



**Minutes of a Regular Meeting, January 7, 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, January 7, 2020, beginning at 7:01 PM via Zoom.

Present: Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney  
Absent: Mrs. Murphy

**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: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MONTH RESOLUTION**

**Whereas**, Michigan is home to more than 600 board of educations that work to enrich the lives of Michigan's students through education and directly influence instruction in Michigan's public schools; and,

**Whereas**, Article VIII, Section 2 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 states that providing for the education of Michigan's children is a fundamental duty of state government; and,

**Whereas**, local school board members represent their community to ensure that educational opportunities are provided to the children and young adults in their community that will advance student achievement in the schools and communities in which they serve; and,

**Whereas**, during this month, we join with the Michigan Association of School Boards, Michigan Department of Education, local school districts and community organizations to recognize and raise awareness of the countless efforts and contributions of local school boards and school board members throughout Michigan;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved that we, the Novi Community School District, do hereby proclaim the month of January 2021 as Local School Board Month; and honor the contribution of Novi Community School District school board members:

- a) Danielle Ruskin
- b) Tom Smith
- c) Willy Mena

- d) Kathy Hood
- e) Paul Cook
- f) Bobbie Murphy
- g) Mary Ann Roney

#### OATH OF OFFICE

We have received from the Board of County Canvassers, for the County of Oakland, the Certificate of Determination of the election results of the Novi Community School District. The official document states that it has been determined that at the regular election held on November 3, 2020, Danielle R. Ruskin, Paul Cook, and Willy Mena were elected to six-year terms of office, expiring on December 31, 2026.

The Revised School Code provides within 10 business days after notification of election or appointment to the board, each person shall file with the secretary of the board an acceptance of the office to which the person has been elected or appointed. Prior to the member-elect performing the duties of office, the Oath of Office must be administered within ten days after they have been notified of election results. This activity has already been completed for all three individuals.

Officiated by Dr. Steve Matthews, the following elected Board members to read the oath tonight as public recognition of their election.

- Danielle Ruskin
- Willy Mena
- Paul Cook

The oath is as follows:

***"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this State and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Member of the Board of Education of Novi Community School District, Michigan, according to the best of my ability."***

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Board of Education elects officers annually not earlier than January 1st immediately following an election held on a November regular election date and not later than the first meeting in January.

At a Board Work Session, held on Thursday, December 18, 2020, all Board members discussed the Board committees and officer positions.

#### Position of Board President:

It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mr. Mena that the Novi Board of Education elects Dr. Danielle Ruskin for the position of President for the 2021 fiscal year.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Position of Board Vice-President:

It was moved by Mr. Mena and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education elects Mr. Paul Cook for the position of Vice-President for the 2021 fiscal year.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Position of Board Secretary:

It was moved by Mr. Mena and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education elects Mr. Willy Mena for the position of Secretary for the 2021 fiscal year.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

Position of Board Treasurer:

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mr. Mena that the Novi Board of Education elects Mrs. Kathy Hood for the position of Treasurer for the 2021 fiscal year.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

BOARD COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The Board President may identify Board members, or Board members may express an interest, for committee appointments or representation as Board liaisons. The president appointed the following people to the Board committee opportunities:

- Novi Educational Foundation Liaison: Mr Tom Smith
- Community Education ISD Liaison: Mrs. Mary Ann Roney
- OCSBA Government Relations Committee Liaison: Mrs. Kathy Hood
- Standing Committees:
  - Finance Committee:
    - Mrs. Kathy Hood – Chair
    - Mrs. Bobbie Murphy
    - Mrs. Mary Ann Roney
  - Governance and Policy Committee:
    - Mr. Paul Cook – Chair
    - Mr. Tom Smith
    - Dr. Danielle Ruskin
  - Legislative Committee:
    - Mrs. Bobbie Murphy – Chair
    - Mrs. Kathy Hood
    - Mrs. Mary Ann Roney
- Ad Hoc Committees:
  - Capital Projects Committee:
    - Mr. Willy Mena – Chair
    - Mr. Paul Cook
    - Dr. Danielle Ruskin

- Curriculum Committee:
  - Mrs. Mary Ann Roney – Chair
  - Mr. Willy Mena
  - Mr. Tom Smith

### 2021 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

A tentative 2021 Board of Education Meeting schedule is presented tonight for review and discussion with these meetings being held at the Educational Services Building, located at 25345 Taft Road, Novi Michigan 48374. The tentative schedule includes proposed dates for the Board Workshops.

It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mr. Cook that the Board of Education approve 2021 Board of Education Meeting calendar as presented.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

### **MOTION CARRIED**

### FOIA, FERPA, AND OMA

School board members are responsible for ensuring that they are knowledgeable of three important governmental and educational laws and guidelines. These are the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Family Education Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), and Open Meetings Act (OMA).

This board has had presentations on these topics at previous meetings. Tonight that information is provided to the Board as a review of our responsibilities in that area.

No action is needed.

### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

There were two (2) comments from the audience regarding returning to school full-time, in person.

