

SPECIAL MEETING Agenda: MASB Facilitated Workshop | Electronic Meeting VIA Zoom; see "IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS MEETING" (Monday, July 12, 2021)

Generated by Julie Haines on Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Members present

Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Ellen Champagne, Sharon Lee (joined at 5:17 p.m.), Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

Meeting called to order at 5:02 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Celeste Hawkins, Board President

2. IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS ELECTRONIC MEETING

Information: A. Electronic Meeting (via Zoom) In Accordance with DHHS Emergency Order and PA 254 of 2020; COVID-19
IMPORTANT MESSAGE: This meeting of the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education will proceed electronically in accordance with DHHS Emergency Order and PA 254 of 2020.

If participants do not have technology access, please contact our Director of Technology Nik Jackson for accommodation: techdirector@ycschools.us.

Public viewers please use the following link to watch the live stream: <https://www.facebook.com/ypsilantcommunityschools>

-or join directly on Zoom-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83401100127>

The public can register their attendance at the following link. If they would like to ask a question or make a public comment to the Board, there is a place for that, as well:

- Live form: http://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_Comments
- Call in to speak during public comments time: **734-221-1204**

As public comments come in, they will be collected in the order received in the following spreadsheet. Board and Cabinet are the only ones with access:

- Formatted Public Comments: https://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_FormattedComments
- Sheet Collecting Attendance and Comments: http://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_PublicCommentsCollected

Information: B. Electronic Meeting Guidelines

ELECTRONIC MEETING GUIDELINES: Because electronic meetings are new to the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education, it is appropriate to outline those procedures which may vary from typical meeting procedures.

#1: Board members will be asked to state their name when making motions and seconds for the benefit of the audience.

#2: All votes are urged to be taken by roll call for clarity.

#3: The Chair will strive to recognize Board members by name before they speak. In the event this does not happen, trustees are encouraged to announce their own name or may be reminded to do so.

#4: Audience members will be muted until recognized by the Chair during public comment(s).

#5: People who speak during public comment time will be asked to state their name and topic before speaking.

#6: If there is a closed session in a meeting, it will take place in a separate Zoom session. The regular meeting will remain open until the Board returns from closed session.

#7: Board members must avoid using email, texting, instant messaging and other electronic forms to communicate with each other or with members of the public during the meeting.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Action: A. Acceptance of Agenda

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept the agenda, as presented.

Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Yvonne Fields.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Ellen Champagne, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Electronic Participation

Information: A. Guidelines for Public Comment

Public Comment Protocol

Pursuant to Board of Education Policy 0167.3

*The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express their view.

*Please limit statements to three (3) minutes duration.

*Participants shall direct all comments to the Board and not to staff or other participants; no person may address or question Board members individually.

*Remarks shall be made in a respectful and professional manner.

Virtual Public Comment Information:

The public can register their attendance at the following link. If they would like to ask a question or make a public comment to the Board, there is a place for that, as well:

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No public comments.

5. PHASES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING: Mary Kerwin, Facilitator | Senior Consultant, Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB)

