



REGULAR BOARD MEETING
14400 Dix Toledo Rd
Southgate, MI 48195

**BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

PRESIDENT

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VICE PRESIDENT

ANDREW A. GREEN

SECRETARY

DR. DARLENE L. POMPONIO

TREASURER

RICK LAMOS

TRUSTEES

JASON CRAIG
NEIL J. FREITAS
SHAWN SAGE

DATE: October 13, 2020 7:00 p.m.

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Pastor, Baker-Herring

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
Mr. Estheimer read the District Mission and Vision Statements.

REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2020/21-38 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board approve the October 13, 2020 Regular Board meeting agenda.

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

ADMINISTRATION

SUPERINTENDENT

JILL M. PASTOR

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

DIRECTOR

BARBARA WILSON, CFO

CURRICULUM/FEDERAL

PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

DR. MICHELLE BAKER-
HERRING

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

The following comments were read by Ms. Pastor, Ms. Thomas, Dr. Baker-Herring:

Hello, my name is Safa Saaidi. I have three kids that attend Southgate schools, one in high school, and two in middle school. I want to thank all of the teachers and Principals for their hard work. for my kids safety and my parents safety, I will continue to enroll my children in online classes. Because this is the safest way to protect it family for Covid-19. As you now, the cases for Covid-19 are very high, and they will continue to rise when winter comes. This is why I will continue to keep my children online. Last but not least, even if the school opens up and allows indoor learning I will continue to keep my children online. I chose this so that my family and friends can be safe. And again thank you for all of your hard work.

Southgate School Board,
I wrote to you last the 7th of August for input to the School Board Meeting for the vote to have the 20-21 school year started virtually. At that meeting, the board agreed to revisit the status of having school virtually, or going back in-person.

For the October 13th meeting, my understanding is that the board will determine whether or not to continue virtual learning.

For the safety of my family and that of the teachers and staff, I would highly suggest that the board vote to continue virtual learning for the foreseeable future.

If it is safe to open schools, why are all the board meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and PTO meetings still virtual? Adults can handle the safety protocols far better than children. If it is safe for schools to reopen, then we need to have these meetings face to face.

Our three children are doing great with virtual learning. Yes, it does take effort on our part to make sure they complete everything, that they ask questions when they need to - but that isn't any different than in-school learning. All of the teachers have been understanding in getting the kids up to speed on how things work. The Schoology program has made things much more organized - we would love to keep it even when school goes back in person next year.

We've already invested so much time and money into virtual learning to abandon it after a few months. The amount of time the teachers and staff have taken to make this work, the money spent on the technology to make it happen, the change in routine to the children are now fully taken advantage of.

Southgate Schools:

- Anyone who complains of any physical ailment will be sent home until they get a negative Covid test. Our two boys are asthmatic and would not be allowed back in school without continual Covid testing due to their continual coughing when the weather gets cold, everyone gets a cold, etc.

- Is a complaint of a headache, cough, enough - What are the exact protocols that the schools will follow, where are they published, and what are the names of the staff that will be in charge of enforcing each one? Will the school secretary be required to screen each child before they enter school? If a child coughs while in the hallway, but only the kids say so and so coughed, who follows up with that? If the kids ignore wearing their mask over their nose, who enforces that? Do they get sent home? Do they all go to the main office to sit with other children and spread infection to the main office staff and children?

- Southgate schools are generally old, and not equipped to handle continual ventilation. Partitions around desks do not take the place of an air filtration system.

- Over 40% of Southgate teachers won't return to in-school teaching. What happens at that point?

- If the teachers are to be cleaning the desks, equipment, etc. multiple times a day, where are they able to find the cleaning supplies?

- Is there a set of funds set aside for litigation? If the children are known through contact tracing that they were infected by other children or staff in the school, they will sue the district for negligence. Those parents who are complaining about not being able to go back to school will be the first to sue the district once their children get sick.

- Those parents who are complaining are complaining about too much communication through email and screen time are the same ones complaining there wasn't enough communication in March through June.

- When people try to compare a trip to the grocery store to being at school - at a grocery store, you're not with the same number of people in a room without ventilation for 6-8 hours straight.

One thing to consider that may help continuity - if schools do reopen it would make sense to reopen them all at the beginning of next semester. That will allow teachers and students to adjust with a fresh class. It will also allow those who will choose to go to Atlas and those coming from Atlas to in school the opportunity without loss of continuity.

Michigan and Nearby:

Tests positive on October 10th were 1,500 in Michigan. The last time we had daily infections this high was April 8th. When I wrote the board last, the board voted to have school virtual, the daily infections were 814.

Michigan is at a 3.7% overall percent positive rate of community spread is an increase over the beginning of Sept (3% is deemed safe).

American Academy of Pediatrics reported on 9/30 that children make up 10% of all US Covid cases. A steady rise since April as schools reopen.

As we've seen across the state and the country, the reopening of schools has led to the same schools closing temporarily for quarantine for weeks. Then the children and staff go back, only to have the school closed again a few days later.

So much time wasted in transitioning between in school and virtual. So much confusion and destruction of routine for the children and staff.

With the recent overturning of the Governor's mask mandate, the children will now be more capable to spread any illness more than the school year so far.

Local examples:

- Wyandotte has postponed their in-school restart due to the spread of Covid through their football team. Riverview, Rockwood, Dearborn, Gibraltar, Livonia, Novi, etc. have all had either schools closed or large quantities of students quarantined. A full list of Michigan schools with Covid can be located here: https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98163_98173_102480---,00.html

Many of the schools that have opened and then closed throughout the country are fully air conditioned - air handling infrastructure.

Second wave has been confirmed starting in Europe - an example of what could come here.

The world has yet to go through a sick season cycle with Covid on top of the already difficult cold and flu season that grips much of the North. Nobody has any idea how this is going to impact the amount of people that get Covid.

In the end, we are all in a great position to continue virtual learning for our children throughout the 20-21 school year. Our thank you goes out to the teachers and staff to continue to be flexible and understanding throughout the year.

