

**SPECIAL MEETING Agenda | Electronic Meeting VIA Zoom; see "IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS MEETING" (Monday, October 11, 2021)**

Generated by Julie Haines on Tuesday, October 12, 2021

**Members present**

Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

**Meeting called to order at 5:33 PM**

Vice President Lee joined meeting at 5:38 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Celeste Hawkins, Board President  
Action: A. Roll Call of Board of Education Members

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 Solomon Zheng for accommodation: [techdirector@ycschools.us](mailto:techdirector@ycschools.us).

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

**-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](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](https://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_FormattedComments)
- Sheet Collecting Attendance and Comments: [http://bit.ly/YCS\\_BOE\\_PublicCommentsCollected](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 Google Hangouts 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, Action (Consent): A. Acceptance of Agenda

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

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Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Yvonne Fields.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, 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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#### 5. PRESENTATIONS

Discussion, Presentation: A. Review of Letters of Interest and Qualifications for Vacant Board of Education Position

As a reminder, a public announcement was released on September 28, 2021 to share that a vacancy existed on the Board of Education for Ypsilanti Community Schools. The deadline to submit letters of interest and resumes was **Friday, October 8, 2021, at 5 pm.**

**The purpose:** As outlined in our timeline our special meeting this evening is being held to discuss resumes and letters of interest received and select the top (3) candidates who will be invited to an interview.

As a reminder to the BOE, we invited candidates to submit both a letter of interest and a resume.

The qualifications for the YCS BOE for the vacant seat are as follows (the list below was shared in the posting):

#### **A school board candidate must:**

- Put children (scholars) first. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant should believe that every student deserves an equitable, quality education. They should have a true commitment to the successful future of all students in the district and a proven history of advocacy and engagement on their behalf.
- Have no personal or political agenda. In YCS, board applicants should not be seeking office based on their own personal agenda or political aspirations. Instead, they must have a passion for public education and believe that all students deserve and are entitled to a high-quality education.
- Provide leadership. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant should be passionate about moving the district forward, have high expectations, and provide high support. To accomplish this, an applicant needs to be an innovative problem-solver who is effective in building consensus and is not averse to change and reform.
- Appreciate equity, diversity, and inclusion. In YCS, a qualified applicant values the diversity of cultures and is committed to espousing equity, diversity, and inclusion as values we honor, advance, and practice to effectively engage and support the needs of all children and their families.
- Understand budget and finances. In YCS, qualified school board applicants must understand their role as fiscal managers of the district with the responsibility of dedicating resources to the priorities of the district while maintaining a balanced budget.
- Know educational policy. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant should be somewhat familiar with education policy and the role of the school board in policy making.
- Demonstrate integrity. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant must be a person who has demonstrated honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness and adheres to a high ethical standard.
- Understand community outreach. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant understands the importance of engaging the community in the school board's decision-making process to advance the educational goals of the district.
- Expect accountability. In YCS, a qualified school board applicant must be able to hold the superintendent accountable to the goals of the district and in turn recognize they are accountable to the community.

#### **As a school board member who will serve in a Blueprint district:**

- We are seeking a board member who is committed to leading the systemic reconfiguration of the district at the classroom level while sustaining the organization's sense of urgency in realizing dramatic improvement in student and teacher performance in a short amount of time.

Members of the Board will elect an acting Chairperson for the review/selection process.

#### **Item A: Review Process**

The board will have an opportunity to review our criteria as outlined in the posting, candidate qualifications (letter and resume), take notes, and have a general discussion about what attributes and qualities they would like to see in a new member of the team. We will then open up the nomination process for the candidates chosen to be invited to an interview to be held on Oct. 18th during a special meeting to be held at 5:30 pm.

**Board President:** I'd like to thank the **seven** wonderful people who applied for Board consideration.

Many of the letters of interest we received mentioned the desire to give back to the community and a commitment to our vision and mission.