Discussion: A. Phases in Strategic Planning

Mary Kerwin: Thank you so much for holding this session. I want to tell you what an honor it was to be in your Community last week with a group of stakeholders quite impressive and very reflective of the Community. I've done a lot of planning, both for school improvement and strategic plans, and this was a very unique and representative group that came together. So I'm going to start by citing why we are doing this in the first place. In 1990, public act 25 was passed by the legislature and that's what we call the school improvement act. Currently we call this continuing improvement but the act specifies that we have to have in place a three to five year School Improvement Plan and it has come time when we look at that strategic planning process now. The School Improvement Plan shall include but not be limited to a mission statement, goals based on student achievement, objectives for the students, curriculum alignment of corresponding with goals, evaluation processes, staff development, development in utilization of Community resources and volunteers, the role of adult education or libraries or Community colleges in the learning and building level decisions. It specifies that those who work on this must include board members, school building administrators, teachers, and other school employees, pupils, parents of pupils attending the schools and other residents of the school district. So I want to share with you a little bit about the group assembled. We had 25 members of the Community. They included alumni, members of the business community, elected officials, representatives from higher education and nonprofit agencies. We had parents and grandparents, pastors, retirees, and a student. So we all, especially valued the student who is now starting college. We, of course, welcomed our Trustee Goodrich. We had principals representing every age, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, and administrators. We were joined by and attended throughout the superintendent and assistant superintendent. So as far as a group of stakeholders, I just can't speak highly enough about that group who assembled and their eagerness to undergo the first part of this process and provide a lot of valuable input. It was also requested by Dr. Hawkins and the board that we gather together stakeholders to provide information and input regarding ESSR as we're approaching ESSR III. So we could do double duty on this. The ESSR legislation requires stakeholders, including students, families, school and district administrators, teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators and school staff so we were able to do both at the same session, talk about ESSR funding and receive consultation. So we really did talk about a list of areas where ESSR funding might be used and then how they would recommend using the ESSR funding. So for the ESSR funding, one of the areas that the ESSR funding may be used and remember ESSR III has to be completely used by September 2025 so we know we're under some pressures. These were the emergency relief funds which were deemed essential by everyone except the state legislature. So we're still kind of on a hold for that. Congress deemed these absolutely imperative that school districts receive these emergency relief funds right away so that schools could remediate what needed to be remediated to ensure that we had a safe environment from learning. One of the areas that funds can be used includes mental health services and support. Every single person in the room, and again the superintendent and assistant superintendent plays no role in any of these. So they are observing but they're not leading the way on any of our engagement with our stakeholders. The stakeholders own the room. Every single hand in that room supported mental health services and support. So I want you to realize that that's imperative for the stakeholders who were there. They know the need. You all have mentioned before you know the research, but this is an area where they have consulted and given us input. The group also appreciated the summer learning supplemental programs that were offered immediately. They wished that they had known about them in advance and, I thought the district was very resilient and as soon as the funds became available immediately starting our summer programs. So they were excited about that. They wished, as do we all, that transportation could be provided. That is not something that ESSR does, however, that is a desire of the Community because they feel that if we would have more students engaging in our summer programs if transportation were available. It was a surprise to them that funding for that was not available, and they were encouraged by some electives in the room, we had a county Commissioner and a mayor, who encouraged them to contact Congress, because again it's Congress that is writing the laws and stipulating how we can spend our resources and surely transportation would be wonderful, but it's not something that was considered for the emergency relief package. So those are the two areas that they really supported and they are aware that virtual learning will continue and so that's an area of support as well. Any questions or comments on the ESSR conversation we had with the stakeholders. This is just one example of receiving consultation from stakeholders regarding ESSR funding. I know that your superintendent has been having other consultations with other groups, however, this was a great opportunity because this group was so reflective of the Community, including, as I said, we had faith based, we had entrepreneurs, we had business community, we had the retirees, we had taxpayers, we had every group that we could possibly have so it was perfect for them.

To move on with our strategic planning, the phases of strategic planning includes a review of critical issues and priorities, a SWOT that's where we ask our stakeholders to give us input on how they view as our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and then we transcend towards the mission, vision, and goals based on that. After we do that first phase, we will look at strategies on how to achieve the priorities and then the third phase is actual implementation. That is what we call the resource alignment, the timeframe, meetings, monitoring, mechanisms, reports, and documentation. So we began with the first phase: critical issues and priorities, that SWOT, and we transcended the mission, because, as you know, the mission statement rightfully comes from the stakeholders. They recommend it for you to review and then formally adopt. And so what we did on that portion was after we did all the other brainstorming was to look at our current mission statement and they reflected on their SWOT and their beliefs and aspirations in reviewing the mission statement so I want to share with you some of that information. I have pages and pages of the notes that we took and I will send to you a formal report on that, but two days was not enough time to get that assembled for you today, but I do share some of the key pieces from this. The assembled group identified a number of strengths of the district,