Nobody signed up for this virus. It is something we have to deal with until there is a treatment plan available.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,
Christian and Katie Schoeneman

Dear Board of Education,

I do not envy you having to make decisions that impact thousands of people from diverse backgrounds, and I thank you in advance for not using haste when doing so.

I would like to urge you to consider the scientific data that changes daily, sometimes hourly, when making decisions on when it is safe for the students and staff to return to mask-to-mask learning. Yes, remote learning is difficult...anything "new" can cause trepidation, but it is, without a scientific doubt, the safest method of instruction in a world where our immediate area is still more than 40 active cases per million as flu season is fast approaching. The daily number of cases has not improved since the decision to close schools was made in March; as a matter of fact, many days it is much, much worse. On October 8, 2020, the Covid Act Now research group moved Michigan's risk level for another Covid-19 outbreak from "medium risk" to "high risk". (Johncox, 2020)

The medical experts are now predicting that we can expect over 400,000 total deaths due to Covid-19 by the end of winter if we do not continue to take drastic measures against the virus. That is almost double the current amount of deaths we have had in the seven months since the virus's first appearance in our nation...double the amount of deaths in a shorter time span. Not one life in the Southgate Community School District is worth the risk that type of data and predications foreshadows.

It is our job as parents and a school community team, to work through hard times together, even as it inconveniences our lives, so that we can rejoice when we can see that our actions/decisions did not harm any student or staff member. Please understand that changing remote students to the Atlas program should not be viewed as the option for parents that are not comfortable sending students back for mask-to-mask schooling. Atlas is built for the independent learner, and those that are not will suffer. It is a reading-heavy curriculum, not structured well for many of those with various IEP goals, or who simply lack the educational maturity to be an independent learner.

I am requesting that the Board votes to continue remote instruction until the scientific data supports that we can return to in-person learning in a safe manner, without fear of becoming infected with Covid-19, or a viable vaccination is widely available. The timeline of a possible return in November is not feasible with the virus rate in our area and the start of flu season. Asking parents to take a survey on their levels of comfortability for modes of instruction without detailing what a "day in the life" will look like for students, as well as the procedures and protocols that will take place with all things Covid-19 related is a bit backward. Are we sure that we are prepared to fulfill all of the demands of the Phase 4 and Phase 5 Return to Learn Plan with fidelity to ensure the safety of all students and staff? If there is even a shadow of a doubt, the most irresponsible decision we could make would be to send students back to in-person learning of any kind.

Thank you for your time,

Shannon Swauger

Johncox, C., 2020. Michigan Again At 'High Risk' For Virus Outbreak Amid Worry Of 2Nd Wave, Data Shows. [online] WDIV. Available at: <<https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/michigan/2020/10/11/michigan-again-at-high-risk-for-virus-outbreak-amid-worry-of-2nd-wave-data-shows/>> [Accessed 8 October 2020].

My comment is regarding the vote that will be occurring regarding a possible return to in-person classes.

I hate that this virus is still running rampant in our country, in our state, in cities nearby, and schools nearby.

It's not fair that this virus is still spreading. It's not fair that our kids have had to learn from home. It's not fair that our kids are missing out on the social interactions they need. It's not fair, and yet, it's necessary.

With the number of cases growing, and no end in sight, I don't see how we can safely send our kids back into classrooms full time - especially since I can't see any way it can be done with the appropriate social distancing needed.

However, I also know that of my 3 kids in Southgate Schools, I have one that is desperately needing some contact with the outside world. However, I don't think she needs that contact on a full-time basis, packed into a giant petri dish with 30 other kids.

Like many other parents, I've warred with myself over this - knowing that if I were to send my children back to school at some point, there will be risk.

I hate that we have to make this decision, but since it has to be made, I suggest we do it in the safest way possible. I suggest a part-time return for these reasons:

- 1) kids will get the social interaction and in-person instruction they need
- 2) the classes will be half-full, and the hallways less crowded, allowing for more social distancing and thus, less exposure to possible virus carriers
- 3) a transition from in-person to remote will be much easier when a school needs to close due to cases

I feel that, while the first week of remote learning was rough, it has gotten better - and the kids have gotten used to it. The amount of homework seems a little excessive, but I'd rather see them busy than not doing anything. But overall, I'd like to see them happy. I think that a part-time return would appease many of us parents who are worried about sending our kids back - who perhaps need baby steps in this process. I believe that a part-time return will also make our kids happy because they will get to return to part-time normalcy. I am not comfortable with a full return and will consider other options if the need arises. Thank you. Melissa Hurst

I implore the ladies and gentlemen of this board to listen closely to my message. Governor Whitmer closed the schools at the end of the school day on March 13, 2020 with approximately 254 cases of the coronavirus reported in the state of Michigan. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported 1,522 daily cases of Coronavirus and 15 deaths on Saturday, October 10th, which is 6 times the number of cases that were reported at the time of closing the school.

On October 5th, MLive.com reported, Michigan has 18 new K-12 schools with Covid Outbreaks. "The number of Michigan schools with coronavirus outbreaks continues to grow, with the number now reaching 58, according to data the state released Monday including:

Holy Redemer,- Detroit, Lutheran Westland, Shumate - Gibraltar, Salina Intermediate - Dearborn, Airport High School - Carleton, Novi High School - Novi, Divine Child - Dearborn."

They go on to say, "There's no guarantee that the numbers won't take a turn for the worse in coming weeks. Even a single case of coronavirus is dangerous for the infected student and has the potential to spark a wider outbreak in their communities." According to Michigan.gov, Wayne county alone, has reported 1,854 new cases over the last two weeks from September 27 to October 10th. Further, evidence of the dangers of this virus continues as schools on the West side of the state, have closed in-person classes as of yesterday, October 12th.

I support and admire the brave and morally correct decision that you have made to choose remote learning. I applaud the efforts and tremendous strides that the employees of Southgate have made to provide all students with a Chromebook, purchasing and quickly implementing Schoology, and going above and beyond to support the students. I understand that remote learning can never replace the face-to-face experience of in person learning and nothing can replace my family either. You see, I am not only a Southgate taxpayer and a supporter of Southgate School bonds, but I am a proud father of a Southgate teacher, a Grandfather of a Southgate para-professional, and a Grandfather of a graduating Southgate senior. Remaining on an online platform is imperative to remain safe. Today, October 12th, Wayne County reported a total of 36,900 cases and 3,008 deaths. With Wayne county's numbers on the rise and the reported numbers being 6 times higher now, then they were when the school was closed, why are we even considering to return face-to-face? This is a game of Russian Roulette and returning face-to-face is pulling the trigger.

