



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
ANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
15475 LEROY-SOUTHGATE, MI-48195**

**BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY O. ESTHEIMER

DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2020

VICE PRESIDENT

ANDREW A. GREEN

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

SECRETARY

DR. DARLENE L. POMPONIO

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Pastor, Baker-Herring, Wilson

TREASURER

RICK LAMOS

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

TRUSTEES

JASON CRAIG
NEIL J. FREITAS
SHAWN SAGE

REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2020/21-55 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio the board add Action Item 5- Approval of the contract between the Southgate Community School District and Labor Support Staff, Teamsters Local 214; Action Item 6-Approval of the contract between Southgate Community School District and Teamsters Local 214-Southgate Paraprofessionals; Action Item 7-Approval of the contract between the Southgate Community School District and Southgate Alternative Education Association MEA/NEA and approve the November 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting agenda, supported by Mr. Craig,

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

ADMINISTRATION

SUPERINTENDENT

JILL M. PASTOR

2020/21-56 It was moved by Mr. Green to add Action Item #8-Having remote board meetings to the November 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting agenda, supported by Mr. Craig.

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

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

DIRECTOR

BARBARA WILSON, CFO

CURRICULUM/FEDERAL

PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

DR. MICHELLE BAKER-HERRING

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mr. Eric Reiss-My name is Eric Reiss and I am a father of two students and a husband of a staff member in Southgate Community Schools. I am here today to again ask the board to strongly reconsider the amended motion set forth at the October 13, 2020 School Board Meeting and continue with only remote learning at Southgate Schools. A lot has changed in the last month, Covid 19 cases are at the highest levels we have seen throughout the entire pandemic. The Wayne County risk assessment for Southgate is an E, which is the highest risk for our community. In the past few weeks we have already seen schools in the downriver community not only have a spike

in cases in students and staff but have also decided to go back to remote learning after just a few weeks. As parents, my wife and I have chosen to stay remote for our children for a number of reasons even though one of my children has an IEP and would really benefit from face to face learning. The very best way to help our community is to limit close contact and one of the easiest ways to do that is remote learning. I can tell you remote learning has not been easy in my home it is a struggle every day but there are also positives to remote learning. My children are not stuck confined to a desk wearing a mask all day long, their teachers have been readily available for all issues that arise with their learning, and most important to me they are safe. I know the decisions that you face are not easy and affect numerous lives and I appreciate all of your hard work but having said that your decisions should be data driven now and in the future when it comes to face to face learning. The data is showing that it is a huge risk allowing children and staff back in school. I feel we should continue remote learning until the data shows us that it is safe to go back to face to face learning.

I would also like to comment on what occurred at the end of the Special School Board Meeting held on Nov. 4, 2020. I think it is very important, even when issues are not popular, to be transparent with information to citizens in the community that you have been elected. I would like to thank President Estheimer for trying to inform the citizens in our community of possible discussions and upcoming agenda items for the November 10, 2020 meeting. I was taken aback that while the School Board President was addressing the citizens of this community another member of the school board was repeatedly requesting for adjournment. In my humble opinion, this was done for a couple of reasons. The first reason was to make sure that that discussion as it pertains to Covid 19 and our learning model would not end up in the meeting minutes. The second reason in my opinion is to suppress community involvement at the Nov. 10, 2020 School Board Meeting. We are in tough times and I firmly believe that any information that the Board can provide will only help us in the future. Thank you for your time.

Shannon Swauger-I am Shannon Swauger; I have been a proud Southgate teacher for twenty years and a Titan Parent for six years. As always, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this evening on my concern about returning to any type of in-person learning.

While I appreciate how the parents/guardians in the community have been polled by numerous surveys since August on the mode of instruction we would like for our children, I strongly urge that any type of decisions based on subjectivity be removed at this point as we continue to deal with a common enemy, Covid-19. The infection rate of Covid-19 has skyrocketed faster in the last several weeks than ever before, with the numbers continuing to trend exponentially and shatter daily records, including over 6,400 new cases today. With this data, how can one justify in any regard sending students and staff back to in-person learning?