and they focused a lot on, rather than viewing weaknesses, they focused a lot on opportunities and shared opportunities they would very much like to see. I think it's significant that their focus isn't on weaknesses or whining or any of those things, but really focusing on things that we could do better. They recognize things that the district does very well and things that could be done better, and I think this is really a unique experience this time that so many people would see opportunities available, including collaboration and some other things that you would probably be aware of. We spent a year of experiencing a pandemic as a major threat, so we did not spend as much time on threats, because we know what that is as much as they did on the strengths and opportunities. We also talked, as I said, about descriptors. How they viewed quality education, how they viewed dedicated staff, how they viewed our graduating students, what they would like to see for our early elementary students, all of those pieces we went through in a brainstorming fashion. Another area that I think that's very unique for this stakeholder session was the experiences they shared from their own school experiences. This was not necessarily spent in our own school district but I think it was important, and I want to share with you. I think it's important to reflect on how significant it was for them to share their own personal experiences in schools. And I think what we can learn from looking back with them isn't "Oh well, you that wasn't even here so what can we do about it," but more how much they care that students, that we have within our arms now don't have the experiences that they had. I want to spend a little bit of time on this. When each of us goes to the doctor, we have all experienced this, even if we do now, with a virtual doctor visit and we have a very specific thing that we're there, has there ever been a time when you don't have to go back and fill out the history. A long laborious history of everything that our families have had or all of these things, but I have a headache, "can't you just deal with my headache?" When your stakeholders share their background information, it is fundamental. We can't introduce a series of strategies unless we in fact look back on that history. So we did spend a significant time with the stakeholders, they volunteered their stories, it wasn't on my list of SWOT, "please this isn't a strength, I want to stop talking about this," we didn't do that. We listen very carefully to their shared history because that history is indicative. We cannot ignore that. As we go forward and strategic planning those narratives shared by those stakeholders will, in fact, inform us going forward the same way, a good physician wouldn't just write me a prescription and say "fine, try that" but would really look into my history to see the significance of the pain that I was experiencing now, coupled with what my history shows. This does that make sense to all of you. So normally where I would have a brisk list and again for most of my strategic planning it's been a brisk list "let's move," give me list after this after list that was not the nature of our three hours together. Our three hours together included the narratives of a personal experience and education, their recognition our strengths, and opportunities for our district and their aspirations for all of the learners that we embrace. So I will be giving you a list of all of their bulleted points which included, as I said, their impression and their wish for our students both young and then for our graduates as well, and they have some specific pieces that they wanted. I did share with them at the end of that because I thought it was significant how closely what we had on the sheets on every single wall, how closely that aligned with the current mission statement. So I'm going to read the current mission statement. This is the mission statement I found on your website so it's the one that I'm assuming is the current mission statement, but let me read it as I found it on the website and then I'll go through the vision as well. See if we were in tune after our about two and a half hours, whether if what we had written on the walls resonated with the current mission statement. So the mission statement says, the purpose of YCS is to develop mindful, engaged students with the skill set, work ethic, and attitude to contribute to a community that honors diversity, equality, and justice. When they looked at this, they were not sure that if right now YCS is actually doing this - a mission statement says what we are doing. And they thought that this sounded more like a vision statement, where we are going so we spent some time talking about mission, what we are doing and where we would like to be going and what they agree, all hands, was that we are creating the opportunities to develop mindful, engaged students with the skill set, work ethic, attitude to contribute to a community that honors diversity, equality and justice and that that was important. The Stakeholders who were there, and again the paid staff spoke but did not overwhelm the group at all, I think we heard from each principle a couple times and teachers, a couple times, but they did not overwhelm and I want to share that stakeholders from your community do not know what mindfulness is. Everyone on this call knows how important mindfulness is. It is the direction of the board, it is in our blueprint. We have an opportunity to do a better job in helping the community embrace mindfulness, but we will have to do that through definition. We can do it through our website, but I would encourage all trustees in meetings that you attend with community members to go ahead and ask, "Have you heard of our mindfulness initiative? Do you know how important we see that to be and what do you think?" For me living through what we've lived through for the past 18 months, I think mindfulness is the answer to everything. I think mindfulness is key to building a better community and building a better educational system. And I think that those students who come through with mindfulness will be better leaders than we have in many places in our government today. It's imperative that we do more to share mindfulness and our commitment to it with our community at large.

On the vision on your website, you have YCS is academically strong and committed to transforming in ways that help students thrive. That's a good vision. It's a clear vision. It's not where we are, but that's where we're going. YCS is the choice for a trusted, reliable, and socially just district. Aspiration is great. YCS is a sense of connection for families and students in a district where each and every one is valued and belongs. YCS is your consistently well managed and organized school district. So those are vision statements, very appropriate. I think that you'll see the same links that you mentioned about desirability on many of the things that the stakeholders brought in. So there's your vision statements. And for the mission statement, the group that we had assembled for our first session, agreed that we were creating opportunities to develop mindful, engaged students when the skill set. They just weren't sure that we were doing it right now.

Celeste Hawkins: As part of the time that you spent with stakeholders was anything mentioned about the word equality, and I only raise the question because I know there is often discussion on the terms of quality versus equity. And I know as a district, our commitment has been to make sure we're advancing equity, and equality is a very different term so I just wonder did anything come up in the conversation with the stakeholders around that term.

Mary Kerwin: Equality was never mentioned. Equity was, and it was a shared commitment again, this is a high level group of stakeholders, it was shared very early - equity, diversity, and inclusion were mentioned right off the bat. And the commitment to equity was in the room. Again none of this is coached so that was very important to them, and I know that it's very important to you, to this board itself. Equity did come up, no one ever said anything about equality.

Celeste Hawkins: I have another question. So as part of this process, as I'm thinking about the term equality because equity, it seems like was a theme that came up, it was threaded through the discussion, but our current mission has equality in it, so I wonder if we might spend some time at some point talking about is that the most appropriate term that really captures what our mission ought to say.

Mary Kerwin: Again for the mission, a draft will be presented to the Board and the Board is certainly welcome to tweak it. Absolutely tweak it before adoption. So sometimes the language isn't as clear as we would like but no stakeholder offered equality, all stakeholders offered equity as important to them, so I think that substitution would be important. When I send you the list of bullet points, it will also have draft mission statements for your consideration.

