

YPSILANTI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Administration Building, Professional Development Room * 1885 Packard Rd.: Ypsilanti, MI 48197

MINUTES: REGULAR | SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

The meeting was called to order by President Dr. Celeste Hawkins at 5:33 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, led by an Erickson student and Superintendent Alena Zachery-Ross.

Please note that at this meeting, the YCS Board of Education is operating as a six-member Board of Education.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT

President Dr. Celeste Hawkins, Treasurer Gillian Ream Gainsley, Trustee Ellen Champagne, Trustee Sharon Lee, Trustee Meredith Schindler

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ABSENT

Secretary Maria Sheler-Edwards

ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Erickson Elementary Points of Pride included: 1) Peer Mentors in Training; 2) Proactive 4th Graders; 3) Caught Being a Leader; 4) Books Pals; 5) Back to School Kick Off; 6) Robotics, and; 7) Building Network Systems Installation.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA: Accepted as Presented

Motion by Lee, supported by Schindler

Action Recorded: 5/Yes; 0/No.

PRESENTATIONS

Technology Department Review 2019: Nik Jackson, Director of Technology, presented a Department review. Dialogue on PowerPoint presentation, including: 1) Technology Ticket Counts; 2) Lab Deployment; 3) Security Camera Systems, and; 4) Looking Ahead.

Statement Regarding Status of Board Member Residency Show Cause Hearing. Hawkins read the following aloud:

A Show Cause hearing was held in the pending litigation regarding a board vacancy on October 9, 2019. At the hearing, the Judge did not rule on whether the Board member in question is a resident of the Ypsilanti Community School District; rather, the Judge scheduled an evidentiary hearing on October 24, 2019. The Judge also ruled that the 30-day requirement to fill the vacant seat is enjoined until after the evidentiary hearing. As a result, the Board is precluded from further action in this matter until additional orders are issued in the litigation. Further, the case is still pending litigation in which the Board of Education and each individual Board member are named as parties. Therefore, the Board will make no further comment regarding the case at this time.

We understand the attention this case has received raises questions from the public and it is difficult not to respond. However, it is prudent to remember that the Board and all individual Board members are named individually. Therefore, all Board members have a fiduciary obligation to ensure they act in a manner that does not compromise the Board or the District. The Board has a Board member ethics policy. As always, all provisions of the Bylaw apply to Board members at all times. However, two provisions of the Bylaw are especially important to

remember during litigation, which are as follows: As members of the Board of Education, Board members will strive to improve public education and to that end they will:

Item J. avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using their Board positions for personal partisan gain;

Item K. take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law ... [Board Policy 0144.2 – Board Member Ethics].

PUBLIC COMMENTS #1

Shoshana DeMaria, representing NAACP, commented on calls they are receiving regarding Board member residency, and, emphasis on the business of students. Lee Tooson commented, briefly, of the removal of a Board member.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION TO approve the following: 1) September 23, 2019 special meeting minutes; 2) September 23, 2019 regular meeting minutes, and; 3) the personnel matters as per the attached list dated October 18, 2019: Retirements, New Hires and Resignations.

Motion by Lee, supported by Schindler

Action Recorded: 5/Yes; 0/No.

ACTION ITEMS, Student Affairs

Field Trip, YCHS Choir

MOTION TO approve the out-of-state and overnight field trip of the Ypsilanti Community High School Choir to New Orleans, Louisiana and Nashville, Tennessee in April 2020.

Motion by Schindler, supported by Ream Gainsley

Action Recorded: 5/Yes; 0/No.

Donation: CTE Collision, Farmers Insurance

MOTION TO accept a donation of a salvage vehicle to the Career & Technical Education program, with an estimated value in excess of \$1,000 in present condition.

Motion by Ream Gainsley, supported by Lee

Action Recorded: 5/Yes; 0/No.

Donation: Unite Community Church, Erickson Elementary

MOTION TO accept an \$8,100 cash donation from Unite Community Church on behalf of Erickson Elementary.

Motion by Lee, supported by Schindler

Action Recorded: 5/Yes; 0/No.

RESOLUTION: Celebrate Our Principals / National Principals Month

MOTION TO adopt the Resolution to Celebrate Our Building Leaders, commemorating the month of October as National Principals Month.

Motion by Schindler, supported by Ream Gainsley

Roll Call Vote: 5/0 Yes

Yes: Ream Gainsley, Champagne, Lee, Schindler, Hawkins

Comments: Zachery-Ross complimented building leaders who are extraordinary, and go above-and-beyond. These leaders were honored with a breakfast at the beginning of October. Hawkins thanked building leaders who work tirelessly. Ream Gainsley shared her recent experience in an elementary building. Zachery-Ross read the resolution aloud.

DISCUSSION

FIRST READ | Draft Policy, NEOLA #2410 | Prohibition of Referral/Assistance (Amendment to State School Aid Act Board Policy Requirement): Zachery-Ross commented Board Members have confidential information from our attorney regarding this draft policy. This is part of the School Aid budget Governor Whitmer recently signed. If a policy is not adopted, there is risk of losing State Aid monies. Zachery-Ross read aloud the draft policy received from legal counsel. Ream Gainsley comments on mimicking this policy as a "state-mandated policy", as Ann Arbor did. Hawkins comments the Board Policy Subcommittee can have further conversation. Dialogue on a deadline, First Read delay with the cancelled meeting, and, scheduled approval.

The Board recessed at 6:22 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 6:31 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS #2 (Moved up, from after Equity and Inclusion Presentation)

Amanda Smith commented on the draft policy presented tonight. *Edward Dance* commented on Board solidarity and focusing on the future. *Lavada Weathers* commented on the draft policy and Board member residency.

MEMBERS OF YCS ADMINISTRATIVE CABINET IN ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOLLOWING SESSION: Assistant Superintendent Dr. Carlos Lopez, Director of Student Support Services Ruth Jordan, Director of Human Resources Sue McCarty, Office of Communications/Marketing Jerilyn Lynn, Board Secretary Paula Gutzman

EQUITY AND INCLUSION PRESENTATION: Dorinda Carter Andrews, Ed.D., Professor & Chairperson of Teacher Education at Michigan State University, led discussion and activities in followup to work done in August -- Effective School Board Operations: Courageous Conversations about Race, Schooling and Decision-Making. Dialogue on ways to promote equity, including: 1) The Big Picture; 2) Board Priorities; 3) Guiding Questions; 4) Brainstorming and Planning; 5) What Stuck?, and; 6) a Self-Assessment that Board members and Cabinet members in attendance participated in.


OTHER

- *Lee* recently attended her first WISD Head Start meeting; next month is a next meeting.
- *Hawkins* spoke on a list of events for Board member sign up.
- *Lee* spoke of the ACCE luncheon and turkey donations.

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

- *Ream Gainsley* commented on her tour of 10 YCS buildings.
- *Zachery-Ross* commented on the work with Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews being helpful for her and Administrative Cabinet to move this work forward.
- *Hawkins* acknowledged and apologized to the community for the cancellation of the last Board meeting. There was no Board quorum, so the meeting had to be cancelled. Spoke of rescheduling the topics of that meeting to tonight's agenda.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:41 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Paula Gutzman 

Date Approved: November 4, 2019



Maria Sheler-Edwards, Secretary
Board of Education
Ypsilanti Community Schools