



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Virtual Board Meeting**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUP01xMBpc>

**BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY O. ESTHEIMER

**DATE: August 11, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

VICE PRESIDENT

ANDREW A. GREEN

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

SECRETARY

DR. DARLENE L. POMPONIO

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:** Pastor, Baker-Herring, Wilson

TREASURER

RICK LAMOS

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Estheimer read the District Mission and Vision Statements.

TRUSTEES

JASON CRAIG  
NEIL J. FREITAS  
SHAWN SAGE

**REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Green requested that G. Consent and H. Action be flip flopped for the purpose of continuity. The purpose for the proposal is that after the citizen's comments and the board's responses if any, then we will move right into presentation of the COLT Team and then from there questions can be asked immediately instead of flipping back and forth.

**ADMINISTRATION**

SUPERINTENDENT

JILL M. PASTOR

2020/21-11 Moved by Mr. Green supported by Dr. Pomponio, the board switch Items G. and H. and approve the agenda with revisions.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

DIRECTOR

BARBARA WILSON, CFO

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage  
NO:

CURRICULUM/FEDERAL  
PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

DR. MICHELLE BAKER-  
HERRING

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Mr. Estheimer explained that citizen's comments will be read by members of the administration. Limited to 3 minutes. After citizen's comments we will have the presentation which is the COLT Team's presentation. The board will have an opportunity to ask questions before going into the first action item of the night which is the approval of that specific COLT Team discussion.

The following staff members read the comments: Dr. Baker-Herring, Mr. Martin, Ms. Nowak, Mr. Himick, Ms. Chilson.

**Christian and Katie Schoeneman:** Per Mr. Estheimer's suggestion, we are submitting the following to be read aloud at the August 11th school board meeting:

Mr. Estheimer,

I attended last week's school board meeting on the preparedness of the teachers and staff to begin virtual learning. I'll be attending the August 11th meeting as well.

We thank the board for the decision to prepare for virtual learning. We feel this is the best method for safe and expansive instruction for our children. We know this was a very difficult decision, but we are thankful for the decision that was made.

Based on the lack of enrichment that Atlas brings per email discussions with Mrs. Baker-Herring, and the full spectrum of classes the Southgate system can offer, the most logical decision at this point is to maintain a virtual learning environment for our children.

My wife and I have three children in the Southgate School District - Hunter, 13, going to 8th grade, Evan, 11, going to 6th grade, and Kara, 8, going to 3rd grade. Both of our boys have asthma. In speaking with our allergist/pulmonologist and pediatrician, our decision is to keep our children at home for at least the first semester. The hope is that the cases/deaths will diminish over the winter allowing mask to mask school in the spring.

The quality of education available from the Southgate teaching staff far surpass the programs available on Atlas. I have been in direct contact with Mrs. Pastor as well as Mrs. Baker-Herring about Atlas, as it was our first course of action if the children were not able to access Southgate teachers.

In these discussions, the Atlas program partially meets our needs, but it does not include advanced courses, foreign language, and extracurricular activities such as engineering, medical detectives, art, music, band, computers, etc.

I know Mrs. Baker-Herring has been looking into other programs for Atlas, but it appears to be more of a knee-jerk reaction to get these programs in vs. what is already the curriculum in the Southgate schools.

If you would like further information, schedule some time to discuss, or would rather write to us on our thoughts, please do!

Again, thank you for keeping our children safe, as well as the safety of the teachers and staff.

Thank you,

**Ginny Fulwinder:** I was very nervous with the school year coming. I was in touch with Atlas before the decision was made because I work in a nursing facility and know first-hand how the disease works. I seen it take its toll on a person. I am extremely happy with Southgate's decision on going remotely. I wasn't going to send my child to school to wear a mask that he won't stop playing with or touching. Parents need to keep the kids safe and in person is not safe. Also the masks are not good and have long term effects on the respiratory system. So thank you again

**Debra Swarhout:** With the virtual classes being curricular how is this feasible for working parents? My incoming kindergartener will not sit still for the online Atlas classes and my husband and I both work full time and cannot and will not quit or lose our jobs to homeschool (that will create a whole slew of other problems). These young 5&6 year olds need social interaction and a face to face teacher. What is your plan for the working parents? Are we just supposed to quit our jobs?

**Mia Martinez:** My 12th grader is currently doing credit recovery/summer school classes online with Mrs. Sisler. Can he continue with this platform until schools reopen or will they be using a different platform? This has really worked for him.

**Ramona Bacha:** First off I would like to say thank you for thinking of the health and safety of our children and all staff. When will we be able to get the chrome books and will we have tech support to help us. Is there going to be more locations to pick up the lunches some of the families by the time they got a ride over to Davidson they ran out of food.

**Stacy Winters:** Please open schools. According to the experts Michigan should be safe! I like with the proper equipment and a little extra work Southgate can do it...Our children deserve their school to open!! Other districts can do it for their kids, why can't Southgate?

**Diane Ziemba:** As of right now, Gibraltar, Huron, Flat Rock, Riverview, Trenton, all plan on giving parents an online or F2F option. Woodhaven is undecided. If Southgate does not offer the same options, is Southgate prepared to lose as much as 10-20% of their students through school of choice? Once a family gets comfortable in a new school it's highly unlikely they will come back. Only offering 1 option will devastate the budget for years.

**Rebecca Heyer:** Has the board taken into consideration the CDC guidelines urging that schools allow children to return to school with face to face interaction? If we are in phase 4 that allows children to return to school, and most districts downriver are following this protocol, why does Southgate differ? Do we lack funding they don't or do we not have the resources other districts have? If we do not resume face to face at the beginning of the school year, what will it take for the children to eventually return to school? What further will need to be implemented? Will we need to be in phase 5 before the decision is made?

**Melissa Hurst:** Dear Southgate School Board, I was so relieved last week when it was decided Southgate Schools would open remotely in the fall. I've heard that since the decision was made, you've had lots of parents reach out that are concerned with the plan. I understand that opening remotely will be a logistical and monetary nightmare for many parents. I understand that it would be easier for them to just have the kids go to school. I also understand that we are in the middle of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Life should be different right now. We shouldn't be going about our day, business as usual, seeing our friends and heading to the movies on Friday night. We should be hunkering down and riding this out until it's safe to resume normal activity. Many times over the last few weeks, I've looked across the street at the Anderson football field to observe the football team practicing. The practices always start with social distancing and always end with shoulder-to-shoulder, face-to-face, scrimmaging. In my opinion, that is so disappointing, and downright scary, knowing that these kids may end up sitting next to my kids in class. I ask that you hold firm to the decision that was made - to proceed with remote learning - as it could mean life or death for a student or staff member. However, I know that my opinion is one of many. Before full in-person learning is chosen, I would ask you to consider the alternative half-remote and half in-person instruction approach other districts are using. I know I'd feel a lot better knowing that my kids were in a 15-student socially-distanced classroom, than a 30-student room of sardines. It is my understanding that this approach would provide in-person instruction 2 days each week, 2 days for completing assignments at home, and one day for records-keeping and virtual meetings if requested. I see multiple advantages to this approach over the full in-person approach.

