams that would like additional fields, there are two fields on the east side of Atchison Park that are not being utilized. They are in rough shape, but any team willing to potentially work with the Township, there is a Parks & Rec Committee they can reach out to and see if there is some partnerships that can happen with them to see if there are some fields that could be utilized. Everyone enjoy the mid-winter break coming up and stay warm.

- *Ms. McDowell* welcomed and congratulated Ms. Buda. She thanked all the students who spoke this evening. It is very encouraging, heartwarming and lovely to see young folks engage in civic discourse and advocate for themselves. She would encourage any student who has a concern about anything related to their education to do that now or in the future. It is an excellent opportunity. She thanked Mr. Archibald and his team for organizing tours for her to visit Hardy, South Lyon High School and Millennium Middle School. She also thanked the administration at each of those three schools and to the staff who weren't expecting adults walking around and poking their head in the classroom. She shared a thank you to the teachers and students for the warm welcome. She strongly encouraged her colleagues on the Board to visit the schools. Mr. Archibald's team is more than willing to accommodate that request. It was very eye-opening and educational.
- *Mr. Leftwich* stated that all the board members received dozens of emails in the last two weeks. He wanted to let the community and teachers know that he read every word of every one of them. He takes these very seriously and gave fidelity to anyone who took the time to write. He thanked Mr. Dashner as the president for responding on behalf of the Board to so many of them. He noted that many of them were teachers. He encouraged the teachers to work with their administrators and talked to your administrators as you move toward the transition to 100%. Tell them what it is you need.
- *Mr. Kennedy* indicated he didn't have anything to add to what has already been said. He welcomed Ms. Buda, our new math teacher. Stay well and keep the faith.
- *Mr. Schwegler* welcomed Ms. Buda. He spoke to everyone who has sent an email. He knows that not every email a board member receives are of the same opinion. There are varying degrees of how people feel, and he wanted to encourage everyone to continue to send them. All board members read all of their emails. Mr. Dashner has done an absolutely amazing job at taking care to respond to each email. The Board takes these words into their consideration. They use this along with the data that they do have available to them. They really do try to make a decision that is best for as many people that is possible. He believes that the decision they came to today reflects that. It is great to see as our community grows that there are other opportunities. He is hopeful that after this evening's discussion, there is a pathway for the Bombers to have access to. Chris will do a good job helping fit everybody in as best we can.
- *Mr. Abbate* began by tipping his hat to the new members on the Board. He told Ms. McDowell that it takes a lot of courage to speak her mind and be in a moment when she is kind of holding down the minority position for a particular vote. The Board needs people to push them in their thinking and really does appreciate the perspective that she brought this evening. Mr. Leftwich is a very confident new voice, and he appreciates what he brings to the table as well being an educator and living that world from another district. It is helpful to them. He mentioned that the Board received a lot of communication from our students in the public comments and emails. It is excellent and always wonderful to see. They are the best messages. They are models of respect and civility in most cases.

The Board learns a lot from our students and really need to get a lesson from them in the way they express themselves in these really charged moments. We need to give the kids more credit. He thanked Mr. Archibald and our Cabinet team for the time they put into the learning plan.

- *Mr. Dashner* extended a warm welcome to Ms. Buda. To the public comment regarding in-person board meetings, we are currently prohibited by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services for holding them. Basically, the rules were put in place. There are some exceptions, and they did not list School Board public meetings as one of the exceptions. The next question is how can school be open, and board meetings closed? He doesn't have an answer to that. We are just playing by the rules just like opening our schools. He echoed what was said about the students. He likes hearing from them and their perspective. Instead of parents telling us what they think their kids are feeling, he likes hearing it directly from them. He would encourage students at any time to write the entire Board, call into the meetings. They are welcome, and the Board values their opinion.

ADJOURN

Moved by Mr. Leftwich, supported by Mr. Kennedy to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Urtel
Board Secretary