Some of the applicants have been active volunteers in Ypsilanti Community Schools' Superintendent Advisory Council, GrowU (a nonprofit partnership between Ypsilanti Free Methodist Church and the Salvation Army), serving as reading tutors to YCS students, Challenge for Change Expo, Divine Nine Scholarship program, members of the PTO, Randazzo Dance Company, Parkridge Park, advocates for housing resources, supporting educational institutions with finding adequate learning spaces and connections to community stakeholders, and supporting YCS students with business and financial literacy training,

We have applicants from fields such as Education, Real Estate, the Faith Community, Accounting, Auditing, Community & Student Relations, YMCA Child Care Collaborative, Child Development Specialist, YCS Media Services, Transportation, Energy Management, Banking, and Entrepreneurs.

We have graduates from Eastern Michigan University, Wayne State University, Nebraska College of Business, Grace University, Ferris Institute, Alpena Community College, Kaplan University, Kent State University, Davenport University, and the Armed Forces.

**Some applicants are our friends, neighbors, and colleagues from work.**

Every one of the applicants has something special to add to our Board. We are very fortunate to have so many qualified citizens from which to choose, but it makes choosing that much harder. Yet, choose we must. So after reading through the materials, we will begin with a general discussion of applicant attributes, narrow the pool, build consensus and then open nominations by placing names in nomination, followed by support, a discussion, and vote. Outreach to applicants to schedule interviews and to those not chosen (Oct. 12).

**Item B:** Time to review resumes and take notes

The Board members now have an opportunity to review the applications and resumes that have been submitted. Please focus on ascertaining who you believe might meet both the qualifications (letter and resume) and have evidence of attributes that align to the Board's discussion.

**Item C:** Attributes BOE looking for in a new member

The Board will have a general discussion about what attributes and qualities they would like to see in a new member of the team.

**Celeste Hawkins:** At this time, I would like to invite the board to engage in a discussion about those attributes and qualities, they would like to see in a new member of the board of education. I'll open the floor and whoever would like to go first go ahead.

**Maria Goodrich:** I just wanted to say that I think that the qualifications put together in the document that was shared with us and the public and the applicants really captures a lot of what I'd like to see us prioritize in our next board trustee. I feel particularly passionate about having someone who has a deep appreciation for equity and educational excellence and also someone who can contribute to our role in Community outreach. I would love us to bring on someone who can bring in some more skill and some passion for that as well.

**Meredith Schindler:** I wanted to echo that deep commitment to equity and I think it's helpful to know the district, but I don't know that one has to know the district inside out to be a good board member. Every one of these letters has shown a commitment on some level to the Community, but that equity work. And again Trustee Champagne had a really strong voice for unions and again our administration, right now, has worked very well with our Union and I think that's super commendable, and I hope that our current administration stays on forever, but in the event that there would be a change, I would think that it would be very important to have a voice on the school board, to me that's a priority is to make sure that there is that commitment to the Union and the strong work that the Union does, although no one addressed it specifically in their letters.

**Gillian Gainsley:** I would echo a lot of what's been said and I was really struck reading these mostly, that I was just thrilled to see so many strong applicants and so many wonderful people that want to be part of it and do this work. I would love to get all seven of them involved in some way in the district if they're not already. I think there are three things that I really look for and not everyone has all three but it's, do you have a connection to our kids, I would love to see more parents on the board, especially representing different schools, so people who actively have their kids in the district and see the day to day part of it, kids, grandkids, whatever? A connection to our staff and there's been quite a few people who stood out because they have been on our staff or have worked directly with our students, especially there was one woman who is a former parapro and I thought it's really important perspective to bring. And then, a connection to our Community, so the people who serve on boards and have those other connections and have other parts of their lives, where they're really deeply connected into the many organizations, and so I think that each one of these people fulfills those things in different ways, but I think that I would be looking at those three things and bringing those to the table.

**Trustee Fields:** I echo everything that everyone said, one of my biggest areas for me, is also being involved in the Community in different aspects and what they contribute are ready in their other lives and what they do I think that's very, very important attribute to have because if you're not involved in some sort of way already within the community that relates to YCS, there's a lack of trying but if you already have it that's going to be a bonus for whoever is elected in that position and the other one is as far as a Union. I'm a strong believer behind that too. That's a big support of mine as well because that develops your partnerships with the teachers and the other staff who were part of Unions. I think that's really important to have that even though we didn't see it, but if they have some knowledge about that and are familiar with how that works, I think that is also going to be a big key in bringing something to the table.

