



**Minutes of Regular Meeting, November 5, 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, November 5, 2020, beginning at 7:02 PM in the Novi Middle School, Auditorium.

Present: Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Roney
(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 Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments from the audience.

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 October 15, 2020

B. Approval of Bills

- a. Board Report
- b. Check Register for September 2020
- c. Purchase Card Report from August 1, 2020 through August 31, 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, Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

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>
Brasil, Sandra	ESB	Exec. Asst.-Business Office	Position Chg.		11-09-20

B. Retirements and Resignations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Diatikar, Christine	ESB	Exec. Asst.-Business Office	Resigned	TBD
Gleesing, Donald	Maint.	Semi-skilled Maint. Worker	Retired	11-25-20

A. 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: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Middle Cities Resolution

The Novi Community School District has been a member of the Middle Cities Risk Management Trust since 1993. This Trust provides property, general liability, auto liability, and errors and omissions insurance for the District.

There are 32 member school districts and other entities in this Trust and each member has a designated Trustee, Alternate Trustee and Risk Management Coordinator. With the departure of Jill Minnick who was Novi’s designated Trustee, the District is required to appoint new individuals to fill these roles.

The proposed Resolution was submitted to the Board of Education for information and discussion, and comes back for approval tonight.

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Cook that the Novi Board of Education approve the appointment of Gregory McIntyre and Deanna Wheeler as trustee and alternate trustee to the Middle Cities Risk Management Trust.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays:

MOTION CARRIED

Bargaining Unit Contracts

A tentative agreement has been reached with the Novi Education Association (NEA), Novi Transportation Association (NTA), and the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE). The administration recommends the contract agreements be approved.

It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education approve the tentative agreements reached with the Novi Education Association (NEA), Novi Transportation Association (NTA), and the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE).

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays:

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Mrs. Hood, Board Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on the committee meeting that took place on October 19, 2020.

Capital Projects Committee

Mr. Mena, Board Secretary and Chair of the Capital Projects Committee, reported on the committee meeting that took place on October 28, 2020.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Hollman commented on five (5) days of school.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steve Matthews, Superintendent of Schools, reminded the Board that there was a closed session this evening for the purpose of a possible purchase or lease of a property. He reported that today is November 5th and is the ninth week of school. Dr. Matthews stated that when we started on September 8th, we were unsure what the year would bring, but was confident that our staff, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, food service workers, secretaries, tech staff, and child care staff would find ways to connect with our students and continue providing a high quality educational experience for our students. He said that he was not disappointed.

Dr. Matthews mentioned that there have been missteps, mistakes, and struggles along the way, but our staff has been wonderful. He reported that they have been tested, but have found ways to make connections and have learned new skills, tried new experiences for both themselves and their students. Dr. Matthews stated that we continue to make progress on providing a high quality experience. He asked, can we do better? Certainly, but he is proud of our staff. Dr. Matthews said that he has seen them teach and heard their stories and this unpredictable and unusual year continues. He mentioned that we continue to teach and the students continue to learn.

Dr. Matthews reported that on November 19, we will again discuss our Return to School Plan that we are required by law to bring to the Board, and ask the Board to help us think through and think about where we should head.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, reported that the business office is revising the 2021 budget. He stated that they will be presenting it to the Board at a December Board Meeting.

Dr. RJ Webber, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, said that one of his favorite quotes is "you do not have to be sick to get better," author, Michael Josephson. He reported that after the last Board meeting, he got the impression from many of our teachers and administrators that what they are doing was failing the hybrid model. Dr. Webber contended that having the pleasure of being six buildings, in their classrooms and seeing them that it is quite far from the truth.

Dr. Webber complimented and expressed his gratitude to the Novi Community Coalition for providing 650 copies of *The Deepest Well*, which was read by the Novi Mental Health Alliance. He stated that there was a three-part book study on this book, which is about childhood trauma and how do we attend to it. Dr. Webber said that in light of what I going on in the pandemic, it is critically important.

He performed a show and tell with a couple of the fifth grade science kits to give parents an idea of what

our hybrid and virtual students are getting. Dr. Webber reported that these kits help the students to have a better understanding of science and a hands on experience. He stated that from a K-12 educational standpoint, our students have that opportunity. Dr. Webber said that he checked his Twitter handle and observed a fifth grade classroom where students were making predictions on what was going to happen. He thanked the Board for the commitment six years ago that made this funding possible. Dr. Webber reported that our K-12 science program is on of the very best in the state.

He thanked and complimented the Board on the decision that was made on August 6, to have the two (2) modalities launched. Dr. Webber expressed his appreciation to Dr. Matthews for being the COVID data “hound” that played hugely on what our District is doing.

