



**Minutes of Regular Meeting, September 24, 2020
Novi Community School District
Board of Education**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Novi Community School District was held on Thursday, September 24, 2020, beginning at 7:04 PM in the Educational Services Building virtually via Zoom.

Present: Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)
Absent: Mr. Smith

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members of the audience joined with the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Cook that the Novi Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Windle and Ms. Brys commented on the return to school plan. Ms. Haslam commented on the PRIDE + JOY mission.

CONSENT ITEMS

Items included in the Consent Items are those which have previously been considered by the Board in committee or at a prior meeting, or of such a routine nature, that discussion is not required. Board members may request that any items be removed from Consent Items for further discussion, if additional information is needed or available.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2020

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Cook that the Novi Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

Personnel Report

Gary Kinzer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presents for your consideration the following personnel changes:

A. New Hires

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Bldg.</u> | <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Reason</u> | <u>Rate</u> | <u>Effective</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|

where she continues to work full time. She graduated from Madonna University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 1996 and is a certified Pediatric Nurse, a member of Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) and Vice President of the Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN). She also is the region leader for all school nurses in Oakland County.

Cathy Farris was hired part time in November of 2010 to work for the Novi Community School District. In December of 2010, Ms. Farris' employment was converted to a third party contract at an hourly rate. She also is a proud Novi parent and involved community member.

Cathy Farris has been a valued employee. She regularly meets with our state nurse consultant and collaborates often with the counties surrounding Novi to enhance our practices, policies and procedures. Ms. Farris reviews each and every medical plan that is submitted and has revamped all of our medical forms to conform to the medical community. She is on call if needed for medical advice in a building or if a medical emergency should arise. Ms. Farris has provided training to our staff with regards to insulin, epi-pen, AED, CPR, and so much more. She has been instrumental in keeping our information up-to-date and moving us forward through the COVID learning process.

Pre-COVID we were planning to propose to the board, in our budget for 2020-2021, that we wanted to make our school nurse a salaried NCS D employee. Now, through a combination of CARES Act and county money, we have the ability to make Ms. Farris our full time school nurse for this year.

We plan to build Ms. Farris' position into our 2021-22 budget to ensure her continued employment in the district.

This came before the Board tonight for information and discussion. It will come back for Board approval at the October 1, 2020 meeting.

Coronavirus Screening Update

The Novi Community School District COVID-19 Learning Plan provides two options for parents. One option is the in-person hybrid option. The second option is the complete virtual option.

These options were developed because the administrative team felt it was safe and important to provide our parents with a choice for the fall. The administrative team made the decision to return based, in part, on the numbers that we reviewed of cases.

One of the assurances that we committed to with the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan was to review key metrics. For much of the summer and into the start of the school year, Novi was left to analyze numbers by ourselves. The State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Oakland County Health Division had not supplied any metric. However, on September 16, the state and Oakland County Health presented "Guidance for In-Person Instruction." The CDC has also released guidance for decision making.

Tonight, we will discuss the metrics that have guided our administrative team as we have moved through this pandemic.

1. NCS D numbers
2. Oakland County Weekly Report
3. State guidance for in-person instruction
4. CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision Making

This came before the Board tonight as a report to the Board.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no comments from the audience this evening.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Mary Ann Roney, Curriculum Committee chairperson, reported that the committee had met this afternoon to discuss the new Health textbook and PE (Physical Education) credits. She stated that the committee would be meeting again in two (2) weeks.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steve Matthews, Superintendent of Schools, reported that he has been in and around the district over the past couple of weeks. He stated that he continues to be very impressed with our staff. Dr. Matthews said that he was in a kindergarten teacher's classroom, who just expressed how much fun she was having as a virtual teacher for kindergarten students. He mentioned that students were learning and that they were engaging with each other. Dr. Matthew reported that she just had a huge smile on her face and it was really heartening to see. He stated that he walked into the orchestra class and the teacher was teaching virtually at meadows. Dr. Matthews said that they were tuning their instruments virtually and she had them up on the screen. He mentioned that she was very excited about how it was working out.

Dr. Matthews reported that he had been in hybrid classrooms and saw teachers really working hard to ensure that students were having a really positive experience during the day, while they were with the teachers. He stated that they are well prepared to move forward with their at-home learning. Dr. Matthews said, are there things that we can continue to improve on? Yes, there certainly are. He stated, Are there things that we're trying to ensure that we find ways to make better? Yes there are, but overall our just our teachers have responded marvelously.