**Celeste Hawkins:** I will just go ahead and note a few items that I think stick out to me, and a lot of it has already been said, but I'll just highlight them again. I do think having someone who has a deep appreciation for be really committed to equity. I know we talked about it a lot. We've talked about it a lot as a board and where our commitment is so having someone who really shares that vision, their commitment to advance the equity across our district. The Community outreach collaboration piece, I think, is also really, really important as an attribute for board members to really understand all aspects of the Community to have some demonstrated involvement in and connection to not just our district, but experience in collaborating across communities. We have certain communities that since we've been on the board, not all of our communities are represented equally, so I would love to see us have someone serve who represents a part of the Ypsilanti community that maybe doesn't have necessarily a connection to or voice in that particular area. I'm thinking about further I know where the eastern side of Washtenaw county but the eastern side of Ypsilanti. Thinking about the areas like Sugarbrook, areas like the borderline between Willow Run, that community, but then, if you cross over some streets you're in Wayne county and your district is Belleville, but like there's an area where I don't think since I've been serving on the board, we've really had a board member serve who has represented that particular area and I don't know, based on the applicants, that we have if we have someone who fits that criteria, but I do think that representation is incredibly important. Someone who really knows and values our students, someone who is committed to really promoting our district in really positive ways and I think that could be demonstrated through some areas that we've already seen them kind of engage in. We have many Community partners in this Community. People who are deeply committed to the district so I'm just thrilled that we have so many great applicants to look at and to choose from, who will advance to the interview phase, and then we will then have to make a choice about who we think is the best fit for our district. So those are some of the key things that really stood out to me in terms of what I believe we value as a board and what I think we're looking for in terms of someone to feel the vacant seat.

A conversation ensued about 2 of the candidates only submitting the letter and not a resume. It was decided to consider everyone.

**Item D:** Explain narrowing down process/steps - **Dr. Zachery-Ross/Ms. Julie Haines**

This is the portion of the meeting where the Board of Education will come to a consensus about the (3) candidates who will be interviewed.

**“We will now move to the selection step. We will begin with learning who has an interest in advocating for a person to be interviewed.” Recognize each trustee with a candidate to nominate and ask each to, “Share the**

**qualifications, attributes, and assets the applicant brings to the role.”**

**Trustee Goodrich:** I would like to present a nomination for M. Janice Townsend. The things from her application package that I just want to highlight, I appreciated her service background, Community presence, and outreach. I liked the vision that she articulated for our students and support for equity, celebration of student identity, and a commitment to educational excellence which I believe is something that we all share here. I also appreciated her articulation of the role of financial stability and supporting our districts and her leadership background, including a number of other executive boards. Those are just a few of the things that I wanted to highlight that I think align well with what we're looking for a new board member.

**Vice President Lee:** I would like to nominate Ms. Donetta Mazyck and the qualifications: she has a bachelor's of psychology and child development, she has done lead teaching. She's also grew up in Detroit, I believe the East side of Detroit. I appreciate that she says a poor black community in Detroit and she has also been raised in a single family household and her mother has stress in her the importance of education, which I truly connect with that. She has lived in Ypsi for 12 years, so I do believe she knows the Community very well.

**Meredith Schindler:** So there are actually quite a few people on this who's resume stood out, but I wanted to advocate for one of the people that submitted that I know quite well, so this is a personal advocacy but based on also the material that she submitted and that's Camille Woods. I've known Camille for 20 years and think so highly of her. I know that she's been really interested in board service for some time and I met her when we were both parents at Chapel elementary so through the PTO and then Randazzo dance. She has her masters in social work. I like that she has the special education lens as well, so personally. I like that she is a black woman, and I think representation matters. I think that's very important. She knows the district. She was an educator here so she has that point of view. She was a parapro. She's a social worker. She's now employed in Ann Arbor so she knows that side of things. In terms of Union and just in general she has that kind of experience, so I think that's really helpful and she's just a good human.