BOARD COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Murphy, Board Trustee, piggybacked on what Dr. Webber mentioned around *The Deepest Well*, book discussion. She stated that it was a huge testament to the diversity of staff who were interested. Mrs. Murphy reported that we had a bus driver who participated and wanted to better understand how to help students. She stated that this was a fantastic group of people who participated. Mrs. Murphy expressed her gratitude to the coalition for the books and to Dr. Webber.

Mrs. Hood, Board Treasurer, reported that last night she attended the Oakland Schools Government Relations Committee meeting. She stated that she is the Board liaison to that committee. Mrs. Hood said there were a couple of things on the agenda; the elections results, finalizing Ellen Lipton as the new member of the State Board of Education. She mentioned that Ms. Lipton was a former House member from Huntington Woods and is a public education ally and advocate, which is good for all kids in Michigan. Mrs. Hood reported that Kelly Breen has replaced Kathy Crawford as the new Michigan House Representative. She stated that Ms. Breen has been on the Novi City Council for the past few years. Mrs. Hood said that there was a lot of turnover in some districts for Board members. She congratulated the three (3), Mr. Cook, Dr. Ruskin, and Mr. Mena, who were re-elected.

Mrs. Hood mentioned that they had a long discussion on COVID and schools that decided to come back full time. She reported that they are now coming back virtual and/or hybrid. Mrs. Hood reported that there are several, based on the newest Michigan cases being up, that are delaying this. These districts (Berkley, Walled Lake) are receiving more comments from their parents who are very concerned about their kids being in any school. She stated that these conversations are taking place all over Oakland County.

Mr. Mena, Board Secretary, reported that tomorrow morning he was heading out to watch our cross country runner compete in states. He stated that this should be pretty exciting. Mr. Mena said that the KLAA West Conference is the best division in the entire State of Michigan and is a very competitive division. He mentioned that the big football game is tomorrow against Detroit Catholic Central. Mr. Mena reported that we have played them five (5) or six (6) times and have not fared well, but our time is coming.

He piggybacked on what Dr. Webber mentioned and wanted to be clear that the folks he has spoken with do not feel our teachers are failing. Mr. Mena stated that they are just concerned about the implementation of the hybrid model. He said that he knows our administration has promised to make some improvement in hybrid. Mr. Mena mentioned that he would take some time between this meeting and the next to talk to some stakeholders and get a feeling of how things are really going. He reported that the comments came from the teachers themselves, so he would be talking to some teachers. Mr. Mena stated that if he finds it worthwhile, he will share his findings.

Mr. Cook, Board Trustee, said to follow what Mr. Mena said regarding the return to school plan, the Board will be voting next week and the tutoring, some common activities for K-6, one of the things he asked for was making sure we are driving those combo classes down to option one. He stated that he would like to see how that is going. Mr. Cook reported that his company is partnering with Sylvan Learning Centers for parents to get tutors with free drop in, at certain times. He asked how our tutoring, that we started, was going. Mr. Cook stated that the work needs to get out. He said that it is not that the teachers are not doing their job, it is the kids need to be engaged when they are at home and it falls on the parents. Mr. Cook mentioned those are the areas he was hoping to see some improvement.

Mrs. Roney, Board Trustee, congratulated a Novi Cross Country runner, Elizabeth Babcock for being named the Heisman High School Scholarship winner for the state of Michigan. She also gave big kudos to our teachers, who have been working hard. Mrs. Roney reported that we are working hard to find a solution that makes parents and staff happy. She stated just give us some time.

Dr. Ruskin, Board President, reported that Volleyball District finals were tonight and they won, so they are off to regionals. She stated there is a big football game tomorrow and it would be very exciting to have our guys move on from Brighton. Mr. Smith said that every day our kids get to participate in athletics or extracurricular, based on what we see happening throughout the county and as things progress, people are pulling the plug on these kids. She mentioned that every morning she is excited when she sees that they can continue to do these things in a safe manner, so good luck teams that are still playing in the playoffs, representing Novi. Dr. Ruskin reported that is what it is all about, having our kids engaged with education being the priority, but having socialization. She stated that we are holding steady and there is always work to be done.

CLOSED SESSION

A public body may meet in a closed session only for one or more purposes as specified in the Open Meetings Act. Tonight the Board will move into a closed session to consider the purchase or lease of real property.

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mrs. Hood that the Novi Community Schools Board of Education move into a Closed Session to consider the purchase or lease of real property.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays:

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Roney and supported by Mrs. Murphy that the Novi Board of Education Regular Board meeting be adjourned

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays:

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for November 19, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Willy Mena, Secretary

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