



**Minutes of Regular Meeting, October 1, 2020  
Novi Community School District  
Board of Education**

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A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Novi Community School District was held on Thursday, October 1, 2020, beginning at 7:02 PM in the Educational Services Building virtually via Zoom.

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

Absent:

**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. Smith 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**

**REPORT TO THE BOARD**

**Return to School Planning: Novi High School and Middle School Scheduling**

On March 12, 2020, Governor Whitmer temporarily suspended K-12 instruction and encouraged schools to provide the best alternative means of instruction.

On April 1, 2020, the Governor closed schools for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year and required schools to develop a Continuity of Learning Plan.

On June 30, 2020, Governor Whitmer published her Return to School Roadmap to guide schools as they prepared for fall 2020 return to school.

On July 7, 2020, the Novi Community School District published its ROAR (Responsive Organizational and Academic Return) Plan. This plan was in response to the requirements of Executive Order 142.

On July 16 and July 30, the Novi Community School District Board of Education discussed Return to School planning and preparation.

On August 6, 2020, the Board approved a Return to School recommendation. The recommendation stated:

*That the Novi community School District Board of Education approve the following options for our fall 2020 return to school:*

- *In-person: A hybrid blend of in-person and virtual instruction with strict adherence to clear safety protocols. The board directs the administration in concert with the teachers to identify the best possible hybrid option.*
- *Virtual online instruction: An online, virtual learning program for students*
- *The Board of Education commits to these options through November 6, 2020.*

After the August 6 vote, parents were sent a commitment form for the start of the school year. The form asked parents to commit to either the hybrid or the virtual format. In the Frequently Asked Question, it was stated that parents would be given an option to change after November 6.

After commitments were made, our administrative staff spent hours planning and preparing for the upcoming school year. Schedules were created trying to balance hybrid and virtual class loads, class requests at the middle and high school, and the needs of students and staff.

School started on September 8. Approximately 55% of parents chose the virtual option and 45% of parents chose the hybrid option.

On August 20, 2020, Public Act 149 was signed into law that required an Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan. The Novi Community School District Board of Education approved the extended learning plan on September 24, 2020.

During the first month of school, the Novi Community School District administrative team has been thinking through and thinking about what our plan could and should be for November 6, 2020. As mentioned, the FAQs stated that parents would be given an option to change.

At this point, the administrative team does not believe that it is feasible to create an option to change on November 6. We understand that this changes the message that we shared with parents in August. Part of our presentation addresses the difficulties that would be created if we allowed changes in November.

We do think that it would be possible to change structures and give parents choices at the end of first semester.

However, two alternatives to our current schedule do exist. One would be to bring back hybrid students K-6 for four days of instruction and leave our 7-12 structure in its current format.

The second alternative would be to bring back all hybrid students.

In either option, we would sacrifice social distancing. We would work to create as much distance as possible, but with 20+ students and a teacher in a 900-foot classroom, 6 feet of separation between students is not possible.

Tonight, Andy Comb, Assistant Principal at Novi Middle School and on special assignment with the Office of Academics, will present a summary of conversations with building administrators on shifting school modes and some logistical considerations.

After the presentation we will have time for discussion.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

Fifty-one (51) people commented on the return to school plan. Two (2) people commented on diversity in hiring.

Mrs. Murphy was excused from the meeting at 9:00 PM.

#### 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 24, 2020

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

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, 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>
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#### B. Retirements and Resignations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Cohen, Suzanne	Adult Ed	Adult Ed Teacher	Retirement	06-30-20
Janke, Janice	TRAN	Bus Driver	Retirement	09-30-20

#### C. Leaves of Absence

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
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It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mr. Mena that the Novi Board of Education adopts the personnel report recommendations as presented.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and  
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

### School Nurse

During budget conversations pre-COVID, the administration was planning to propose to the board that we move our school nurse from a third party contract to a district employee. However, with the budget projections in the spring it was decided to postpone this recommendation. However, through a combination of CARES Act and county money, we have the ability to make the school nurse a permanent fulltime district employee.

Our recommendation is that we make Cathy Farris our fulltime district nurse. Mrs. Farris was hired part time in November 2010 to provide school nurse services for our district. In December of 2010, Ms. Farris' employment was converted to a third party contract at an hourly rate.