### CONSENT AGENDA A 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 December 17, 2020
- b. Work Session Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2020

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education approves the consent item(s) as presented.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

CONSENT AGENDA B ITEMS

The Board shall, at the organizational meeting:

**A. Designate depositories for school funds:**

The Novi Community School District currently has accounts and investments with the following banks:

<u>BANK</u>	<u>ACCOUNT</u>
Fifth Third Bank	General Fund Checking
	Debt Fund Checking
MILAF/Fifth Third	Bond Funds
Huntington Bank	Money Market Account
CIBC Bank USA	Money Market Account
Comerica Bank	Money Market Account
Chemical Bank	Money Market Account

The Novi Community School District currently uses the following banks for purchase of investments and the ability to wire money to and from the following banks:

Bank of America	Flagstar Bank
Bank of New York Mellon	Huntington Bank
CIBC Bank USA	JP Morgan Chase Bank
Citizens Bank	Level One Bank
Comerica Bank	PNC Bank
Fifth Third Bank	TCF Bank
	Washington Trust Bank

**B. Designate those persons authorized to sign checks, contracts, agreements, and purchase orders:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently authorizes the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations to sign checks; the Superintendent or designee to sign contracts, and agreements; and the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations to sign purchase orders.

**C. Designate those persons authorized to use the safe deposit box:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently does not have a safe deposit box.

**D. Determine fee charged to individuals who request notice of Board meetings:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently does not charge a fee.

**E. Designate an administrator to assume the specified responsibilities of the Treasurer and/or of the Secretary:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently designates the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations to assume the specified responsibilities of the Treasurer.

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently designates the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent to assume the specified responsibilities of the Recording Secretary.

**F. Designate the Electronic Transfer Officer (ETO):**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently designates the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations as the Electronic Transfer Officer (ETO).

**G. Designate a law firm to represent the School Board:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education designates Thrun Law Firm to represent the District administration and Miller Johnson (formerly Lusk Albertson) to represent the Board of Education.

**H. Designate a day, place and time for regular meetings which shall be held at least once every month:**

The Novi Community School District Board of Education currently designates a minimum of two (2) Thursdays a month for their meetings to be held at the Educational Services Building, located at 25345 Taft Road, Novi, Michigan 48374, at 7:00 PM. All dates and times are posted on the Novi Community School District website.

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Hood that the Novi Board of Education approves the consent item(s) as presented.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**CARRIED**

**MOTION**

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Personnel Report**

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

				<b>New Hires</b>	
<u><i>Name</i></u>	<u><i>Bldg.</i></u>	<u><i>Assignment</i></u>	<u><i>Reason</i></u>	<u><i>Rate</i></u>	<u><i>Effective</i></u>

**B. Retirements and Resignations**

<u><i>Name</i></u>	<u><i>Bldg.</i></u>	<u><i>Assignment</i></u>	<u><i>Reason</i></u>	<u><i>Effective</i></u>
Check, Mary Anne	NW	Kindergarten Teacher	Retired	02-18-21

**A. Leaves of Absence**

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

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Bid Package #4: Novi High School Secure Additions**

On Thursday, November 24, 2020, sealed bids were received and publicly opened for the Novi Middle School additions and remodeling. In attendance for the bid opening were representatives

from the Novi Community School District, Plante Moran Cresa, TMP Architecture, McCarthy & Smith, Inc. and interested bidders. Bids were opened, recorded, and tabulated through a Zoom meeting.

The project team conducted post bid interviews with each of the following, qualified bidders, for each bid division of work. During the post bid interview, the project team reviewed the scope of work, project schedule, manpower requirements, and specified materials with each of the contractors.

Based upon the project team's review of the proposals and bidders, we propose the following recommendations for contract award:

Bid Division 101: Sitework Mr. Daniel Cortis Cortis Brothers TOTAL \$ 435,800.00	TOTAL: \$ 259,400.00
Bid Division 102: Asphalt Paving / Site Concrete Mr. Tim Baugher Asphalt Specialists, Inc. TOTAL \$ 49,350.00	Bid Division 114: Aluminum Entrances / Storefront / Glass / Glazing Mr. Howard Beindit Preferred Glass Inc. TOTAL \$ 607,950.00
Bid Division 103: Selective Demolition Mr. Scott Krall Blue Star, Inc. TOTAL \$ 20,950.00	Bid Division 115: Metal Studs / GPDW / EIFS Mr. Seth Helfman City Contracting Services TOTAL \$ 329,291.00
Bid Division 104: Concrete Footings & Foundations Mr. David Glowski North Channel Construction TOTAL \$ 89,900.00	Bid Division 116: Hard Tile Mr. Franko Sallaku Continental Contracting Co., LLC TOTAL \$ 55,200.00
Bid Division 105: Interior Concrete Flatwork Mr. Dave Reece Clark Contracting Services TOTAL \$ 76,551.00	Bid Division 118: Carpet / Resilient Flooring Mr. Richard Krupske Continental Interiors, Inc. TOTAL \$ 35,000.00
Bid Division 106: Masonry Mr. Howard Hicks HMC Mason Contractors TOTAL \$ 217,550.00	Bid Division 120: Painting Mr. Xhuliano Pjetrushu Continental Contracting Co., LLC TOTAL \$ 33,000.00
Bid Division 107: Steel Mr. Ron Pawlak Judd Industrial Contracting, Inc. TOTAL \$ 700,200.00	Bid Division 128: Casework Mr. Scott Farnell FCI Group LLC TOTAL \$ 29,500.00
Bid Division 108: General Trades / Carpentry Mr. Seth Helfman City Contracting Services TOTAL \$ 270,637.00	Bid Division 140: Plumbing Mr. Paul Bowers Contrast Mechanical, Inc. TOTAL \$149,000.00
Bid Division 109: Roofing/Sheetmetal Mr. Steve Eskelinen Esko Roofing & Sheet Metal	Bid Division 141: Fire Suspension Mr. William Case Professional Sprinkler, Inc. TOTAL \$ 32,980.00
	Bid Division 143: Electrical