Dt. Matthews reported that our administrative team has worked tirelessly to ensure that things go well and so at this point in our district, we are having a positive experience with our students. He said over the next several weeks, we'll have discussions about what our next steps need to be and he looks forward to those discussions, but right now we're in a good spot.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, reported that some great news circulated out of Lansing, yesterday about the state aid school fund and it looks like we are not going to be subjected to a cut for 2021. He stated that in addition to that, we are going to get a one-time \$65 per student bump which equates to more than \$400,000 that will make up some of the lost income from rental revenue that we were supposed to get. Mr. McIntyre said that count day is Wednesday, October 7th, so shortly after that we will know where we are going to land with the student count. He mentioned that we are anticipating a small drop from where we were last year because we did lose St. Patrick's school, which factors into our account as well. Mr. McIntyre reminded the Board that we did get the 2.3 million dollars in Coronavirus relief fund money. He reported that the money came to us via state aide, but it is a grant so we will funnel as many expenses as we can to that grant to absorb all 2.3 million. Mr. McIntyre stated that the last thing the District picked up was the Safe Route to School Grant, which is a 1.2 million dollar infrastructure grant and about a \$56,000 soft cost grant. He said that there will be more information as we go along. Mr. McIntyre mentioned that our partners with the Safe Route to School consists of the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Fitness, the City of Novi, and H&M Engineers.

Dr. RJ Webber, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, expressed he gratitude to all the

teachers, the administrators, parents, and students. He reported that it has been a joy having everyone back and getting a sense over the past month of the joy people have in engaging in teaching and learning again.

Dr. Webber thanked our school resource officers for their help in a situation last week that he had to attend to. He stated that our two school resource officers, from the City of Novi Police Department, were beyond phenomenal in a very difficult situation. Dr. Webber said that it shows the power of building relationships and what community policing can do. He expressed his gratitude to our two resource officers, Julie Warren and John Zabick for going above and beyond in so many ways last week.

Dr. Webber shared a story with the community about two (2) bus drivers. He stated that these are the things he wished everyone could see. Dr. Webber reported that a bus driver was assisting a student with significant special needs. He said the student was very, very reticent to get into a restraint seat on the bus. Dr. Webber stated the deftness, the compassion, the love that this driver showed in helping this young man find another seat, so that the young man felt safe and did not have quite as much of the stuff that was bothering him, yet still remain restrained was beautiful. He said to see those stories, whether it's our bus drivers, our custodians, our school resource officers, food service, He wishes that everyone could see this.

Dr. Webber mentioned that we are really fortunate from a standpoint of Playworks is back in the district. He reported that he met with Coach Tyler today, at Deerfield. Dr. Webber stated that our Playworks coaches are working with K-5 students, who are virtual and hybrid. He said parents are really going to enjoy, from the K-4 level, seeing that Playworks is up close and personal in the virtual format.

Dr. Webber reported that if you have virtual science students, which about 52 percent of our students, through the incredible efforts of several people: Greg McIntyre, Emily Pohlonski, Bridget Zahradnik, science captains on every grade level, were packaging bags of materials for parents to pick up, so their students can use those at home to continue that work. He stated that he had a meeting with Mr. McIntyre and Emily Pohlonski this week and she made a good impression because she went from, what we thought was going to be, a \$77,000 up charge to a \$7,000 up charge. Dr. Webber said that to make this work we had to make a couple concessions, but we got it down. He mentioned that to be able to provide that level of service was phenomenal.

Dr. Webber reported that two other things, he sometimes can be guilty of seeing the stars and forgets that he does not have a rocket ship and people like Greg McIntyre have been a joy and a pleasure to work with. He stated a couple examples are the white boards that he had mentioned, every single student in the Novi Community School District is going to receive their own personal white board and their own marker with it. Dr. Webber said that this is important and let me show you why, so if you can imagine something the difference between being able to see something like this (written on the white board) is like night and day; your ability to see something is far different in this format. He mentioned that from a social justice and equity standpoint, this is a very low risk approach, where kids can quickly erase what they have on there and we can also get kids away from screens as they work with us our science teachers. Dr. Webber stated that this will be that is helpful for students both hybrid and virtual. He said that we were able to work with a company to produce these and actually the back of them will have the power cat logo on them. He mentioned that when Greg McIntyre talked about this notion and this idea was exceptionally helpful seeing the value in it and helping to negotiate a spectacular price point. Dr. Webber reported that he and his assistant, Miss Christine Diatkar, really helped to pull that together.

He stated tomorrow, we are going to be the very first district in the country that is actually going to offer a furniture loan program. Dr. Webber said that parents will receive a survey tomorrow and these surveys are that actual sign-up. He mentioned that Greg and he were thinking that we have got half of our district filled with furniture it's just sitting there, our taxpayers paid for it and we have families with three, four, five, six, bless your heart, seven kids and they have run out of kitchen table space, run out of couch space, so we are going to give parents the opportunity to be available to get chairs, tables, and hokey stools, which are wobble stools. Dr. Webber reported that this is just another value for being a Novi Community School District parent.

He stated that he was saving the best for last what happens if like a family cannot pick up the furniture that is where Greg McIntyre comes in. Dr. Webber said that Greg mentioned we are going to deliver it to them, so Greg had a fantastic idea as another value-add that we would actually be delivering that furniture to the household, so people do not have to come get it. He mentioned that is a true differentiator between our district and others and the reason for that is the school board that's managed our money very well and a community that has supported us in our bonds, and employees like Greg McIntyre who sees the possibility and opportunity in things.

Dr. Webber reported that some time ago, he distributed 650 copies of the book, *The Deepest Well*, to our staff and had to order another 150 copies. He stated that a hall monitor, at the middle school, stopped him the other day and say it was a phenomenal book and very helpful in his work with children. Dr. Webber said that he thought we were good and hoped that everyone was well and realizing that together we will not only come through this or get through this and be stronger as a community school district.