Thank you for reading my comment to the board and I pray, that we remain safe, while attending schools remotely. It is always better to error on the side of caution, particularly when lives are at risk. Ross Powers

To whom ever this may concern,

My opinion is that the kids need to go back to school in person! For one I'm not a teacher so my son doesn't really listen to me or the teacher when they have live classes(it's too distracting). He needs face to face interaction with the teacher. He is not learning much from a computer and kindergarten is such a huge stage in life(especially not having a touch screen chrome book it's very hard for him to trace things when its asked to do so)! He needs to be with his peers and teacher. He was so excited for school and friends , he did better in preschool in person than how he is doing now.

Sincerely,

Holly and Connor West

Dear Board of Education,

I would like to thank the Teachers and Staff who are doing a great job providing an education to our children in this trouble time. As a father of two children in Southgate Community Schools and a husband of a staff member in the Southgate Community Schools, I would like to give my thoughts on the decision to return to in-person schooling. A survey was sent last week to gauge what families want going forward but I feel that I could not make an informed decision with the lack of information available.

As parents we ALL should know the following:

- What safety protocols are in place to protect students and staff
- What procedures are in place for if/when someone tests positive for Covid-19
- How well is the ventilation system in each School in the district
- Classroom sizes, distance from each student, distance from teachers

These are just a few concerns of mine. As we all see the number of Covid-19 cases rising steadily each day, I strongly feel that remote learning with OUR Southgate Teachers and Staff is the safest option for all.

Thank you for your time
Eric Reiss

Dear Board of Education, Let me begin by expressing my gratitude for the fact that you have made decisions to keep the entire Titan family safe thus far during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and I can only hope that you continue to do so. I know that you will hear many voices during this next phase of decisions, and it should be made clear that my stance is to urge you to vote to keep instruction remote. In the parent survey that was sent out last week, we were given four modes of instruction from which to choose moving forward. Where is the voice of teachers in this process? I'm sure there are teachers that would rather stay remote, and those that would prefer in-person instruction. Why can't we re-structure class lists to accommodate these situations? Saying that Atlas is our "online option" for the current remote students that are not comfortable with in-person instruction should be a moot point. Atlas is structured for the independent learner and our remote students have been succeeding with Southgate teachers for over five weeks now with live instruction. To change this educational routine for remote students because Atlas is the only option to stay clear of in-person instruction is one that would be damaging for many students. In addition, current Atlas families in elementary were given the option to change their decision and return to in-person learning at the trimester schedule. If the Board votes to return to in-person learning for the November 9th date previously mentioned, this would allow current Atlas students to enter these classes about three weeks after this date. This would impact several aspects, including class size, social distancing requirements, re-learning class procedures and policies, etc. Here is yet another major factor that plays into my request of delaying the decision to go to in-person instruction. Has it been made crystal clear to families what in-person will look like, making sure to stress just how different it will be from when students departed back in March? It is my opinion that the general consensus for those that support in-person learning is that we "need to get back to normal" and that "kids need to socialize"; the reality is that neither is applicable while in Phases 4 & 5 of our plan. The rigid plans that will need to be in place to meet the CDC guidelines for returning to school safely will quickly show that in-person learning is anything but "normal" at this point in the global pandemic. Can you assure us that every teacher, every administrative assistant, every staff member is fully ready to implement all aspects of the Return to Learn Plan? Can you assure us that every substitute teacher that walks into our buildings will be fully prepared to follow the protocols and procedures? Can you assure us that all staff has the necessary equipment to provide a safe environment, including when class size numbers are impacted at the trimester and semester timeframes? If there is any doubt in any of these aspects and more, that may cause harm to our children and staff, the overwhelming answer here is to keep our students remote. Respectfully yours, Adam Swauger

I have a preschooler, kindergartener and first grader. Virtual learning has been an incredible challenge since day 1. I know the school and teachers have been working very hard and I commend them for all they have done. Most days are spent with me running back and forth between my kindergartner and first grader because both need assistance during their live sessions that are at the same time.... all while trying to keep my 3 year old silent during the live sessions to cut down on background noise. My kids have been very distracted and aren't soaking in any knowledge. For our family it's been more about checking things off the list instead of truly learning and taking in the concepts and information being taught. Both of my children would be more successful with face to face instruction. Instead of school being enjoyable for my kid's, it's a constant source of tension and arguing to get them to complete their assignments. Kristy Friss

Good Evening,

Before you decide if our children should continue learning virtually or return to school face to face, let me tell you how they have been doing since this pandemic started.

In March my daughter was in third grade and my son in preschool. They both absolutely loved school. They would wake up excited to start the day and see friends and teachers. They got great reports for behavior as well as assignments. Once the pandemic hit, we were all just trying to survive by staying home, waiting out this Covid-19 storm and the less than optimal school situation it caused, and said this is temporary. The only people the kids saw were their grandparents through the window. The kids had a really hard time with this as they missed their friends/peers/teachers/family terribly.

Summer came and more was known about this virus, we slowly started seeing close family and friends. Once we knew how low the risks actually are, we allowed our son to play TBall.

Things were looking up and the kids were looking forward to being able to return to school in the fall as we watched beaches, amusement parks, and other places considered non essential reopen to the public. When the decision was made to return to school virtually, we chose the Southgate teacher option so that they can at least see peers and teachers in live sessions.

Though the teachers have been great, virtual learning for my children has been very stressful, both mentally and emotionally. We rarely get through a day without some sort of meltdown, whether it be caused by misunderstanding an assignment, headaches from staring at a screen the majority of the day, frustrations from learning to use a computer at 4/5 years old, and/or not being able to concentrate because their breaks are at different times. They also have a 3 year old brother who wants to play with his siblings. Have you tried to work from home with kids running around the house? Are the kids distracting? Now imagine being a kid yourself. Missing your friends, missing being in school. Throw in some technical difficulties and don't forget the fact that kids are better behaved for others verses their moms. It's been really tough. Both kids dread school each day now. I don't have a classroom, I have a kitchen table. This is a house, not a school. My kids are struggling and I feel like I'm failing them every day.