Ms. Farris is a licensed registered nurse with 24 years of Pediatric ICU experience at both Children's Hospital of Michigan and Mott Children's Hospital, in Ann Arbor, in the Neonatal unit, 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.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the district will use CARES Act and Oakland County resources to fund this position. As we move beyond this year, the cost for the school nurse will be included in the regular budget.

This came before the Board at the September 24, 2020 meeting for information and discussion. It comes back before Board approval tonight.

It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Community School District Board of Education approve Cathy Farris as the fulltime school nurse.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and  
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom) (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

There were no items for information and discussion this evening.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Capital Projects Committee

Mr. Mena, Board Secretary and Chair of the Capital Projects Committee, reported the committee met this week and discussed the updates and some happenings at the high school, the middles school, Village Oaks, and Orchard Hills. He stated that they had some great discussion on the updated plans for Novi Meadows fifth and sixth grade house. Mr. Mena said that there would be a presentation coming to the Board regarding the progress and the layout and designs of the beautiful building that will be fronting Taft Road. He mentioned that there will be a full official report to the Board probably in November.

### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no further comments from the audience this evening.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steve Matthews, Superintendent of Schools, had no report this evening.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, had no report this evening.

Dr. Gary Kinzer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported that they are just about through the process of assigning mentors for our tier one (1) and tier two (2) mentees. He stated that they have scheduled the first Mentee Monday for October 12, 2020 and it will be virtual. Dr. Kinzer said that it will be a replacement for the teacher orientation that we were unable to hold in August and the agenda would be amended accordingly.

He mentioned that he was unable to participate in the conversation last week regarding Mrs. Farris. He congratulated the Board on their excellent decision. Dr. Kinzer reported that he had the opportunity to work with Mrs. Farris for the last three (3) years and that she is truly exceptional. He stated that we need her more now than ever and is pleased with the decision. Dr. Kinzer expressed his gratitude to the Board.

Dr. RJ Webber, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, expressed a simple gratitude to the teachers, bus drivers, the administrators, the custodians, the assistants, the parents, and the students who

have shown grace in a very difficult time; who weathered the past six (6) months and rose above the name calling and instead have shown grace and understanding. He stated that we are all in this together.

### BOARD COMMUNICATION

Mr. Smith, Board Vice-President, expressed his gratitude to Dr. Ruskin and Mr. Mena for being on the Capital Project committee. He reported that he heard from the Director of the Novi Educational Foundation, who shared an office with Cathy Farris for a number of years. Mr. Smith stated that with her new position with the District, she will be requesting her own private office.

He said that he spoke with two (2) other community members who were responsible for the wonderful signs that we have seen around the District, welcoming back our super heroes. Mr. Smith encouraged everyone to feel comfortable removing them and place them in the front yard of one of our teachers or administrators, drivers, maintenance, and everyone on staff. He mentioned that there are about 108 signs, and that he would appreciate our help in redistributing the signs into those yards.

Mrs. Roney, Board Trustee, reported that she attended the Oakland Schools DEI committee. She stated that this is going to be a two (2) year process for us and that they gave them a real nice Equity Toolkit, which has a lot of great ideas.

Mrs. Roney said they opened the session up for questions they learned that everyone is struggling to hire teachers of color and different ethnicities. She mentioned that she know Dr. Kinzer is trying and it is a struggle. Mrs. Roney stated that if everyone could just be patient and hopefully we will get more diversified teachers. She reported that Farmington shared they are working with Great Lakes Equity Center, out of the University of Indiana, and US2 consulting firm, who is auditing their curriculum to see if they are offering a big enough diverse curriculum.

Dr. Ruskin, Board President, reported that the DEI committee is an interesting group of really knowledgeable people who are working through this. She stated that they would be beginning their conversation and pulling out some best practices for this group to investigate. Dr. Ruskin said there would be further discussion on how they can utilize some of these opportunities here in Novi.

### ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Cook that the Regular Board meeting be adjourned to a closed session for the purposes of negotiations.

Ayes: 6      Dr. Ruskin (in person), Mr. Smith, Mrs. Mr. Mena, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and  
Mrs. Roney (via Zoom)      (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for October 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m..

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Willy Mena, Secretary

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