Now, more than ever, any determinations about in-person learning of any nature need to be founded on metrics, Science, and Math. Our current 7-day positivity rate of this virus is nearly 11%, more than double the 5% metric that most area schools are utilizing to determine the ability to conduct in-person learning safely. When reviewing the modes of instruction in our district's Return to Learn Plan, I implore you to include a parallel metric. Doing so will ensure consistent and transparent determinations will be made regarding this Public Health Crisis, and that data from medical and science professionals are utilized, rather than opinions. It is clear that the lack of ability to conduct effective contact tracing in certain settings has resulted in the under-reporting of outbreaks in our local area schools that have been playing that game of yo-yo in opening schools, closing again, or having masses of students and staff required to quarantine.

My three children all attend Fordline elementary school; my oldest son also receives specialized services in Resource Room, Paraprofessional Support, Speech, Social Work, and Occupational Therapy.

It is crucial that you understand me when I say that every teacher, every Support Staff person, as well as administration, has been working tirelessly to provide effective academic and social emotional learning support to my children in a remote setting, and it is working. Is it ideal? Of course not; but, nothing about Covid-19 is ideal. Teacher's and support staff have had to re-learn how to do their jobs effectively, usually overnight, as the reality is that nothing about their jobs is the same, nor will it in the foreseeable future. Remote learning is the new normal, and staff are perfecting their craft each time they log in with their students. I am sure in your conversations with Mrs. Pastor she has probably asked the question, "What is best for students?", as I know firsthand this is what frames most of her decisions. It is a strong belief as an educator, and as a mom, that keeping consistency and familiarity for students is what is best. We all need the gift of time to allow further advancements to take place to overcome Covid-19. Yes, time is of the essence, and it has been a long, hard year, but we are not through it yet, not even close. Thank you for your time.

April Schuck-Tonight, you make a big decision to hire the person who is going to become the next superintendent of Southgate Schools. As a teacher, who I'm in my 16th year of teaching, I have worked under 6 different superintendents, which averages out to about 2 2/3 years each. And in the last 16 years we have gone from a thriving district, to a 4 million dollar in deficit district, and now having an over 3-million-dollar fund balance.

Choosing who is going to become the next superintendent is not a task that any of you are taking lightly, but tonight I come to you to urge you to appoint Jason Martin. Jason has been here for his entire career, he has been a part of the highs, the lows, and is the right person to lead us into the future of our district. As I heard him say in his first interview, he has been here in Southgate for 25 years, what an amazing career that is, in itself; who in their right mind, after 25 years would want to take on this position, in this crazy time? Jason Martin, that's who. He's been a teacher, currently an admin, he's the only candidate who has not worked in any other district. He's a Titan through and through, and I can't think of a better person to lead our district than him.

Jason is going to put the kids, staff, parents and community as his focus. But what's even better, he doesn't have to get to know us, learn our history, find out what is working and what needs to be improved upon. He already know us, he's one of us, he's our district vision statement. Jason Martin is the best choice for students and parents and I'm even going to include staff. Thank you for your time.

PRESENTATIONS

None

CONSENT

2020/21-57 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos the board approve the minutes from October 27, 2020 Regular Board Meeting, November 4, 2020 Special Meeting, HR Update and Disbursements for October 2020.

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

NO:

ACTION

1. Appoint Superintendent:

2020/21-58 Dr. Pomponio made a motion to appoint Jason Martin, as Superintendent of the Southgate Community School District, effective January 1, 2021, subject to the approval of a mutually acceptable Employment Agreement, with such agreement being contingent upon, and subject to, the approval of the Board of Education, supported by Mr. Sage.

Discussion took place:

Dr. Pomponio- I have over 14 years of hiring experience in higher upper level management positions and as a business owner for over 15 years. I have been a management consultant working with large organizations including Ford Motor Company configuring re-organizations and strategic plans for restructuring or just organization within a business. There is collaboration and review of staff and functional departments that is done to increase productivity, efficiency, moral, and to strengthen the organizations culture.