Face to face learning is essential. When do we stop just trying to survive and start living again?

Gyms are open, movie theaters are open. Schools need to open.

Thank you. Rachel West

Dear members of the Southgate Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding Southgate's upcoming Return to School Plan.

Our two children are students at Fordline Elementary School. We are writing to urge you to continue remote learning with our Southgate teachers rather than reopening school buildings in the coming weeks. As of yesterday, Michigan had 1,077 COVID-19 cases - the highest our state has seen since early April. As of October 8th, Michigan has now been moved from a "medium" to "high" COVID-19 risk state. No one has any idea what to expect during the upcoming flu season, and with COVID-19 cases still growing, please consider remote learning to continue as we move through this potentially dangerous flu/COVID-19 combined season.

While learning is far more ideal to be provided in-person, please know that remote learning is working! If our child needs help or extra instruction, their teachers have bent over backwards to help them. They respond to emails within minutes, or have ample sessions for one on one extra instruction. Each week that passes, they are becoming more comfortable maneuvering through the remote portal. In fact, our children rarely need extra parental assistance.

Reopening schools during a global pandemic is a complex task. Many of our buildings have no air conditioning or poorly functioning HVAC systems. Hallways and classrooms are often crowded. Many students struggle with the maturity to follow COVID-19 rules like practicing social distancing or wearing masks.

With precious lives at stake, district leaders must be able to ensure the safety of each and every person who walks into our schools. Many districts that have attempted to safely reopen have already had to temporarily close down, and outbreaks are happening within their sports teams and even with their staff. If billion-dollar sports leagues like the NBA and MLB can't restart without multiple cases of COVID-19, how can we expect underfunded schools to reopen safely?

While we understand it's important to offer a District solution that allows parents and caregivers to go back to work, it is our hope that all members of the community — from the students to the adults with underlying health conditions — are considered when putting forth a reopening plan for the 2020-21 school year. It is ethically and morally wrong to bring students back without clear and proven mechanisms to keep children, and staff safe. Even one life lost is too many. While social distancing, masks, and cleaning can help mitigate the risk of COVID-19, remote learning is the only way to ensure the virus doesn't spread in our schools and out into the larger community.

Sincerely,
Rob and Tara Secco

We feel with the rising covid numbers and flu season just starting we would be setting our selves up for nothing but trouble. We are all starting to get a handle of online school it would be a shame to disrupt this and then have to fall back to it ! Everyone should feel safe staff and students and families. what will we do if our child has been exposed in school and now we have to take a 14 day quarantine at work ?! What will we do if no one can pick a sick child up ?! To many unanswered questions ! We vote to continue with online until a further date . Thank you, Paul Silcott

Good evening, I want to show my gratitude for the board's decision to have remote learning in Southgate with two choices for parents, during the last five weeks. Thank you for making that tough decision. I am a resident and a teacher for Southgate Schools.

Remote learning has had it challenges. The safety and the health of students, teachers, and staff has not been one of those challenges and for that, I am extremely grateful.

I want to also share some other positive points that I have noticed. Students are healthy. Students are able to see their friends remotely and speak to them without masks. Students are able to move around freely. Students are able to hear their teacher clearly and able to read to their teacher without masks. Students and teachers are able to focus on curriculum without the worry of exposure to a potentially deadly virus and/or other shared germs.

I have concerns about the return to school options and the fact that students will not be accessing many parts of traditional in-person school. Students being kept at their desks all day while eating, while having their Gym class, while socially distanced, and in a mask is worrisome. I would like the board members to consider whether that kind of school experience is what kids deserve and whether it is the right choice for students right now, not parents or teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion, and for all of your time and dedication to the students of Southgate. Anne Wasilewski

Just today The Detroit Free Press reported that hospitalizations from covid19 are up 80% here in Michigan. The same article quotes Dr. Khaldun from MDHHS saying this could be the beginning of a second wave. Does this report affect your decision on how our school system with proceed? Janet Zemple

https://www.freep.com/story/news/health/2020/10/13/coronavirus-covid-19-cases-michigan-surge/5974844002/?fbclid=IwAR26-a8YCqDxop0HKE0DWuprrP-C51cQ0I7O__aOpD50VZLzWFWMhT8vQac

Once again the school board finds yourselves in an impossible situation. You can never please all the people all the time. And I want to recognize and thank you for putting the safety of our children first. I want to thank the teachers and administrators for adapting to this virtual environment. This has not been easy for anyone involved and we should all recognize that and recognize the efforts by students, staff and volunteers in this district.

What is the protocol going to look like for children entering a building? How will there be distinguishment made between allergies, cold, flu, and Covid to best keep our district safe? What is going to be the standards set when someone tests Positive, which is inevitable, how we move forward with safety or will we find ourselves moving to a virtual environment on the fly?

What happens to the children whose families decide that moving to face to face is not the best solution at this time?