**Shannon Swauger:** Dear Southgate Community Schools Board of Education, This year, I will be starting my 20th year as a Southgate educator, and my 6th year as a Titan parent. I have three children that all attend Fordline elementary school. I attended the Special Board Meeting held on 8/3/2020 and want to send my words of gratitude for the direction taken during this meeting, resulting in a decision that put the safety of our students and staff first. When you make decisions based on safety first, it will always be the best decision; my most heartfelt appreciation is given to the Board for the support you are showing all Titan families during these unprecedented times. Thank you

for making hard decisions; I have full confidence in the staff of Southgate Schools to continue to offer a robust learning experience through Schoology remotely. I also have full confidence that the Board will continue to make the safest choices when faced with future decisions as we journey through this school year, together. Warmest Regards, Shannon M. Swauger Fordline Elementary School Reading Specialist Proud Titan Parent of three Awesome boys

**Mary Hildebrandt:** Dear Board of Education: You have been elected and charged with making the toughest decision any Board Member has ever had to make in the history of Southgate; how education will begin for the 2020 school year. I acknowledge that face to face instruction is the best for students, staff and parents. I know by opting for 100% on-line teaching to begin the school year is unpopular for many reasons, including the added pressure it places on parents students, and staff. However; I believe that it will produce continuity. If indeed there is a huge spread of COVID after school begins, face-to-face, or mask-to-mask instruction will have to be uprooted, causing additional chaos. I believe that beginning with a 100% on-line, Southgate teacher instructed plan will give more continuity to all involved. Then, as time plays out, revisit. This too shall pass! Everyone WILL get through this. Sincerely, Mary Hildebrandt

**Heather Ray:** I really think the idea of a virtual orientation for the incoming 6th graders, whenever that may be, is not going to be beneficial. When the schools open up for face to face learning, there should really be a day/evening set aside for them to come have a proper orientation. My older child had an all day orientation and went to the middle school while in 5th grade and had staff come talk to the class. Much more prepared to enter middle school with having done all of that. I feel if the incoming 6th graders deserve something, rather than going to a new and larger school they haven't been prepared for.

**Lindsey Prange:** I don't feel my children will benefit from the Atlas program as much as they would from the Southgate teachers but with two working parents, we will not always be able to get them online at the scheduled times. Will there be a solution for this issue? I'am scared they will fall behind otherwise. Thank you!

**Patricia Campeau:** I have mentioned to a school board member awhile back stating we could split the district doing A-M Monday/Tuesday and N-Z Wednesday/Thursday and save Friday for teachers to plan for the next week ahead and for students who need a Little extra help. He told me they were looking at that but not having school on Wednesday so they could clean. I said great idea, keep the same kids together! Now your just doing all on line with no parent or student input! Why? When Detroit schools are going back with a choice! We could have even done 1/2 dates, 2x's week to start! Baby steps! We can't live in fear or a bubble! Kids need to go back to the classroom. I feel there was no effort put forward by this district for the benefit of the children to try and get them back to class, especially when Detroit, Grosse Ile, Gibraltar, Gabriel Richard, just name a few that I know of are giving an option of face to face or on line. Thanks for your time.

**Kevin and Linda Doyle:** Both my wife and I work full-time as essential workers and are unable to work from home. We do not have anyone to assist during the week. With 3 kids enrolled in the district, shutting down the schools is literally impossible for us. I can only imagine single parents with the same issues. Even if parents were able to work from home, how can they physically complete their work and ensure their small children are completing the necessary tasks.

**Linda Spiro:** What is the situation with the preschoolers? Are they still following the school district decision. So if the Schools are not open preschool will not be as well? What about registration for those parents they need to register their children when are those going to be offered

**Diane Henry:** What is the situation with the preschoolers? Are they still following the school district decision. So if the Schools are not open preschool will not be as well? What about registration for those parents they need to register their children when are those going to be offered

**Carrie Phillips:** Why if it's not safe for teachers to return to classrooms is it safe for our kids to play sports and contact sports at that? There should be no sports if there is no kids in classrooms sports should only be played by kids that are physically in school. My children have ADHD and failed terribly with the end of school online school they need to be in a structured classroom. This online school is setting kids up to fail. If people go to work and make it a safe environment we can make our classrooms safe. I work to jobs one on healthcare and one in retail and I do what I have to do to be safe for myself and my family why can't my kids get the education they need for their future and these kids are our future and we are setting them up to fail.

**Martha Hancock:** Good Evening, First, I appreciate the choice that you, the school board, has been forced to make. There really are no winners at all in this situation, you can only be guided by the knowledge you are given and your conscience. Never before in my lifetime has my health and safety been tied to what my neighbor does or where they go in their own free time. BUT, now, it matters. If my neighbor or my friend isn't adhering to social distancing & mask wearing, exposing themselves to crowds or going out of town to cities that have a lot of cases, it could adversely affect the most important thing in my life, my children. I understand that the CDC has given their recommendation. BUT, the CDC isn't in our classrooms. They don't see 35 kids in a class. They don't see the hallway's jam packed to the point where you cannot pass. I also understand enrollment will be down. But, that will never be for every class. My sophomore could have 12 in his first hour and 37 in his second hour. And, what happens when our teachers get ill (because they will get ill). There aren't enough people to substitute in a regular year, add in COVID, and the numbers will be less. Our healthcare system is not accessible enough to know that if a child is feeling sick, and their parents cannot go to the doctors, that they won't just come to school. This is a systematic issue, but, it's an issue that you must consider when deciding to send them back. Kids come to school sick all of the time under normal circumstances. This will not change. It is difficult for people to take a step back from the idea of "I have to keep my job. I need to make money. It's not fair to me". It is really clouding a lot of people's vision of the big picture. Which is, if one administrator, one teacher, one CHILD dies, then sending Southgate back to the classroom would have been a mistake. So, then, the question becomes, how many deaths is an acceptable number to live with. I do not envy your choices. But, your choices are what we will live with. In our life now, every decision that we make is a risk-benefit analysis. I hope that you will choose to start Southgate virtually, using our teachers, and revisit the idea of a safe return to school at a later date. Because, right now, the risk far outweighs the benefit.

**Dena Berrios:** This cannot be an easy situation for any family, and there is no way to please everyone - no way to please even a majority. While I may understand the decision for remote learning this fall, I do not agree with it and I feel that students will be left to fend for themselves in regards to their learning and development. The learning my child does matters. It matter to us and it matters to his future. 1.) What is being done to ensure every teacher is providing students with the classwork/homework/expectations in an organized and UNIFIED manner for both receiving and returning assignments? The spring was a mess with each teacher doing things differently. 2.) What resources are being provided to teachers to ensure they can provide students with engaging learning strategies and discussions that will keep them excited to return to these online platforms for learning? Are these strategies required or just encouraged? 3.) Will there still be transition support and resources for those entering either Middle or High school?