I have 12 years of board education and experience with the Wayne County and State organizations for school board education. This includes: Achieving all of the available awards including the highest president's award. I have been a member of the resolution and bylaw committee, government committee, and continue to take classes and workshops relating to my role as a board member. I was voted by my peers in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb county school boards to be a director for the Michigan association of school boards. I also am an officer on the Wayne County association of school boards, where we meet with local board members to hear speakers and discuss topics on current board issues and legislation relating to public education.

I have been deep rooted in the education system and have had the opportunity to collaborate with other board members throughout Michigan.

I have nearly 12 years of school board experience working with 5 superintendents, staff, teachers, parents, and students. I have worked with many administrators and teachers in numerous committees. I have witnessed first-hand the lack of leadership, direction, and commitment to the community from one superintendent that had caused a negative impact on the district for several years after.

With all of this experience, history, and insight on what a good candidate looks like, I had completed due diligence as I researched the candidates that applied to work in our district. It is not like hiring someone for my business, or a large organization, or even to work in any given position of authority. Hiring a public school district superintendent is one of the most important jobs of a school board member. You must consider many factors including: Experience, character, approachability, and willingness to work with all of the stakeholders including parents and students. At the same time, how well will the teachers and staff work with the candidate. After my review, I was upfront and stated that I did not want this candidate to continue to the next step to be interviewed.

There was a lot more negative feedback than I had expected after the first interview. I do not feel that the negativity would benefit our district at this time.

Within the two candidates, I can say many positive things about the second candidate.

- They are invested in our district with 27 years of service.
- I have worked with him on many committees spanning over 11 years.
- Our current teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students have shared many positive experiences and support him in the potential position as Superintendent.
- He is ambitious about Southgate and making it a better place.

Most importantly, we need someone familiar with our district and community as we are experiencing some of the most challenging times in the history of public education. It is not just one area of expertise that will push us forward but a combination of necessary elements so we can get through the challenges we have yet to see.

With the overall community and district in mind, the many positive qualities of Mr. Martin far outweigh the business decision and much negative baggage with the second candidate. I cannot be swayed with a wink or charismatic conversation or response to a question. It is more meaningful to me as I think about the impact to our district.

Mr. Sage-Dr. Pomponio summed it up. The board does not take this lightly, we are here for the kids. The passion Mr. Martin has for the district makes him the best choice for the district.

Mr. Green-Agreed with Dr. Pomponio and Mr. Sage and followed up by stating at first he wasn't sure about an internal candidate. He dug deeper into both candidates and had strong concerns. It comes down to believing that both have the credentials, but comes back to what is best for the district, not just what is on paper. We are moving in the right direction, put there by Jill Pastor. We don't want to change course now. He questioned the number of districts Ms. Irvine has applied to be the superintendent. He commented that Mr. Martin's answer to problem solving involving a rubric and his ability as a fast learner makes him a better fit. We are swimming in the right direction and doesn't want to gamble on changing directions now. He shared a comment he had heard from an assistant superintendent, that when faced with the decision; more community or more experience? -more community wins out. In the past we have selected candidates who were internal and building administrators, with great success. Surrounding districts have done the same and are doing quite well. He supports Mr. Martin.

Mr. Lamos-Respects the opinions of his fellow board members and respects both candidates. To be objective he used a rubric that included; overall knowledge, good understanding of finance, KPI's (key performance indicators), effective management performance and believes Ms. Irvine is the better candidate.

Mr. Freitas-Has three kids in the district, knows Mr. Martin has done a great job. The pressing issue that faces the district will be budgetary, and he does not feel Mr. Martin has those skills. This is a big jump, like an assistant high school football coach going to a head coach position at a Division 1 school. Mr. Martin's enthusiasm is second to none, but we need someone with the skills, right now. We need to go with someone that has the knowledge base moving forward. He will support Ms. Irvine.