Thank you for your time! Rhonda Gibson

I would first like to start out by saying thank you to Southgate community schools and all the teachers and staff for all the hard work and dedication during this time. I opted for school of choice at Southgate for my Kindergarten, related to their decision for online only learning as I have seen what COVID has done and continues to do to individuals and families. As a medical provider in the hospital during this pandemic I have seen things I hope I never see again, and encountered situations unlike any other. Coming from a two medical personnel household, one of which is immune compromised, and having 3 young children I feel strongly about maintaining distance learning as a sole option. I understand in doing so that this creates a lot more work for the parents as well as all Southgate Staff however I feel as though returning to any face-to-face learning at this point would be detrimental not only to the individuals involved in the schools, but also the community. I am grateful that as of yet, most young children have minimal symptoms but that is not the case for many of our immune compromised and older adults. By school-age children having minimal to sometimes no symptoms, they become a significant carrier and transmitter of COVID-19 to those they come in contact with and as we know, this is a very transmittable virus. Our kids have started out the school year strong and are just now getting into a routine. To take this away and put them into a face-to-face environment, in which they would be taken out of very frequently and without warning to be quarantined from family and loved ones, would have a significant impact on their mental health as well as put them and many others at avoidable risk. As a medical provider, I am hopeful and confident in our abilities to develop vaccines and other means of treatment, however this has not occurred yet and we are going into influenza season full of coughs, sneezes, fevers and runny noses, all of which will spread COVID-faster. I know it would be much easier on me as a parent to say return face-to-face, however I would not be able to sleep at night knowing I put my own, as well as others families and loved ones at risk to make my situation easier. Having a "hybrid" schedule would do nothing for the spread of COVID. Any exposure at all to someone with the virus puts you at just as much risk one day or two days a week as it does five days a week. I will end by asking you all to consider this scenario. You opt for returning face-to-face, and one of your loved ones becomes seriously ill from COVID...Would you at that point think it was still worth it? My intention is not to scare anyone but to bring light the severity of this situation. Jennifer DelVero

Virtual school has been an adjustment for everyone and I think now that we've been doing this for a month, it might be a good time to reevaluate the amount of work being given to the students. I understand the usual curriculum is a full days work but they aren't physically at school, they're at home. Where siblings are also on their chromebooks attending lessons, where little ones not in school yet are being kept from areas they used to be allowed in, where parents are also working from home. There have been a several instances where the schedule moved times, same day, or an additional time for the next day given to us parents the night before. There is no doubt our Southgate School Members are working hard and doing a great job. Just asking to revisit this process and see where we can improve. A schedule to abide by to have the ability to plan our days is imperative and less alone-time work would be even better. Rachel Rosamond

I understand the reasoning behind selecting remote learning for the start of the 20/21 school year. However, after discovering that the majority of the time the kids are learning on their own, this is not sustainable. My 3rd grader has 6 hours a week with his normal teachers. That is it. 3 hours of math and 3 hours of ELA. The teachers are rushing through their plans due to time limits and my son is not learning, he is meeting deadlines. If I would have known the amount of asynchronous work that I would be responsible for facilitating prior to the school year, I would have left the district or chosen Atlas. When all adults in the house work and they have no close family, this is a struggle. It is not fair to these kids, especially those who have learning disabilities, ADHD or those who need that face to face contact. I urge the school board to consider at least a hybrid model to allow these kids a chance to succeed this year. Respectfully, Julia Frazier

PRESENTATIONS

Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan Presentation: COLT Leadership Team-Ms. Pastor began the presentation by stating this presentation will take place once a month. After the extended plan was approved, the board must meet to; reconfirm delivery of instruction, solicit public comment on how instruction is going to be delivered, publicly announce weekly 2-way interaction rates at the meeting and post to transparency reporting link on district website.

The district shall report to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI); the instructional delivery method that was reconfirmed. How that instruction will be delivered for each grade level offered by the district, including pre-kindergarten, as applicable; and whether or not, as determined by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in consultation with CEPI, the district is offering higher levels of in-person instruction for English language learners, special education students, or other special populations.

Ms. Kelly Thomas-Director of Special Education reviewed the Special Education Considerations-New Guidance: MDE Guidance-Additional Consideration During Phases IV-VI

- If a district is in a remote mode of learning per their Preparedness/Response and Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans, MDE recommends the following:
- The CLP (Contingency Learning Plan) may need to include in-person services based on the individual needs of the student.
- In determining the specific mode of instruction, utilize data and expert opinions of school professionals.
- IDP teams must consider a range of alternative learning strategies including those of hands-on, in-person, that would otherwise be provided if districts were convened in brick and mortar setting.
- If a district is unable to provide FAPE(Free And Appropriate Education) via remote instruction, the district may have to provide certain services face to face, as determined by the IEP team.

Special Education Considerations 2

- Contingency Learning Plans (CLP's) should be completed for all students with IEP's when the District is not in full face to face instruction. This plan should describe the services that are being provided that may be different from when face to face.
- If a student is not making adequate progress, we need to consider alternate methods of instruction, which may include some face to face instruction.
- We are recommending starting with our youngest students and the students with the most severe disabilities, such as the students who attend the cross categorical classrooms and Beacon Day Treatment Center. Many of these students have a more difficult time with remote instruction and there are also less students in the classrooms which make social distancing easier.

Special Education Considerations 3

- We have started Learning Labs in all buildings. We have used them mainly for special education assessments and meetings. Parents, staff and students have followed the safety protocols and we have not had any issues. We are hoping to build additional services using the learning lab protocol, however we have many details to work out regarding schedules.

Two-way interaction percentages-(the number of times students interact with their teacher) were reviewed for the first 4 weeks of school which averaged 97%. This information is required to be documented.

There were opinion surveys sent out to parents of Y5 through 12 grade and staff asking what their choice would be for continuing with remote/virtual, return face to face or move to a hybrid model. Dr. Baker-Herring reviewed the results of the survey. There were 1632 responses from parents, 307 responses from staff and all of the responses and comments were shared with the board of education.

Ms. Pastor reviewed the assurances; The District/PSA, in consultation with the local health department will develop guidelines concerning appropriate methods for delivering pupil instruction for the 2020-2021 school year that are based on local data that are based on key metrics. Note: A determination concerning the method for delivering pupil instruction shall remain at the District/PSA Board's discretion. Key metrics that the District/PSA will consider shall include at least all of the following:

- COVID-19 Cases or Positive COVID-19 tests
- Hospitalization due to COVID-19
- Number of deaths resulting from COVID-19 over a 14-day period
- COVID-19 cases for each day for each 1 million individuals
- The percentage of positive COVID-19 test over a 4-week period
- Health capacity strength
- Testing, tracing, and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID-19

The Wayne County Health Department shares a weekly report that is also shared with the board. Ms. Pastor reviewed this report which included every week since the start of the school year. This report covers the total confirmed cases in Wayne County, 7-day positivity rate, hospital occupancy rate, hospital occupancy rate for ICU, testing capacity rate and the number of outbreak events.