Mary Kerwin: As part of the strategic process, after we've met with our stakeholders, the next session will be to pair the blueprint that's currently being used throughout the district and see how that pairs with the stakeholders interest to develop the strategies,

the resources, and all of those other pieces required in the strategic plan and with the District School Improvement Plan. So both of those pieces will lay well together and one of the outcomes is we would like to have accreditation come in to do a survey of our schools. They, too, will look at stakeholders, they, too, will look at our board governance documents when they determine the accreditation for the district itself.

I've covered all of those steps that the strategic planning takes place and how they marry with the requirements under the law of both for school improvement and for stepping forward through accreditation.

And so, now I wait your questions or comments.

Celeste Hawkins: It's really important for us to do a little work on operationalizing the term mindfulness and I really appreciate that feedback from the Community, that it is not as clear to them what we actually mean by that, so I just appreciate that feedback. And it gives us something to think about in terms of how we use language and really convey clearly to everyone what we mean by the words that we have in our statements.

Mary Kerwin: Especially since it is so core to us, and I was thinking about our young learners, our very earliest students that that's an opportunity, when they first enroll and we are meeting with guardians and parents and grandparents for us to talk about mindfulness because we know the difference that can make with our very, very young students. And that's why I'm so hopeful about a better world. As we look at our young learners who will grow up to be future leaders having mindfulness as a key touchstone will make all the difference.

Celeste Hawkins: It also ties into mental health and the whole child, which is work that the district is engaging in so I'm really happy that the community really is prioritizing and saying to us that we will place a focus on mental health. So when I think about mindfulness and the whole child and mental health there's so many intersections there, so I just wanted to also make that connection and offer that comment as well.

Maria Goodrich: One clarification, I just want to make sure that I'm understanding correctly for where we are in the process is that, by having held this community engagement event that we met the requirements for getting community input as part of our strategic plan and for the ESSR funding? I agree that we had an amazing group of stakeholders there, some amazing conversations that came out of having all those people in the room together at the same time. It was fantastic that we had a student there and I know that because we've met this benchmark it doesn't necessarily mean we stopped here, and I know that the district is collecting information and feedback and other ways and I'm looking forward to how we can integrate additional student and family voices and additional teacher and staff voices as well. We had some really fantastic representatives. We had a lot of different stakeholder groups represented, and I would love to see how we can integrate more of those voices when we're deciding what to do, both in terms of our strategic plan and the ESSR funding. One super minor thing just going back to ESSR funding, I think when folks are talking about transportation, they were particularly focused on after school activities, it's my understanding. I think that there is transportation for Grizzlies Learning Camp, so we do have that piece covered for this summer, but that some of the after school learning opportunity, some of the different ways that we can tap into both students and educator passions in some of those spaces - there's a lot of talk about the opportunities and a lot of praise for what we're doing this summer in the Grizzly Learning Camp, but transportation was definitely highlighted as a barrier to pursuing some of those during the school year.

Mary Kerwin: They really would like ESSR funding to provide transportation and they have ideas and I'll share them with you when I send the report. They have ideas about specific after school programs, and they did highlight the importance of having enthusiastic presenters in those after school programs. They know that that level of enthusiasm from our educating teachers and other staff members who present those programs makes a huge difference in how students respond to them. So those are pieces that are really important.

Alena Zachery-Ross: Thank you so much for the facilitation. You really did a wonderful job bringing out the voices that were there. You found ways to ensure that we heard from our families and from the staff, really highlighting those voices of families. One of the things that I noticed is that we need to do more celebrating or more sharing of what we are doing. It was just a noticing of yes, we put out information and we need to make sure that our community knows more. It was just that big idea that just to me resonated and the nice part is it connected to a lot of the work, even our mission statement aligned to what they had on the charts but the work we're doing aligned as well, and I just saw that big gap of opportunity there that I just wasn't noticing.

6. OTHER

7. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Trustee Gainsley: I guess it was just looking for a sort of a timeline of the process. Are there additional meetings planned and when are we going to be getting notes from those meetings because I think it would just be really valuable to actually have the full write-up of what happened in the session? It sounds like the session was really valuable, but I would love to really see those details and have time to kind of work through those and process those as a board. And if there are additional meetings, then maybe we want to do that all at once, together, but I just like to understand kind of what is planned and when we will have that feedback and if we will have that feedback at the August 16 meeting.

Mary Kerwin: You'll have the report in advance of the August meeting. I will get that to you in early August. You'll have time to take a look at that.

Alena Zachery-Ross: To add on, we have been keeping names of people who weren't able to attend or were concerned about being in person to perhaps have a virtual opportunity. Now that we have the next day, we can navigate. We're trying to give ourselves a timeline. As Mary said we've been working with different small groups, the building networks all have met to give information towards the Michigan blueprint for the MICIP. The teachers have been able to give information, but we want to make sure that we do have additional stakeholders and those persons who weren't able to make it to have that follow up and some of them had requested virtual.

8. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.