**Trustee Fields:** I am advocating for M. Jeanice Townsend as well. The couple things that I really think stood out for me, especially is her Community partnership and her volunteer activity is very, very strong and I know that's one of the highlights that we're looking for in an individual in this position. The fact of the equity stands out. When you look at her resume you can see where she's wear lots of hats and all the different diversity backgrounds, with different partnerships or volunteer work that she does or has done, and is still doing in the Community. She is a youth leader as well in her Church, which really stands out that means she loves working with the kids as well. She has a strong presence in Ypsilanti. She was born and raised in Ypsilanti so she is a product of YCS schools, at the time was Ypsi public schools but being a product of that as well, I think that makes a big difference and she knows the neighborhood and I think even in she has a strong presence on the area that we're looking for, as well as far as Community and being able to advocate for that community. She's in the Community a lot.

**Celeste Hawkins:** I would also just advocate for Jeanice Townsend and I'll highlight some things that weren't already said that I don't know what the public is aware of those who are joining us for this meeting. She ran in the last election and she got quite a few votes in that election, and she did a lot of campaigning, and a lot of people have gotten to know her. So she's almost like a known entity in some respects because she went to all the Community forums where you get grilled and get asked a lot of questions about why is board service important to you. So in all of that information, I know that we watch that very closely during the time of the election. Another thing that I would highlight is I thought it was very interesting to learn that not only was she a student in the district, but her kids were in the district as well, and I think she's the only applicant who has those qualities and it's not necessarily highlighted in our list, but I certainly think it adds value to her overall package and what she presented to the board. Then the last thing that I would say is just really what I saw come through in her materials is really this really strong commitment to service, and I know she's been a partner in the district, and has really given a lot to the district in terms of leveraging different collaborations and different resources and bringing different workshops and, specifically, I love how she talked about because I've always like who's talking most about students because that's really like what we're looking for someone who's going to Center our students and I feel like her materials really shine in that respect, because she talked about students through out and how she leverages her own resources and services and support and gives back to the Community in those ways that really support our children and just has a strong commitment to advancing educational goals.

**After each interested trustee has spoken, request “Trustees, please name the (3) persons you would be interested in interviewing” Each trustee identifies the name of her preferred candidates for preference. This will narrow the pool, and indicate the trustee with majority support for the position.**

**Vice President Lee:** Donetta Mazyck, Camille Woods, M. Jeanice Townsend

**Trustee Gainsley:** Same as Vice President Lee

**Trustee Goodrich:** Donetta Mazyck, Camille Woods, M. Jeanice Townsend

**Trustee Schindler:** Ms. Mazyck, Ms. Woods, and Ms. Townsend

**Trustee Fields:** M. Jeanice Townsend, Camille Woods. Donetta Mazyck

**President Hawkins:** Jeanice Townsend, Camille Woods, Donetta Mazyck

**Item F-1a** Dr. Zachery-Ross will tally the names during the above step and announce them to the President.

“It appears that there is majority support for the following (3) names, M. Jeanice Townsend, Camille Woods, and Donetta Mazyck.”

**Celeste Hawkins:** Is there a nomination for the three names read by Dr. Zachery-Ross that we've reached consensus on?

**Maria Goodrich:** I nominate M. Jeanice Townsend, Donetta Mazyck, and Camille Woods to be interviewed for the open board of education seat.

**Yvonne Fields:** I second the nomination.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

**Celeste Hawkins:** That takes us to a few reminders and some of our next steps as we close out this meeting. Tomorrow emails will be sent to candidates to schedule interview times. Our plan is to schedule interviews with our candidates no more than 30 minutes. We probably won't need that much time for each candidate, but that's how much time we are at least allowing for each candidate and then our next meeting is going to be with those candidates on October 18 at 5:30. And then on the 19th, we would have made a decision on who we are appointing to that seat and the email will be sent to all of the candidates with our decision on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The Board will invite the selected candidate to the meeting and the votes on the approval of the candidates will take place formally at that board meeting. We will announce the new board member on the 26th through a press release on the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 26, we will also send a letter to the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Association of School Boards announcing the new board member. On October 27, our plan is to have the new board member take the oath of office at the administration building and then we will send that oath of office, to the Washington County Board of electors. Are there any questions from the board at this time about our timeline going forward or process?

6. OTHER

7. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

8. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.