Based on the community spread for a 7-day period the county gives a letter grade. The higher the risk the lower the grade. Our district is at a "C" for the week ending October 6, 2020. Ms. Pastor reviewed the metric used to determine the grade the district receives from the county.

The possible options for the mode of instruction that the board can consider are: Continue with the current learning schedule (Remote/Atlas), move to a Hybrid Model beginning no sooner than November 9, 2020 or move to All-Students Model beginning no sooner than November 9, 2020.

REGULAR MEETING

Ms. Pastor stated that even though three members of the COLT team presented this plan tonight, it has been worked on by all members who meet on a regular basis to talk about what this looks like and the challenges.

Everything is not perfect but we are working to do the best with what we have currently.

Discussion took place regarding the meaning of two-way interaction and if there is an option for parents to choose to go face to face or stay remote with their teachers. Board members spoke about teachers having options to teach remote or face to face and suggested recording their lessons or have doc-u-cams in classrooms so students can continue to learn from home. Additional discussion took place regarding the amount of screen time students are getting and how going back face to face is going to look. Board members questioned the numbers reported by Wayne County. They asked about the number of times a family could take the survey and how valid the results are.

CONSENT

2020/21-39 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Green, the board approve the minutes from September 22, 2020 Regular Meeting, October 6, 2020 Special Meeting, HR Update and the disbursements for September 2020.

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

NO:

ACTION

1. Approval of Mail Meter Lease: Ms. Pastor explained, the current lease for the Data Pac mail meter lease expires 10/25/20. Three quotes were obtained for a 5-year lease on a new mail meter. All vendors provided consortium pricing.

Quadient (formerly Neopost) proposed a lease of 60 months on a Quadient iX7 DS Mailing System. Total cost per month proposed is \$311.50 for 60 months, annually \$3,738.00 and for the lease duration \$18,690.00

UTEC proposed a lease of 60 months on a Post Base Pro DS Postage System. Total cost per month proposed is \$319.00 for 60 months, annually \$3,828.00 and for the lease duration \$19,140.00

Pitney Bowes proposed a 60 month lease for a SendPro P Series meter. Their proposed cost per month is \$827.37 for 60 months, annually \$9,928.44 or for the lease duration \$49,642.20.

UTEC is the recommended vendor even though the cost is \$90 higher per year. For the minimal cost difference, UTEC has gained our recommendation for additional reasons that are difficult to financially quantify (6 years excellent, dependable service, equipment durability and overall satisfaction).

Discussion took place regarding the need for a mail meter, what is sent out that cannot be emailed. Student records, report cards and other packages sent out to families get run through this machine.

2020/21-40 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Craig, the board award the Postage System lease to UTEC for the Post Base Pro DS Postage System for a duration of 60 months at a cost of \$319.00 per month and a lease duration cost total of \$19,140.00.

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

NO:

2. Southgate Community School District Mode of Instruction: Ms. Pastor explained, as per Senate Bill 0927, that was signed by Governor Whitmer on September 20, 2020 and assigned PA-0165 on October 1, 2020 effective immediately, Section 98a of the law modifies the requirements for District/PSA Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans required in Public Act 149.

Assurance #8: Thirty days after the approval of the plan under subsection (2) and each month thereafter, the district must, at a meeting of the board reconfirm how instruction is going to be delivered during the 2020-2021 school year. Tonight the board must vote to satisfy this requirement.

Mr. Green asked for clarification; if we choose to go face to face and cases increase within the month they vote on this, can we change our decision?

Ms. Pastor said there is nothing in the legislation that say the board cannot make a different decision at a different board meeting during the same month.

Mr. Lamos stated his position; the foundation for the decision needs to be about choice, quality, the execution with safety while mitigating risk. Face to Face, Atlas and remote learning to a degree that is possible to staff so there is continuity for the folks who want to continue, should be part of the formula. We should give direction to the administrative while not being too prescriptive as to how they operationalize this.

Mr. Green agrees with Mr. Lamos, and offer the option of remote learning for parents that don't feel safe coming back but still want the live teacher. He is supportive of a partial hybrid model. He doesn't believe it is overstepping our bounds to ask that the class sizes are not 30. This would give people options. He understands everyone's situations, everybody is right.

Dr. Pomponio said it is safety first, then choice, then quality. This is real for a lot of people that know someone or have been through it. It seems the way it is heading it is going to get somebody if it doesn't get everybody sooner or later. There are people that need their kids in school and need their jobs, students learning styles cannot succeed with remote. Parents need choice. She is in support of that.

Mr. Lamos said safety in everyone's perception, maybe a little different, or their willingness to tackle risk. He agrees with the choice idea. Every parent has to make the decision for themselves.

Mr. Sage commented he wholeheartedly agrees with safety, he lost his niece at 29 years old, Tina Stevenson. This is a mess, it's real there's no question. No one takes this lightly. He asks himself how long is this going to go on. At what point are we considered safe. We stopped in March. We had the opportunity in September, as a board we made the decision to go remotely. What is going to change between now, and January or February? Is it a vaccine? At what point are we going to say enough? We've got to minimize the risk to the best of our ability. Giving parents a choice, minimizing the risk to the best of our ability, it's going to happen at some point. Whether it is a church, a business or a school. We do our best to minimize the risk but live with it. One death from COVID is too many, but same thing goes for suicide and depression. All aspects need to be considered. He asks himself what is the best choice. There is no right decision, but the board is put in a position to make a decision. He agrees with the hybrid where the parents and the teachers potentially have the option to do it remotely with a teacher and then those that feel they have to move into the classroom that's what we do.