**Adrianna Carpenter:** I fully understand that attendance is required for the online live sessions. My issue is both my husband and I work full time like many other parents in the district. If my kindergartener can't attend every single live session because we've aren't home to do it with her and daycare facilities won't help with this but we fully intend to watch session in the evening and do the assigned work and turn it in will she be failed based on attendance? If that's the case we will need to look at other school districts. Atlas is not a good fit educationally for our family. Mrs. Pastor mentioned latchkey was licensed as a daycare and possibly opening up when I spoke to her last week. Is this still an option for families and if so how do we go about signing up and will teachers there help our children sign in to live sessions?

**Jennifer Pipta:** Good Evening Board of Education and Jill Pastor I would like to take a moment to say thank you all for the very hard decisions that you are trying to make for our school district. I know that this decision is a very tough one to make and that not everyone is going to be happy with the outcome. I am a parent of a 7th and a 10th grader. A few years back, we moved out of the district but chose to keep our kids in Southgate because of the teachers. It was one of the reasons that we chose face to face for our kids. The decision to do so wasn't easy and it has caused us a lot of anxiety because of the nature of my job. I am a Sepsis Coordinator at one of the local hospitals and I have been working along side our Infectious Disease Department. So like many of the nurses in the district, I have seen the affects this pandemic has created in our community and I wanted to take a moment to make sure that the decision to go remote or to go face to face, is made based upon science and not off of fear. As a parent I wanted to make sure to do my research, so I can make an informed and educated decision. This virus is not going away soon. It does affect school age children as many states that are back in session are seeing. I think that it is important that we learn ways to best deal with it. I am not asking the district to completely postpone face to face learning, but what I would like to see and what I think would help alleviate a lot of stress is to delay face to face learning and go remote with the Southgate teachers who know our children the best. While doing this - the district could then begin to institute many of the CDC guidelines for a safe return to school and prevent the rise of cases in school age children. The current CDC guidelines can be found at these CDC websites: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html> (many of the plans outlined are paraphrased to save on time) Preparing K-12 School administrator for a safe return to School in fall 2020. It states: Engage everyone in the school and community to practice preventative behaviors. Implement multiple Covid-19 mitigation strategies (social distancing, cloth face covers, hand hygiene, and use of cohorting. Communicate, educate, and reinforce appropriate hygiene and social distancing practices in ways that are developmentally appropriate for students, teachers, and staff. Integrate Covid-19 mitigation strategies into extracurricular activities (limiting or canceling if social distancing is not feasible). Maintain healthy environments (cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and allowing for the appropriate dry time with the disinfection product available, the dry time must be observed for disinfection. Disinfection should not be done by students). Develop a plan for when a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19. Have quarantined classes do telework. Develop a screening method for parents and students that is both reliable and easy to do. Develop a plan with the state and local health department to do contact tracing of positive individuals. Monitor the Covid-19 transmissions rates within the community the students, staff, and teachers live in to determine the threat of transmission (Southgate is currently 10th in Wayne County for Covid-19 cases). Approaches to cohorting that fit the needs of your school/district. Educate staff and families about when they/their children should stay home and when they can return to school. Actively, encourage employees and students to stay home when they are sick and when they can return to school. Do not offer perfect attendance award or incentives for not missing school as this will only promote children going to school while sick. Staff and Students should stay home if they have symptoms, been exposed to someone that is positive or has symptoms. The CDC website also calls for the spacing of desk at least six feet apart and if that is not feasible that there should be plexiglass type material between the desks. If the classroom uses tables instead

of desk, have all the children facing the same direction and spaced out at the tables. Have all desks facing the same direction. Physical Barriers to be placed between bathroom sinks if they cannot be spaced out 6 feet. Provide physical guides, such as tape on the floors or sidewalks and sign on the walls, to ensure the staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines. Close cafeterias and serve all food in classrooms or have children bring from home, if feasible. Close all school playgrounds or stagger its use with the disinfecting of surfaces in between uses. Please visit the current CDC guidelines page that were published August 1, 2020 for more information about how to safely get our kids back into the class room and if the district cannot implement these safe guidelines, postpone face to face temporarily, get these safety measures in place and then safely introduce the kids back into the school.

**William C. Augenstein:** At what cost do we NOT send our kids back into the classroom? Social interaction and relationships are very important to the development of children and young adults. Isolation, long term lack of motivation, decreased ability to learn, depression, and other cognitive impairments are real risks posed by continuing to keep kids out of the classroom. Other local schools and districts have opted for in-person, face to face openings, with a hybrid approach at a minimum. The fear-based approach being contemplated by the Southgate District will continue to put our kids at a disadvantage as I have heard no plans as to when it ends or what conditions allow our kids to be back in school? At a minimum, give parents and kids the option to decide if they will attend school in person or remotely.

**Nicole Hales:** I would like to thank the board members and Jill for their countless hours they dedicated to the district at this extremely difficult time. Also, to our Southgate teachers that have put in several hours as well to ensure we have a plan for the students, as I know we are likely to be shut down by the state eventually. My sincere thank you to the teachers that made the pandemic easier for my children with just a zoom class, a call or even emails. It was so very important to them to receive interaction during this difficult time. I did attend the last board meeting and with that being said, I had sent in a letter to the board with my concerns and disappointment with the boards decision not to let each family CHOOSE what is best for their OWN child. As I know it is not ideal for some students to go back, and yet not ideal for some to go remote. This could be an ongoing argument with many so I will just leave that there. I feel had the board given the families the choice to choose what is best for their own family would have been the best option. Along with that, I had asked questions regarding the remote learning as I need to decide what is best for my family now that the district has taken my choice to choose away from me. I have yet to get a response so I decided to submit my questions here. How long do you plan to do remote learning? Is this going to be a whole year? If you have more than one student in a household will they each get a chromebook? If the computers do not come in how will the district choose what student will receive a chromebook? If the parent works from home and has 3 students on at the same time it can and has caused difficulty in the past with internet. How will this affect the student when it is mandatory for the student to be on for attendance? To whom do we address when a teacher does not respond to a students email for questions and help?

**Rod Burkhardt:** Board Last week our thoughts as parents from the survey provided to us was delivered to the board and a vast majority 60%+ wanted a hybrid plan and without consideration the board choose another direction. We as parents in THIS district with children at actual Southgate community schools not other schools located in the city, our opinions deserves consideration and respect. We should be heard and given the same respect you demand from us, not dictated too with a plan of at home learning that requires more work from parents are already employed full time, and now having to be at home educators as well.

**Safa Saaidi:** Hello Good afternoon, Firstly I would like to thank you all for the hard work you do. I will speak for my children and I, and how to protect my family and my community that I live in. If the children go back to school it will be a complete disaster, being that many children are asymptomatic, and will bring the virus to their grandparents and older community members. There are also many children in our district that have high risk family members and parents, being from age or health conditions. Or the child themselves is in the high risk category. Even after someone has recovered from COVID-19, a new study has shown that cases of people with COVID-19, have heart problems or other health issues even after recovering. Last but not least, if the schools opens or not I will not risk my children, my family, and my parents by them going to school. Also studies have shown that an average person touches their face 23 times an hour, imagine telling a child that they cannot touch their face all day. Also I would like to thank the Southgate District and their staff for all your hard work.