Mr. Craig-Echoes Mr. Lamos and Mr. Freitas' words, he has respect for Mr. Martin but feels Ms. Irvine is more experienced. We need someone with Central Office experience. He also believes a succession plan needs to be in place sooner.

Mr. Green-Emphasized that Trenton and Allen Park schools both hired principals with no experience and both districts are doing very well.

Mr. Estheimer-Has wrestled with this decision. His rubric did not have enough checked off for Mr. Martin. He will be supporting Ms. Irvine.

YES: Green, Pomponio, Sage
NO: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Lamos
Motion fails.

2020/2021-59 Mr. Lamos made a motion to appoint Sharon Irvine, as Superintendent of Southgate Community School District, effective January 1, 2021, subject to the approval of a mutually acceptable Employment Agreement, with such agreement being contingent upon, and subject to, the approval of the Board of Education, supported by Mr. Craig.

YES: Craig, Estheimer, Freitas, Lamos
NO:
Motion passes.

2. Approval of Mode of Instruction: Senate Bill 0927 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 will vote to satisfy this requirement.

2020/21-60 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board approve the Southgate Community School Mode of Instruction to be; fully remote through Friday, January 22, 2021. (End of the first semester.)

Discussion took place:

Mr. Green-Our report card is an F, with more cases for people in district. This is a crazy time for teachers. We are close to the Thanksgiving break, then Christmas right after that, staying remote is safe for students. With Wayne County Health Department data, this is the safest route. We all would rather be in front of students. Each district is making the best decision they can for their districts based on information and recommendation from the County. Area schools that were open are now closing due to increased cases.

Dr. Pomponio- It was a difficult decision to make before the September start of school. The state set forth guidelines and direction for school districts and the board had to determine what would be the safest option for students and staff. There are too many unknowns about COVID-19. But what we do know is that each person that has contracted the virus, the result was diverse. If you can imagine your response to the virus as a critical one, or life threatening one, where you are unable to breathe or fear the next hours or days ahead. The fear is real, the deaths are real. Just ask their families. We didn't ask for the inconvenience, we don't want to see people struggle financially or physically. While we cannot control the challenge we have before us, we can control the safety and precautions to ensure that most will be protected rather than put anyone in harm's way without a true understanding of the consequences.

We are not the only school district fighting this safety, economic, and education battle. People are ready to get back to their normal routines unfortunately, COVID-19 is giving us a challenge that we have to respond to.

As the state requires us to report our learning method each month, I am in support of stability and safety for the rest of the school year. I recommend and support our district learning online for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Lamos-From a continuity standpoint, it would be silly to not go the extra weeks remotely until we get through the holidays.

Mr. Estheimer- Asked Dr. Pomponio to restate the motion in its entirety.

2020/21-60 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board approve the Southgate Community School Mode of Instruction to be; fully remote through Friday, January 22, 2021. (End of the first semester.) AND ask the Continuity of Learning Team (COLT) to come with a metric to help determine our mode of instruction for future decisions and present this metric on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

Mr. Freitas-My own children are split on the type of learning, one wants remote the other in-person. There will be too much change if we open and then close again, it's too much yo-yoing. We are only talking about 15 days of in-person before the Christmas break. I am in support of online until January 22, 2021.

Mr. Sage-We want kids back in school. I struggle every day with health and safety concerns at work. With the current data it doesn't seem feasible. I agree with staying fully remote for safety and consistency for kids and staff.

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

3. Approval of Convection Ovens: Ms. Pastor explained, as per board policy #5003, all items that exceed \$3,500 must be brought to the Board for approval. This recommendation is coming from Mark Rodriguez, Food Service Director. This is for the replacement of two convection ovens for the middle and high school. In the past two years we have paid \$4,991.43 in repairs for the oven at Anderson. This quote was provided by the CoPro via Wayne RESA. The vendor is Stafford Smith. Using CoPro satisfies our three-quote requirement. The funds for this equipment will be from the food service budget. Discussion took place regarding the last time an oven was purchased.