Mr. Craig saw the survey and doesn't think we can go full face to face. He thinks it's dangerous. When we talked about face to face in August it was with 60% in the schools because 40% were supposed to go to the Atlas program. The only way to accomplish face to face is with a hybrid model where you can deliberately split 50/50 and say who comes on what day. He agrees we have to offer that choice of remote instruction with a Southgate teacher. The other side of the option is to allow those that can't or don't feel safe to return, that option. How we afford that will have to be pushed back to administration and say, if this is what we want, how can you make that happen? He does not like the November 9th deadline. He thinks that is an arbitrary deadline that we just put in there. He would continue with virtual right now, work on improving virtual. He believes one thing that can improve virtual is to have our teachers in the classrooms. Parents are struggling and having a hard time contacting someone when they are struggling to get online. He wouldn't be opposed if teachers need to bring their kids in while they were teaching in the classroom, and also increasing the screen time. He isn't sure November 9th is when we have to do it by, what if we're not ready by November 9th? What if our plan is not in place yet, there are a lot of moving parts. No one knows who is coming back, what teachers are going to work. Maybe K-5, 6-8 or 6-12 are treated differently, depending on the numbers. Our high point limit should be a hybrid model. He wants to hear what everybody else has to say.

Mr. Craig suggested having parents make a choice and then sign a contract to commit to their choice.

Dr. Pomponio agrees with the full online remote as one option, the other option face to face part-time hybrid.

Mr. Lamos agrees the start date should be based on when we can be operational. There may be advantages to starting Nov. 9. There are just a few weeks until Thanksgiving and after that a few weeks more. This would be a good test as opposed to 3 or 4 months. He would like the administrations advice as to the classroom size from a safety point based on staffing capability.

Mr. Sage commented that we need to have a timeline to work with. We need structure so parents are not in limbo the entire time.

Mr. Freitas commented, in Detroit Schools where he teaches, parents were given the opportunity to choose either online or face to face, they could not switch back and forth. If allowed to flip flop it makes it harder on teachers. Parents found that online was harder than they thought. We have to do the best we can, giving parents the choice, keeping the children safe and having a tangible deadline. If a large amount of cases occur we can go back remote.

Mr. Estheimer also embraces Mr. Lamos' plan.

Mr. Green acknowledged we are not going to make everyone happy. He does not think we should go full face to face right now especially with flu season coming. A hybrid model would allow us to maintain safety and keep social distance.

2020/21-41 It was moved by Mr. Lamos to approve the Southgate Community Schools mode of instruction to be built on three pillars; first mitigating risk and maximizing safety, second is face-to-face choice for those parents who so choose, keeping in mind class size and other health department regulations to govern the size of classes and that mode of operation, three-remote with teacher and including systematic assessment of execution and learning modalities and a plan to adjust to change when it is going to come.

motion died for lack of support.

2020/21-42 Dr. Pomponio made a motion to approve the Southgate Community Schools mode of instruction to be both options for teachers and families. 1. Face to Face instruction part-time hybrid 2. Fully remote with a Southgate teacher, online would stay the same through schoology, Atlas or 21F. Face to Face would be moving those students who opt for that selection to have a part-time hybrid instruction with all of the safety and health protocols in place beginning on Monday, November 9, 2020. Supported by Mr. Craig for purposes of discussion.

Mr. Green commented that schoology isn't an online platform by itself. It really has to have a teacher behind it.

Ms. Pastor commented, when we offer teachers a choice to teach remotely, we may not have enough teachers teaching in person to offer a true hybrid. Her concern with the language is that it makes sound like we're going to be able to allow teachers to teach remotely. The results of the survey of staff is 50/50. We will not be able to staff for a hybrid model if we truly offer that option.

Amendment to the motion:

Mr. Craig offered an amendment to the motion to remove the portion about teachers having an option, supported by Mr. Lamos.

Mr. Estheimer requested the motion to be read again.

2020/21-42 Dr. Pomponio made a motion to approve the Southgate Community Schools mode of instruction to be both options for families; 1. Face to Face instruction part-time hybrid, 2. Fully remote with a Southgate teacher. Online would stay the same through schoology, Atlas or 21F. Face to Face would be moving those students who opt for this election to have a part-time hybrid instruction with all of the safety and health protocols in place beginning on Monday, November 9, 2020. Supported by Mr. Lamos.

Additional questions were asked to clarify the online offerings.

Dr. Baker-Herring and Ms. Pastor were asked if this was feasible. While scheduling makes them nervous but they will definitely do their best. There is concern about the number of staff who need to not be in-person.

Once that number is known they will understand what the numbers look like and what options parents really will have.

Mr. Craig said we need to know what teachers and families are going to do, in writing not a survey, not in an email, not in a public comment. He would write up a contract and make the families commit to that process for doing it. Then we can start building back from there. He is nervous about the November 9th date, because there is only so many hours in a day, there's only so many days in a week. He is o.k. with that date in the motion, we can always meet to modify it.

Mr. Sage asked if this kind of plan was discussed in the beginning with the COLT Team.

Dr. Baker-Herring agreed this was one of the plans.

Mr. Green asked if teachers will be required to come into school on Wednesday's when they are teaching remote.

Ms. Pastor stated right now we are not requiring teachers to come into the building, although many teachers are coming into their classrooms as they find it more useful than being home. The details will be worked out, there are options for Wednesdays.

Mr. Green questioned the deep-cleaning day on Wednesdays and how that can be accomplished if people are in the school.

Ms. Pastor told the board we do not say deep cleaning, we believe by saying that it means that we are not cleaning on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays or Fridays. It's the wrong impression to give. Wednesdays are really about staying in a practice of being remote in case we have to go 14 days quarantine. This is the purpose, in her mind, to stay in that practice of being remote on Wednesdays.

Mr. Green thanked Ms. Pastor for clearing that up for him. He was under the impression from every other district that Wednesday's were considered a deep cleaning day.

Amendment: Mr. Estheimer asked for a vote on adding the amendment, made by Mr. Craig, supported by Mr. Lamos, to the motion.

Vote: All in favor.

2020/21-42 Dr. Pomponio made a motion to approve the Southgate Community Schools mode of instruction to be both options for families: 1. Face to Face instruction part-time hybrid, 2. Fully remote with a Southgate teacher. Online would stay the same through schoology, Atlas or 21F. Face to Face would be moving those students who opt for this election to have a part-time hybrid instruction with all of the safety and health protocols in place beginning on Monday, November 9, 2020. Supported by Mr. Lamos.

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

NO:

The appropriate time to ask for a parent survey was discussed.