**Katrina Sanchez:** I know the decision on how to begin our 20-21 school year is a difficult one. When given the choice between face to face and Atlas online schooling, my choice was to go with Atlas. In my opinion, a much better option would be for virtual learning with our own Southgate teachers who specialize in the area they teach. Like many other parents, I would love to have face to face learning but not at the expense of my childrens' safety, my family's safety or the safety of our teachers and staff. Children, no doubt thrive in an environment where they are able to interact on a more personal level with their teachers and schoolmates but that is not an option we have no matter how school begins. Normal as we knew it will not exist until this virus has a vaccine and the spread of it halts. As the parent of a soon to be 6th and 8th grader, I have been very active in the school and volunteered for everything I could. I have seen how it would be nearly impossible to have face to face learning and still keep everyone safe. We don't have enough lockers for each kid to have their own lockers so the kids would need to carry backpacks around all day. How do we limit the spread of germs on a backpack that travels throughout the school and then home? I've seen kids borrow each other's pencils, calculator, highlighters, etc. There are just too many variables that even constant cleaning can't overcome. I've seen teachers beg parents for basic cleaning supplies like Clorox wipes and that was when they could even be located in a store. Now I have a hard time even finding those items for my own home. How can we expect these teachers to provide quality educational material while trying to maintain cleanliness and distance in the classroom? There are just too many ways that face to face can go wrong and force us to take a step back in this fight against the virus. There is no answer that will make everyone happy but there is one that will make us all safer and that is virtual learning. We need to protect our children. We need to protect our families and we need to protect our staff. Thank you for allowing my opinion to be heard.

**Elizabeth Altizer:** I am commenting today to reiterate my support for students starting the 20-21 school year remotely. This format will allow students to foster connections with our Southgate teachers they know, and will be taught using our Southgate curriculum. Remote and virtual learning is the only way to ensure the safety of students, staff and families during this time. I am concerned that if students, teachers and staff were to start the year off face-to-face, even following the many requirements and recommendations in the State Roadmap for Back To School, there would be a significant health risk. There has not been enough time to study transmission and spread of COVID-19 in the unique school environment. While data can be touted regarding children and transmission rates with models and projections, the truth is our current information is lacking. This situation is developing and changing daily with improved recommendations as scientific study continues and evolves. Many who support face-to-face learning talk about nurses and doctors having to work or other professions that have been deemed essential not having a choice. Teachers are not trained as health professionals, nor are they equipped with the same protections / work environments. Our buildings lack proper ventilation, air conditioning, space to social distance appropriately, and so much more for in person instruction to be safe. Starting the year in a remote and virtual format lends itself to an easy transition back to face-to-face instruction when it is safe to do so. Thank you for your time.

**Carrie Bedard:** Dear School Board Members, As a Southgate graduate, former Southgate teacher, and parent of five children in the district, we believe virtual teaching via Southgate teachers is the best way to begin the school year. We have an immune compromised child and can't risk sending any of our children for face-to-face learning. There are too many exposures with two children at the elementary level, one at the middle school, and two at the high school. We are very pleased with the option to have Southgate teachers teach students virtually, because we have used and not had good experience with Atlas in the past. With the uncertainty of this virus, virtual learning provides safety and consistency to students, staff, and parents. We feel that having Southgate teachers teach students virtually is the next best thing to face-to-face learning and the perfect option for our family. Thank you again, Carrie and Robert Bedard

**Kevin Anderson:** My name is Kevin Anderson. I am a registered nurse and have worked in healthcare for 20 years. It is my opinion that the safest way to open school this season is to do so with a full virtual option with the Southgate teachers leading the instruction. We are now seeing evidence in other states that in person class is going to lead to further Covid outbreaks. I want to thank you for offering this option. It was a huge relief for me and my family from a safety standpoint and for maintaining some quality instruction. We were looking for other teacher led virtual options before this became available for us in Southgate. So thank you!

**Jennifer Owens:** My husband and I have two children in the District and we wanted to let you know that you have our full support in your decision to go with remote learning with our Southgate teachers. We understand that this decision was not an easy one, but we feel this is the safest option. We know that you have gotten a lot of bad feedback since the last meeting, but there are many families that are counting on you to stick to your decision and let us start to move forward with the plan you voted on. Thank you for your time.

**Amy Berner:** According to Wayne County Health Department, Wayne County (excluding Detroit) had a total of 104 yesterday, compared to 407 cases on 3/25/2020. Wayne County is in Phase 4 of the Michigan Safe Start, which according to the Michigan Safe Schools Roadmap, puts our children in in-person learning. With appropriate safety measures in place our children and teachers would be safe. Each parent has to weigh the risks vs benefits (health, education, psycho-social well-being etc) for their own children. For those of us parents that have weighed these risks vs benefits and feel that the benefit of in person learning outweighs the POTENTIAL risk of health concerns we should be given that option to send our children to school. I am a nurse and am well aware of coronavirus and it's effects on health. I cared for our most vulnerable population (in a nursing home) during the heart of the pandemic. Safety measures I put in place were able to keep my residents safe during this time. I am not blind to it's effects, but wholeheartedly feel both teachers and students would be safe with appropriate safety precautions and the benefit of in-person education outweighs the risks.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

1. Southgate Community School District COVID-19 Preparedness & Response-COLT Team: Board members were given the complete plan in their board packets.

Ms. Pastor introduced the Continuation of Learning Team (COLT)-Mr. Jason Martin, Ms. Renne Chilson, Mr. Andrew Himick, Ms. Wendy Nowak and Dr. Baker-Herring. These individual have been meeting at 7:15 a.m. to prepare this presentation for the board. Ms. Pastor added, the entire COLT Team has contributed to this plan.

Dr. Baker-Herring began the presentation that complies with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-142-"provides a structure to support all schools in Michigan as they plan for a return of Pre-K-12 education in the fall. Under the order, school districts must adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will cope with the disease across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. In turn, the accompanying Michigan Return to School Roadmap offers a guide to the

types of safety protocols appropriate during each phase. There's no one-size-fits-all solution: What works in Lansing may not work in Sault Sainte Marie. Districts will retain the flexibility to tailor their instruction to their particular needs and to the disease conditions present in their regions."

Dr. Baker-Herring reviewed Phases I through V and the requirements that need to be addressed in each of these Phases. Subcommittees were formed from the COLT; Mental and Social Emotional Wellness, Technology-Schoology/Mobile Devices. These committees met separately. The Schoology learning management platform and components were explained. Staff is being trained on their summer break with Schoology. Every student in Southgate will be issued a district device this fall.