2020/21-61 I was moved by Mr. Green supported by Mr. Craig, the board approve the purchase of the convection ovens as presented for Davidson Middle School and Southgate Anderson High School, not to exceed \$15,134.00.

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

4. Approval of the Food Service Equipment for Beacon Day Treatment: Ms. Pastor explained, as per board policy #5003 all items that exceed \$3,500 must be brought to the Board for approval. Food Service Equipment was listed in our 2020 bond application for Beacon Day-Gerisch. The budget in the bond application was \$20,000. This equipment includes a milk cooler, reach-in freezer, heated cabinet, convection oven, cash register stand, and plastic shelving units. This quote was provided by the CoPro via Wayne RESA. The vendor is Stafford Smith. Using CoPro satisfies our three-quote requirement.

2020/21-62 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Green, the board approve the purchase of the food service equipment as presented for Beacon Day-Gerisch, not to exceed \$19,980.00.

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

5. Approval of the contract between the Southgate Community School District and Labor Support Staff Teamsters Local 214: Ms. Pastor explained the board is being asked to approve a one-year contract agreement for the Labor Support Staff Teamster Local 214 (Food Service) as reviewed during closed session. This contract would expire on August 31, 2021.

2020/21-63 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Craig, the board approve the one-year agreement between the Southgate Community School District and Labor Support Staff Teamsters Local 214 (Food Service).

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

6. Approval of the contract between the Southgate Community School District and Teamsters Local 214 Southgate Paraprofessionals: Ms. Pastor explained the board is being asked to approve a one-year contract agreement for Teamsters Local 214 Southgate Paraprofessionals as reviewed during closed session. This contract would expire on August 31, 2021.

2020/21-64 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Sage, the board approve the one-year agreement between the Southgate Community School District and Teamsters Local 214 Southgate Paraprofessionals as presented.

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

7. Approval of the contract between the Southgate Community School District and Southgate Alternative Education Association MEA/NEA: Ms. Pastor explained the board is being asked to approve a one-year contract agreement for Southgate Alternative Education Association MEA/NEA as reviewed during closed session. This contract would expire on August 31, 2021.

2020/21-65 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Green, the board approve the one-year agreement between the Southgate Community School District and Southgate Alternative Education Association MEA/NEA as presented.

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

8. Virtually held board meetings: Mr. Green began the discussion by explaining why the board was meeting at Anderson High School; Council Chambers would not allow enough people to attend meetings if they wanted to. We can't live stream from AHS auditorium and those that don't feel safe coming in person are not allow to watch or be able to voice their opinions. Everyone has a right to view a meeting and voice an opinion. Virtual meetings would give more people the opportunity to attend meetings by viewing them and have their opinions heard through website submissions.

Mr. Craig commented that the number of attendees was lower when the decision was made to go in person. The limit on the number of people that may attend is lower at City Hall. We can hold more people safely at AHS. He agrees with having virtual meetings with all the virtual support, allowing for more participation.

Dr. Pomponio agreed, with virtual there is more transparency, allowing more people to watch the meetings.

2020/21-66 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board conduct meetings online, virtually until further notice.

Discussion took place about the state authorizing virtual through Dec. 31, 2020 and the monthly presentation given to the board by the COLT Team, about the mode of instruction.

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

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

Shannon Swauger addressed the board to thank them for keeping students and staff safe. She addressed Mr. Freitas, Mr. Lamos, Mr. Craig and Mr. Estheimer, commenting that they got it wrong by not selecting Mr. Martin and she is very disappointed in them.

April Schuck expressed her disappointment with the board for not selecting Mr. Martin to be the next superintendent.

INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Estheimer thanked all those for coming to the meeting and thanked veterans including the many in his own family. He congratulated Mr. Craig, Dr. Pomponio and Mr. Sage for their recent elections to the board.

ADJOURNMENT

2020/21-67 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Green, the board adjourn the meeting at 8:00 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