3. Approval of Concrete Replacement Services: Ms. Pastor explained, this action item has a recommendation letter from Plante Moran Cresa and a summary of official RFP details. In summary, the Project Team is recommending Royal Cement for the Concrete Replacement Services. This award recommendation is for a yearly unit price contract for up to five (5) years. Discussion took place regarding the differences in the pricing from each company and how contractors come up with their unit price.

2020/21-43 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 Concrete Replacement Services to Royal Cement through 2024.

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

NO:

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

None

INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Green announced, he thinks we need a survey. He knows the parent page is going to be blowing up. Everyone is right with their feelings. We are doing the best that we can. Nobody on the board ran to be a medical expert. We came in here trying to help out schools, the children and our community. This got thrown on all of us. There is no easy answer but we are trying to get an answer that can be safe, give parent's choices and do the best that we can. Every school board member, every teacher, every parent and the administration is doing the best that they can. Just because we disagree on some things, he asks that the community pull together, on the chat boards, with each other and show some civility to one another. You can agree to disagree respectfully. That is his hope for all of us, to understand we are in it together. He commented that we are not sitting on our butts doing nothing or withholding information like some people think. We don't want to give out information when we don't even have it yet from the Wayne County Health Department or the State. Just because we are not talking every single day does not mean that we are not behind the scenes answering phone calls, talking to each other, answering emails, looking at data and trying to figure this all out.

Mr. Craig wants everyone to understand, using a football term-we punted. We didn't make a call, we left the administration with a lot of work to do here. We have tasked them with attempting to make everybody happy and serve all the things we want done and in a short time-frame. We are making parents pick and left a lot of work for administration and for that he apologizes to the administration. Administration is going to have to get concrete answers from people to decide what they are going to do. This is where we can put it back on the families, you have to put your name down on a piece of paper and say I'm going to do this. He disagrees with Mr. Green that we need a survey. We need something that we have a default and we have to fill out a little bit more what each of those things mean; this is what remote means. Our motion was a snapshot in time. We might get some feedback from administration that we have asked them to find a purple unicorn and they can't do it. We might have to revise what we want to do and how we need to do it. Keeping in mind over the next couple of weeks, we are trying to do what is best for everybody. But we may do things that not everyone will agree with. We may say we are going to do something and then not be able to deliver which does concern him. We will see where the numbers lie and then we can start making firmer decisions. We are in a fluid situation, trying to do what is best for everybody, trying to serve everybody's needs and meet everybody's expectations.

Mr. Sage thank the administration for all the work they are putting in as well as the teachers. When we talk about uniformity, it is not about the teachers not doing their jobs-the teachers are absolutely doing their jobs. It's about keeping it structured for all the kids so it is similar. He thanked the parents that are up at 9 or 10 o'clock at night still doing lessons with their kids whether they worked during the day or at home doing it all day long. It is not easy for anybody. Everybody has the best interests of the children at heart as well as safety. We have said time and time again we are doing our best. Countless, thankless hours are being put in and we understand. He thanked parents, kids, teachers, administration and the board.

Dr. Pomponio thanked the board, it is tough to consider all the things we had to think about; the learning that is lost if a child is sick for one day weighed on her mind, all the information-are they getting full quality of instruction, are they getting all the instructions. Worrying about the safety of the teachers and students, and the students with compromised health issues. There is a lot the board members had to think about day in and day out, plus with their own students. We thank the COLT Team, social workers, special education director-working with special education students. Hopefully we can work together as a community. She has heard of parents leaving and going off to different schools. Hopefully we can help most of the situations. We are not doing this haphazardly but we are doing it in small steps with the hybrid and part-time and keeping the consistency of the online. We are trying to make it work as we are learning new information about COVID-19. We are thankful for all the hard work everyone's put into it. She thinks about it all the time, daily, what the teachers are going through, the students that are struggling, bad. If we can stick together, communicate and work as a community we will get through this.

Mr. Freitas thanked all of the parents out there who are going above and beyond trying to be a teacher, a technology person and just struggling being a parent. It's a lot of work, he is struggling himself. He apologized to his wife, he has used her as a sounding board; she has listened to him vent and complain about every single thing so he has to apologize to her. As far as the Southgate Parent Facebook page, it is so easy to complain and be negative but we have to support each other in this whole thing. The teachers and parents are doing the best they can. If you have suggestions that help somebody, please offer those. There is so much negativity in the world right now, we can always use some positive. Just seeing the faces of the children liking it. He will go home tonight and one of his children will say it's a great choice, another one will say no dad I wanted to be home the whole time. We can't make everybody happy, only do the best that we can. He appreciates everyone's patience in this especially the COLT Team, they have a huge task in front of them and it's not going to be easy. Let's try to get through this together. Southgate Community is a great community, we rally around each other a lot. Let's keep up the good work.

Mr. Lamos commented that he has two perspective's, one is personal on is business. COVID threw to every single business on this planet. There is no business model that has been immune to this virus. He watches his clients every single day "punt" trying to figure out what the heck to do. In the next quarter, the next two quarters, the next three quarters. No one has all the answers but they are making their best bets with the limited investment budgets that they have, as we are. We are in the same boat. It is not often that public sector has to make these kinds of adjustments and are faced with this kind of situation. Overall we are not a flexible business model but we are doing enormously good stuff with everyone in the district and on the board. Another perspective that influenced his decision; this past week he had two of his eldest grandkids in his house and helping them manage their remote learning while he was trying to do his business and his wife was doing hers, he got a good taste of what all of our families are going through right now. Hopefully we have made some good decisions tonight and we will look to the administration to guide us on how to operationalize this. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Estheimer thanked the; parents for being patient and understanding, the staff for their continued commitment to Southgate Schools and hard work on this team, the board for working hard to help formulate this and for meeting in-person tonight on rather short notice. He thanked Vice President Mr. Green who has given him almost daily counsel on this whole process as we navigate forward. It is always interesting to get his insight as a teacher and a father of a student in the district, he appreciates that.

ADJOURNMENT

2020/21-44 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Craig, the board adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted by: Theresa Grzechowski

Dr. Darlene Pomponio-Secretary
Board of Education

For detailed conversation, Board meetings may be viewed in their entirety on our website: www.southgateschools.com