Ms. Pastor was a member of the Mental and Social Emotional Wellness subcommittee. There will be mental health screeners for all students. There are three versions one each for; Y5-5, 6-12. Y5, K & 1<sup>st</sup> will be completed by parents. Screener will be given 3 times a year; September, January and June. There will also be weekly student wellness check-ins, this was also a part of the roadmap as well. Screener results may lead to Rapid Response Referral Form submitted to the building Social Worker and/or Counselor. PD will be held for; Social Emotional Learning Lessons for in-person and remote, Trauma Informed Leadership Program and there will be dedicated time during staff meetings throughout the year. Communication will be through Schoology, Website Information (Teen Wellness, Newsletters, Covid & Anxiety, Conflict Resolution & Decision Making) and Social Work Newsletters.

Ms. Chilson explained the Phase 4 and 5-Face to Face Instruction Component. The required components include; Personal Protective Equipment, hygiene, cleaning, athletics, screening, testing and transportation. Ms. Chilson reviewed the protocols for PPE, and hygiene; the type of equipment that will be used and the schedule for hand washing and or sanitizing.

Mr. Himick explained the cleaning protocols including identified cleaning stations around the buildings that will hold materials for usage. Touchable surfaces and frequently used materials/equipment, must undergo cleaning at prescribed times with EPA approved disinfectant. Each custodial cart will have a card the references the cleaning procedures. Highlighting the enhanced daily cleaning and disinfecting process.

Athletics: We will follow the most current MHSAA guidelines for phases 4 and 5 and guidance for the phases will be differentiated between, this can be found on the MHSAA website [www.mhsaa.com](http://www.mhsaa.com). The most recent update was on July 29<sup>th</sup> stating that fall sports would be approved to be a phase-in approach. Elimination of scrimmages for all fall sports, new competition limits would be approved. Fall competitions will take place locally. No large scale events or tournaments. Low risk sports can begin practicing/competitions as scheduled on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Martin reviewed the screening protocols; screening starts at home for families and staff. ALL symptomatic students or staff should stay home! Screening asks a small battery of questions which simply require a yes or no answer; have you had a fever, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, runny nose and/or congestion, body aches and/or tiredness, vomiting and/or diarrhea, new loss of smell or taste. If the answer to any one of these questions is yes, then parents should keep their children home for the day and consult their primary physician. Staff members follow a very similar form. If anyone and/or their child has had contact with a COVID positive person or if they have travelled outside of the U.S. in the last 14 days, they must stay home and quarantine 14 days since last contact.

Testing: Symptomatic students and staff sent home from school should be kept home until that have tested negative for COVID-19 or have been released from isolation according to the CDC Guidelines. Protocols for clinically diagnosed cases; notification of local health officials, staff and students while maintaining confidentiality.

Transportation: Services for athletics and special education students is contracted through Dean Transportation and they have provided us with their full plan of safety protocols throughout phases 4 and 5. Beacon Day Treatment will collect transportation safety protocols from the 22 districts they serve.

Dr. Baker-Herring addressed the Remote Learning Component: The differences were clarified between the emergency plan created in the spring and the current plan that we have moving forward for remote or distance learning for the fall. The spring emergency plan was developed to react quickly utilizing supplemental curriculum. We did not provide students with new instruction. Our grading practices were very much caring for students adjusting to this crisis. Minimal live instruction due to lack of devices, sporadic virtual office hours meeting with teachers, asynchronous attendance policy. Emergency professional learning for teachers. Many technology tools and communication methods and irregular due dates for submission of tasks/assignments.

For the fall we have aligned our curriculum with Southgate teacher-paced content. New learning and grading content based on mastery of district priority standards and leaning targets from Southgate curriculum. Live instruction delivered by Southgate staff. Structured school day based on building/grade level schedules. Synchronous attendance is required and taken according to the weekly schedule. Planned professional learning for staff. Schoology will be used across the grade levels and buildings to deliver content and communicate both virtually and electronically. Consistent dates/times for submission of tasks/assignments.

Dr. Baker-Herring clarified terminology used when speaking about remote/distance learning; this speaks about that instruction from our Southgate teachers with our Southgate content. Online/virtual learning is talking about our Southgate teachers that are acting as facilitators or mentors with Odysseyware and Florida virtual platforms.

Remote Learning will be with Southgate teachers, teacher paced during the school day. Synchronous (live) and asynchronous (student-paced) lessons/content with attendance taken at each live session which is required. Weekly mentor logs will be completed by each teacher-Pupil Accounting. Standards-aligned curriculum delivered through Schoology, common grade levels and courses will deliver the same content each week. Grades/credit/promotion/retention will be determined by evidence of mastery of the priority standards. We will administer NWEA Map Growth remotely to screen and/or as a diagnostic to understand where students are academically and inform instructional decision for teacher, student, and families.

The differences for face-to-face vs remote learning, and what that instructional day looks like, were reviewed. Strategies and the gradual release of responsibility from a teacher-led perspective to a student led perspective were explained. Teacher-led instruction is the "I do". In Face-to-Face you may see it as direct instruction, demonstrations, modeling, which can still be done in a synchronous live lesson. Asynchronous component of online instruction could be videoing yourself giving that direct instruction, demo or modeling yourself, students could watch it at a different time during the day and bring their questions to the next live session. Guided instruction is with the whole class. The collaborative component can often be small group. Independent learning is the student doing it alone. Many of our best instructional strategies that we use face-to-face, can be replicated in the remote learning environment.

Dr. Baker-Herring went over the learning recommendations for the minimum/maximum amount of time each grade level/band should have in front of the computer. Sample schedules with the breakdowns for each day of the week was provided. These schedules will be shared with parents/students showing the days students should be present for live instruction.

Dr. Baker-Herring reviewed the Atlas Program explaining the difference between asynchronous and synchronous. Atlas is all asynchronous lessons/content. Atlas is self-paced with Southgate Teachers as Facilitators/Mentors. Courses can be accessed any time day or night. Weekly mentor logs will be completed by each teacher-pupil accounting. Standard-aligned curriculum delivered through Odysseyware or Florida Virtual School Programs. MWEA Map Growth will be administered remotely to screen and or as a diagnostic to understand where student are academically and inform instructional decisions for teachers, students, and families. Assessments (K-8) and Final Exams (6-12) taken virtually (live) or in person when permitted. Grades 6-12 sequential learning (2 classes at a time—completed in 6 weeks). Students can move to Atlas any time during the school year.

We are asking if families are not comfortable sending their student back to school face-to-face when the time comes, or they cannot commit to the synchronous lessons, we ask that they consider Atlas as their option now, for planning purposes, no later than August 19.

Ms. Pastor spoke about the Food Distribution that will take place weekly. The number of breakfasts and lunched will be based on the number of school calendar days. There are no federal allowances for us to do 7 meals in 7 days like we did in the spring.

The Southgate Community School District will begin the 2020-2021 School year remotely for all students and will reevaluate October 13, 2020 (unless otherwise directed by a government agency) with the possible date of returning F2F on November 9, 2020. The district will follow the remote learning plan for phases 1-3 [SCSD Preparedness and Response Plan for Phases 1-3](#). If necessary, onsite testing/screening of students may occur. Learning Labs may be available as needed and designed by each building. Learning Labs will be utilized for assessment purposes and to work with students on goals as determined by students' IEPT and MTSS teams. Proper social distancing, screening and cleaning protocols will be followed. In order to maintain proper social distancing, the labs will be open by appointment only. This entire plan is designed to be flexible and nimble.