BOARD COMMUNICATION

Dr. Ruskin, Board President, reported that she heard loud and clear that this has really taken a toll on our staff and expressed her gratitude the cabinet's creativity. She stated that every day she gets to go on Twitter and see the tweet about the bus driver and it's almost palpable the compassion and real passion for what everyone's doing. Dr. Ruskin said she believe that all of the staff has always been passionate, but you know when things are going good for 5, 10, 20 years, people get into a groove and maybe they do not express that, but it is really wonderful. She mentioned that you can feel it when you see what these staff members and what all of you are doing. Dr. Ruskin expressed her appreciation for that and the creativity is great.

She reported that the Ziploc bags of the science projects or science materials is just amazing and to see how everyone in the district has really just taken the challenge and thought outside the box and found ways to say we can do this. She stated that our thought process is that we just have to think of a way and not yeah we cannot do that that is not going to work, we are going to have to just let that go, and maybe not do that science this year, so she said she thought it was really wonderful.

Dr. Ruskin expressed her appreciation for every member of the community here who works hard every day, whether they are a paraprofessional, a bus driver, superintendent, secretary, or teacher it is really amazing to watch and be proud to be a part of the community.

Mrs. Bobbie Murphy, Board Trustee, expressed a real quick thank you to RJ for that lead in to the Novi Mental Health Alliance, which has not been meeting since COVID struck. She reported that the parents, Empowering Parents Subcommittee of that group was all set to start training. Mrs. Murphy stated the goal is to have some training for parents who maybe have walked through something difficult with their child who is equipped to walk alongside another parent that might be experiencing something similar with their own child. She said they had decided to do an outdoor training on October 5th, at Rotary Park,

at 6:30 PM. Mrs. Murphy mentioned that they are trying to get the word out about that meeting and the Novi Mental Health Alliance and they are hoping that a lot of the people will come to the initial thing. She reported they are going to be setting up a brief introduction and a kind of what we do, then we are going to have videos for parents to watch as part of their training that they can do on their own. Mrs. Murphy stated it will not be a real long meeting, but it will give parents some idea about what they're getting themselves into if they decide to go ahead and pursue the training. She said that there is a registration and she is available for that. Mrs. Murphy mentioned that information will be going out to everyone and some of the flyers.

Mr. Smith, Board Vice-President, reported that some of you may have noticed signs around the different schools welcoming back the superheroes. He stated that the folks who put those signs up are concerned that they might start to look a little funky now, with all the weather. Mr. Smith said that they are encouraging any teachers that want to take home a sign to put their yard or if any of our school board members want to take a couple of signs and put them someplace where they think it would be appropriate that would be welcomed by those that placed the signs.

Mr. Smith expressed his gratitude to Dr. Kinzer, who is not here, and to Dr. Matthews for his leadership, and to RJ for his passion and energy, and to Mr. Greg McIntyre for his work so far, although he had not been with us for a long time. He mentioned that he wanted to circle back with Dr. Kinzer to talk about the hiring process for the last teacher round, where we had one of 19 teachers that were hired, that were of a minority class. Mr. Smith reported that he wants to continue to work with Dr. Kinzer and see what we can come up with, as a district, to encourage different applicants of a more diverse group to apply for the positions within our district.

Mr. Cook, Board Trustee, expressed his gratitude to Mr. McIntyre for keeping RJ under control. He reported that it is not an easy task. Mr. Cook stated that Evol has been passing out lunches for people and that he had an opportunity to drive by the high school at both times today when they were doing their pickup. He said the line was out onto Taft Road both times and that wait times were as much as 20 minutes and or more, but she and her girls are passing out meals. Mr. Cook mentioned that they are doing the yeoman's job of just getting back and forth and getting it packaged up to and out, so to Evol and her crew major props from a lot of people right now.

Mr. Mena, Board Secretary, reported that we had an exciting week at Novi High School this week. He stated that we had our inaugural rate cross country race, right on the high school property. Mr. Mena said, as many of you know when our cross country teams raced on their home turf. He mentioned that it has been over in Hinds Park Cass Benton and when you get out there on a Tuesday night you are competing against a lot of other schools because a lot of schools race at that same location. Mr. Mena reported that we partnered with the city and the cross-country coaches went ahead and created a trail on our property and on some of the city property. He stated that we had our inaugural race against the girls against Salem and the boys against Canton on Tuesday night. Mr. Mena said that it was just a really great event and to actually finally have our own cross-country trail on high school property is a real luxury. Mr. Mena reported that he is looking forward to seeing how they update that course and how they make it better over time, but it was just really cool thing to see.

He stated that he is also excited that finally football will be starting tomorrow. Mr. Mena said our first game of the season will be tomorrow, a home game.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Murphy that the Regular Board meeting be adjourned.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for October 1, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., virtually via Zoom.

Willy Mena, Secretary

An online recording of this meeting is available on YouTube and on the District Website: novi.k12.mi.us/