Each board member was called upon to ask questions or make comments.

Mr. Sage spoke about student safety being number one, interaction with other students and the emotional aspect are all on his mind. He stated one death from COVID is too many, but one death is too many from suicide or depression. There is no bulletproof plan, no easy decision. We have to minimize the risk to the best of our ability. He questioned going from 6.5 hours to 1.5 hour maximum for these kids. He asked about the checks and balances for teachers.

Dr. Baker-Herring commented that while she is not an expert on remote learning, the message shared across the board, asynchronous learning does take place, while it's not in front of a teacher live it's still considered that students are learning, growing and thinking and they are working through that content. Then hopefully bringing the questions back, to have a rich discussion with their classmates and their teacher in their live discussion.

Ms. Pastor addressed the checks and balances for teachers. She will be sending out an email to staff with the expectations and requirements and what is mandatory. She is encouraging parents to reach out when a staff member is not responsive or is not present on a live session.

Mr. Freitas said in Detroit Public Schools, he was required to be online pretty much most of the day as a teacher. During his "office hours" he set up small groups, he would work with 3 to 5 students. His principal would be able to join in on his meetings, see what he was doing and talk to the children. He would present the lesson, give them work and check back with them.

He thanked everyone for their emails and comments and stated: This has truly been a difficult decision. I look at this issue from three different points of view; a father, teacher and school board member. From all points of view, safety is my number one concern. As a parent I am truly trusting the school district with my most prized possessions, my children.

As a teacher I know face-to-face instruction work best. I know there will be some students that will not excel as well online as they would in the classroom. Our Southgate Teachers know our students very well. They communicate with their students in such a personal way, giving the "teacher look" to Natalie, a smile or wink to Penny to encourage her, or simply tell Maya to sit down and do her work. That is definitely the best form of communication in most situations.

As a school board trustee my view of course, is from a higher level. Throughout the year we look at best practices, fiscal responsibility and always student and staff safety.

We do not have all the answers. Each decision we make will be met with 10 more questions. There is no pandemic playbook. I wholeheartedly trust the staff and administration in Southgate to come up with the best plan to ensure the safety and learning for all our students, knowing it will not be an easy task.

The proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", could never be more true, than in this pandemic. It is going to take teachers, administrators, parents and community members to work together to help our students. We all can and must do more right now to get through this time. Whether it is checking with our students and staff, recommending new technology aids to teachers or sending an encouraging note to all of the above. It is imperative that we all share in the care and keeping of these community schools.

As a teacher, my district is planning on going with some face to face and online learning. I'm concerned for the health of the students, parents, and teachers. I will tell you, teaching in the spring was hard. We were all floundering trying to come up with zoom perfect teaching techniques. No one had advanced preparation time and it showed. It was as concerning to the teachers as it was to parents. These teachers in the district are dedicated. They will rise to this challenge in even greater ways than they did in the spring. Dedication to our children's education is their purpose.

Oh, how I wish, how your whole board wishes, there was an answer to the 100's of questions in front of us. Deciding to have virtual vs. face-to-face instruction just begins the discussion of how 2020-2021 school year will look/work. We have not been provided with answers and barely much guidance, but it is in my opinion the best option is to start online and monitor the situation closely. I've been doing all the research I can to best make a decision and I was struck by a superintendent at a different school system when he said, "In the end, it will be impossible to know if we overreacted or did too much, BUT it will be quite apparent if we under reacted or did too little".

With that in mind, I vote for the safety of our children to start classes this fall online and to continually monitor the situation.

Mr. Craig questioned; the protocols for when it is confirmed that a staff member or student tests positive for COVID if we are face-to-face, and the process for educating kids while they are being quarantined. He asked about supplemental internet, blending Atlas with synchronized classes and the requirement on Phases 4 and 5 for remote learning.

Mr. Martin responded, symptomatic students will be moved from the classroom setting, immediate parent notification and communicate with the health department.

Ms. Pastor added, if there was a COVID positive teacher and if she was walking around lecturing and meeting with students in small groups, the entire class is quarantined for 14 days. Our option then is to put those students on remote learning plan for the two weeks they are quarantined.

Ms. Nowak said we have provided supplemental internet options to those in need.

Mr. Lamos sees the same inconsistencies with what is allowed to open, what is not. We have no control over that, our governor is the one that makes those decisions. Even the experts don't really know what this is all about. Even the 6 foot requirement is suddenly out the window, indoors when it comes to the spread of aerosols. Things will continue to evolve and we will have to adjust. As he tries to figure out the rationale for the decision that he made last week and why he is sticking with it, here is on observation; we have proved we are very skilled at face-to-face learning and teaching. If we are just learning how to do the remote, as tough as it is with all the uncertainties, if we were to begin face-to-face and then had to scramble to go remote, if illnesses forced us to shut down, he is more comfortable with a decision to go remote right now in a relatively non-chaotic environment that we can control better now. As we measure change we can move to something we really know very well a lot more easily.

Mr. Lamos asked about the communication to parents on how to sign up for remote, and what plan is in place if Chromebooks get broken.

Ms. Pastor will send out all-calls and emails to inform parents of their choices.

Ms. Nowak said there are backup Chromebooks.

Dr. Pomponio asked, with regards to the priority standards of learning, is there a change to what the normal process of the standards for curriculum for online, has it been revised or changed for the online environment.

Dr. Baker-Herring stated we are definitely having to focus on the priority standards knowing how many standards we have to cover in each of the content areas. We are honing in on those so students will be successful in the following year.

Dr. Pomponio asked if there are resources in place for students that may struggle with this type of learning and how will we identify those students; what are the benchmarks and do we have all the social, emotional and wellness resources available online for easy access?

Dr. Baker-Herring stated there are checkpoints that administrators are reviewing regularly for student progress. There are regular opportunities to review progress. There is time built into the day at all levels where there are opportunities for re-teaching, MTSS, or RTI. Those students can be identified that are struggling and set up additional tutoring or small group instruction.

Ms. Pastor commented that there is a social and emotional page on our website that was recently added. Social Workers worked hard during the closure to get that up and running. The screening tools are designed to try to gather information for those students that are struggling in one area or another in order for us to intervene.

Dr. Pomponio said this is a very difficult decision, a lot of things to weigh. As a parent and board member it's difficult because you can't think about just your kids, you have to think of everyone as a whole; the students, the teachers. Students entering kindergarten are hitting a milestone, high school students want things to return to normal, the way things used to be. COVID is real and it's out there. We don't know where this is going to lead or what path it is going to take. We're just going step-by-

step. She would love face-to-face with our teachers, that's a big component of the learning process-the teacher interaction and what they mean to the students. She understands all the different aspects of what parents are going through. Her younger daughter misses school, her grandchildren will be starting kindergarten, her other daughter is a nursing student with conflicts with her schedule. On the other hand she is thinking about all of our students, the little guys, the teenagers and our juniors/seniors, teachers and administrators, everyone we know and love, she doesn't want to see anything happen to one of them. No one knows who has it or around someone that has. She cannot risk even one person to COVID, she supports 100% online. Hopefully we can work through the inconveniences.

Mr. Green listened to what everyone has said, had the same topics on his list to bring up, but doesn't want to be redundant. He too is a parent with a 12 year old and a 4 year old, Jennifer has to work, he is a teacher and his district has not determined whether he has to go to work. What we are dealing with is not unique to us or this board. We were one of the first districts that tilted our hands to what we were thinking about doing. Since then there have been other boards that are struggling with the same situation.

When this first started he and Ms. Pastor spoke, almost immediately with being in phase four when we heard that district were going remote. We didn't even think that was an option, we didn't think it was legal, that is not how it was written out. The governor made it clear that it can be an option. What you are seeing is that many districts have revisited that because of the numbers going up, some districts are looking at this with a different lens, there are many sources of information. He has read the comments and listened to people, answering their questions with a respectful conversation no matter what side you are on. Out of 15 downriver schools 7 have voted to start remotely. Out of 33 Wayne RESA districts, 18 of them are going to do the same. We are not in the minority doing this like some people think, maybe a couple of weeks ago we were.

An article about medical professionals, 20 some epidemiologist were asked about sending their kids back to school; 6 said they would send their kids back, 8 were unsure and 6 said they would not. Some said young people don't spread it as much to 'it would be really stupid to send kids back now'. We struggle with the decision, people are 50/50 about returning face to face. Board members were sent CDC guidelines by a parent, Rebecca Heyer. The survey that went out to parents did not include options for remote learning as the governors directive did not provide for that in phase 4 or 5. Many said if they were given the option to have their child taught remotely by Southgate teachers, they would have chosen that option. Remote learning is not permanent for the whole year, it will be re-evaluated. There are people who believe we should send the kids back, others do not.

Parents have told board members we will lose students to other districts. Surrounding districts have communicated that they will not put more face-to-face students in their district. He understands the concerns of all parents; those that need their student in school due to work and those that fear sending their student back to school face-to-face. The board is going to make a decision that will not please everyone.

Mr. Green had questions about; support service students-is there plan going to be individualized IEP under these conditions for the first 6 weeks and can a student be failed due to attendance will there be a way for parents to see lessons at a later date.

Ms. Pastor said we will make every effort to comply with IEP's. These schedules will be set first. We will be extra sensitive to meet the needs of these students as required by law. She also stated it is our intention to try as often as we can to record some lessons. But as we see even with the board meetings, if we were to record lessons, students would be recorded and we do not want that. We will be trying to

meet those needs. If a family can never attend lessons during the day, it may be a better option for them to choose Atlas so that they can access that curriculum when it is most convenient for them.

Mr. Green asked if Latchkey is being offered, if CTE classes will still take place and are we following the MHSAA guidelines for athletics?

Ms. Pastor commented that we do not have the staff to provide latchkey in our buildings with our current guidelines. There are some other options that she will be checking into that she will share when she knows we have a solution for some families. Ms. Pastor spoke with Mr. Nasarzewski-the CTE coordinator of the 9 districts that make up the consortium. It is believed Mechatronics could be offered that the Ford plant. That is an offsite offering with a Southgate teacher. Mr. Jason Martin is currently acting as the DCTC district coordinator.

Ms. Pastor does not know what to expect with MHSAA and the football season.

Mr. Green followed up by stating the board is trying to come up with a solution for all. We want to be safe in this situation and keeping children's best interests at heart. Everyone has worked hard to put together a plan with robust learning with the hope of returning face-to-face. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Estheimer asked about the Beacon Day Treatment Center.

Ms. Pastor said they will be starting remotely as well.

Mr. Estheimer thanked the parents for their comments, staff members for their work on the plan. He thanked his fellow board members for their work around the clock in preparation for tonight's meeting. He commented that Mr. Green has taken a lead role in communication with parents and updating fellow board members on a regular basis. In the last 4 and a half years he has served on the board, he has had to make many difficult decisions with the best interests of our children in mind. This year was supposed to be a celebration for us with the passing of the bond and the many benefits our schools will receive from that passage. The amazing and historic improvements are overshadowed by this pandemic. Past tough decisions are not nearly as monumental as the ones facing us tonight.

What makes this so difficult is that both options; virtual or face-to-face are bad for children right now and their individual development. Students will be impacted differently based on tonight's vote. He agrees with what he has heard from parents; that children need routine, regular, social interaction. Parents should be given a choice. Virtual or online is not as effective as in person, kids are unable to social distance or wear a mask all day, I don't know how I am going to work, I am afraid that me or my child will contact the virus. Those that want face-to-face must also understand, the education environment that we are proposing to send our children back to, is not the student-centered place we remember. No welcoming hugs from the teacher in the morning, no interaction with classmates and friends in the lunchroom, no high fives from the principal, no classroom group projects. He isn't even sure if he would be allowed to go in and read to the kids during reading month.

The proposed in-person instruction will not be an environment that's conducive to a child's well-being. It will be isolated, socially distant learning. It will be an experiment as our teachers and students have never taught or learned this way before. Another factor to consider is the unstable state of our staffing situation related to a viral spread, and how that leaves our system erratic and prone to unannounced and unpredictable shutdowns. If a teacher tests positive and students have to self-quarantine for 14 days without notice, puts parent on short notice in exactly the same position albeit temporary that we find ourselves in tonight. While considering a virtual start, having teachers get sick is worrisome, if 10% of the staff got sick a school would have to close. This level of volatility would

cause more disruption for families because it would come without warning. Nobody disagrees that face-to-face instruction is the best choice for students, but is it the safest. The thought of losing one life, as many other board members have said, is terrible and it weighs heavy on all of us. He does not believe we are making decision based on fear as it has been said, it is a combination of science and feedback from medical professionals. If we decided at this point to return to school with cases in Michigan reaching 600 to 700 a day, would that be the best for our students. He realizes how much of a struggle this is going to be for many families. Having small children trying to learning virtually, working parents trying to figure out how to keep their children connected when they are struggling just to find someone to watch the kids while they are at work.

Mr. Estheimer strongly believes starting virtually now, for a short period of time, would be less disruptive for students and families than to find out on a Friday and have to figure it out on a Monday if the governor changed the order. He said it is with a heavy heart he plans to vote in favor of a virtual start to the school year. It is his sincere hope that Titans can once again come together and unite. Our children year for and desire our grace and unity, especially in time like these and they need us to come together very soon. This won't be the last touch decision for this board, but how our students see us handle, how they see the adults in their lives handle this, may be the greatest lesson ever.

## **ACTION**

**1. Southgate Community School District COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan:** Ms. Pastor explained, the board is being asked to approve the Southgate Community School District COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan as presented. This plan states that the Southgate Community School District will begin the 2020-21 year remotely for all students. We will reevaluate this decision on October 13, 2020, unless otherwise directed by a government agency with the possible return to face-to-face instruction on Monday, November 9, 2020.

2020/21-12 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board approve the Southgate Community School District CIVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan as presented.

*Mr. Craig thanked the COLT team for all their work on this, it's not easy to do something you have never done before and figure out how we are going to put this plan together. He very much appreciates their efforts. He thanked parents for their participation, sending in comments, or participated in the meeting last week or watched tonight. This is great to see because very often the attendance is low. We breeze through a meeting in a couple of minutes, we don't get to interact with people at that level. He hope it doesn't end with this and we can keep that going. His vote tonight will be based on safety. He thinks this is the safest plan and the safest thing we can do. He wishes he knew the future, or where we will be in a month.*

*Dr. Pomponio thanked Ms. Pastor, Dr. Baker-Herring and the COLT team for the time and work put into this plan, both for remote and face-to-face for all the phases and all the hours put in during the summer all for Southgate students. She thanked the parents for their support and all of the attention given to this important decision and thanked them for reaching out.*

*Mr. Sage couldn't agree more with Mr. Green, that everybody is right, there's no easy solution. Everyone has a valid point, one way or another. This is going to be completely different learning at home than at school. The virus is real, his niece was on the vent for 60 days, had a trach put in and fought for her life for 120 days. She finally came home today. He is not making his decision lightly in any way. His parents and in-laws have compromised immune systems. He is basing his vote on*

*on the whole child, not the COVID child. He cares about all kids. He appreciates the amazing job the teachers are doing. Instruction has a bearing on the whole child. He thanked parents and Ms. Pastor for staying on. He thanked Dr. Baker-Herring and the COLT team. He will be 100% behind the decision the board makes. Even if he doesn't agree, the board is a team and he will respect the decision.*

*Mr. Green wanted everyone to know this is fluid and like anything else this is changing daily. If the government comes in and says we have to do A or B, it supersedes this board. He wants parents to know, this plan is going to be evolving and we're going to find things that don't work. He hopes everyone will stay with us as we try to fix it along the way. This is new territory for everyone, every board, every district. It would be new territory if we went in the classroom. It is painful, as a parent, this is emotional. His own child will miss band and choir. His daughter commented she doesn't want to 'be in a jail'. He is in the same boat as other parents, not knowing what they are going to do because they have to work. This is just an impossible situation, the board is trying. Communities turning on each other is just heart-wrenching. It's not about who is winning and who is losing, nobody is winning right now. There is no easy answer. We are all losing to some degree in this situation. He respects what every board members says, he respects the perspective of everybody. He appreciates the passion parents have, from both sides. He hopes everyone understands whether they agree with the board or not. He shared his phone number with everyone.*

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio

NO: Sage

**2. Approval of the Purchase of Band Equipment:** Ms. Pastor explained, as per board policy #5003 all items that exceed \$3,500 must be brought to the board for approval. This purchase represents the pianos from Evola Music, wind instrument from Washington Music Center and percussion instruments from Steve Weiss Music. Mr. Toby Kmet and Mr. Brendan Walter worked together and secured bids for these items to ensure that we received competitive pricing. All quotes were included in the board packets. This equipment was included in the 2020 Bond Application and therefore the funds will come from the bond proceeds. Ms. Pastor also commented this is exciting for her as she had a daughter involved in the band program. She never remembers the district buying band equipment.

Discussion took place about the funding for this purchase coming from Bond money and the timeline for purchasing items with bond funds and why the purchase cannot be delayed. The band will still be practicing even if there is no competitive season.

2020/21-13 It was moved by Mr. Craig supported by Dr. Pomponio, the board approve the band equipment as presented, not to exceed \$271,669.85

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

NO:

**3. 2020 Bond Program Construction Manager Services:** Mr. Kakoczki explained, this package is for the construction management services for the entire bond program, for both series. The board received the recommendation letter from Plate Moran CRESA and a summary of the Granger Construction Company's proposal. The budget established in the bond application for Construction Manager Costs and Fees was 10% of the cost of construction. Based upon the recommended contract award to Granger Construction, the total Construction manager Costs and Fees are projected to be about 8.86%, which is a projected cost savings of approximately \$316,588.00.

Mr. Kakoczki reviewed the bid process and what was asked for in the proposals. Six construction management firms were formally issued RFP documents, only 5 proposals were received on July 21, 2020. A Criteria Based Selection (CBS) process was utilized to evaluate the submission form each of the five companies.

Discussion took place about the locality of the construction companies that submitted their proposals and if the board could see customer reviews from those firms. The terms of the contract and the submission of "no" responses by the construction companies were explained by Mr. Kakoczki. Each "no" comment with regard to accepting terms of the contract, was resolved through clarification and/or exceptions and legal counsel was consulted.

2020/21-14 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Craig, the board authorize the Superintendent, subject to the review and approval of the School District Counsel, to award the Construction manager Services to Granger Construction Company.

*Mr. Craig stated he sat in on the interviews, there were three good companies. We would have been successful with any one of them. He favored Granger. He spoke about the contract, when it goes out, it is a very one sided contract in our favor and companies will respond no-to the terms-It's all simple stuff. When speaking about construction being local, for construction of this scale, Lansing is considered "local".*

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

NO:

**4. Updated Policy Adoption:** Ms. Pastor explained, the board is being asked to approve the adoption of the Updated Lusk Albertson Policies. These updates were recommended policy manual changes from Lusk Albertson. The committee: Dr. Darlene Pomponio, Andy Green, Shawn Sage, Ms. Pastor, met on Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> to review these changes. The committee recommends these to the board for full approval. Due to the time sensitive nature of the new Title IX Regulations the board needs to waive a first reading of these changes.

2020/21-15 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Sage, the board waive the first reading and approve the Updated Lusk Albertson Policies as presented by the Board of Education Policy Committee.

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

NO:

## CONSENT

2020/21-16 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Craig, the board approve the June 28, 2020 Summer Retreat Minutes, July 14, 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes, HR Update and Disbursements for July 2020.

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

NO:

## EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

None

### INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Pomponio thanked fellow board members for all the time, research and energy put into the board.

Mr. Sage added he respects everybody on the board even though they may not agree 100%, he respects the decision and opinion of board members. Let's move forward and do the best we can.

Mr. Lamos supported both of the comments.

Mr. Green knows what it's like to stand alone on an issue, but doesn't know what it's like to stand alone at least on the convictions of something that's this strongly believed by both sides. He respects everybody, COLT Team and administration, teachers and those in the community that are passionate on both sides. He agrees with everybody and respects Mr. Sage for standing up for what he believes in.

### ADJOURNMENT

2020/21-17 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Sage the board adjourn the meeting at 10:01p.m.

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Green, Lamos, Pomponio, Sage

NO:

*Respectfully submitted by: Theresa Grzechowski*

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Dr. Darlene Pomponio-Secretary  
Board of Education

*For detailed conversation, Board meetings may be viewed in their entirety on our website: [www.southgateschools.com](http://www.southgateschools.com)*



