Mr. John Ramonaitis  
Amcomm Telecommunications Inc. TOTAL \$

328,368.00

Total Award Recommendation Amount: \$3,738,777.00

This came before the Board for information and discussion at the January 7, 2021 and comes back for approval tonight.

It was moved by Mrs. Roney and supported by Mr. Cook that the Novi Community School District Board of Education approve the contract awards as recommended above in the amount of \$3,738,777.00.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Professional Auditing Services**

On November 12, 2020 we received a proposal for a contract extension with Plante Moran.

The agreement is to provide external, independent auditing services beginning with an audit of the financial statements for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The estimate fee-for-service for basic financial statement and federal program audits is \$46,250 per year, which represents a 4.0% increase and will remain fixed for the duration of the extension. Their current contract expired at the conclusion of the June 30, 2020 audit.

Plante Moran has perform auditing services for the district since 2012. It is recommended that Plante Moran be awarded a three year extension for professional audit services.

Plante Moran is a regional accounting firm headquartered in Southfield, Michigan with a total of 21 U.S. offices.

- Serves over 200 school districts, more than any other CPA firm in Michigan
- Clients include 13 of the 15 largest school districts in Michigan
- 150 staff members that receive specialize school district training
- Received a “Pass” Rating on most recent Peer Review
- Affiliations with MSBO, ASBO, MICPA, MASB, MASA, MDE

This comes before the Board tonight for information and discussion. It will come back before the Board on January 23, 2021 with the recommendation that the Professional Audit Services be awarded to Plante Moran in the amount of \$46,250 annually for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

#### **COVID Metrics to Change Learning Modalities**

Returning students to school five days a week is a common goal of our Novi Community School District parents, Board of Education, teachers, and administrators. In order to do so, the conditions in our schools and communities need to be safe.



Over the past several months we have examined this issue from a number of perspectives. I would like to provide another way to examine this issue.

On August 6, when the Board of Education approved our Return to School Plan, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	101
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	10.9
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	18.9
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	15.4
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	4.3
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	5.35%

On September 8, our first day of school, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	75
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	22.5
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	13.6
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	22.7
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	8.8
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	5.65%

Four weeks into the school year, October 6, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	74
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	16.7
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	19.3
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	21.5
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	4.9
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	3.27%

Eight weeks into the school year, November 3, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	361
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	32.1
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	32.1
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	51.6
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	28.6
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	10.02%

Twelve weeks into the school year, December 1, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	716
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	111.6
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	95.3
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	153.0
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	61.7
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	12.16%

The last day of school in December, December 18, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	380
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	93.0
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	111.5
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	150.5
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	48.3
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	7.83%

Upon our return to school on January 4, the COVID-19 statistics in Oakland County looked like this:

7 day case average per million residents in Oakland County	300
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48374	62.2
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48375	53.1
Cases per 10,000 residents in zip code 48377	91.6
Cases per 10,000 residents in the Novi Community School District	35.5
Percentage of reported positive tests in Oakland County over the last 7 days	6.09%

These numbers show a steady rise over the course through December and then a slowing trend downward into January. As of January 7, the numbers in our district are higher than when we made the decision to go hybrid and virtual in August and September.

Over the course of the school year we have kept track of positive cases reported to the district by week. A summary of those numbers through January 4, shows the following:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Total Positive Cases</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Staff</b>
ECEC	4		4
Deerfield	2	1	1
Meadows	7	3	4
Novi Woods	2	1	1
Orchard Hills			
Parkview	2	1	1
Village Oaks	3	2	1

Novi Middle School	3	3	
High School	18	15	3
Career Prep/Adult Ed			
NATC	2		2
Other (transportation)	5	2	3
	48	28	20

In our district, we started school on September 8 with two options for students – virtual and hybrid. Roughly 55% of our students opted for virtual learning and 45% opted for in person hybrid learning.

Our district has provided a consistent learning environment since September 8. We have offered hybrid in-person or a virtual option every day since September 8. Other districts surrounding us and throughout the state have jumped back and forth between in-person and virtual learning.

One of the keys to effective learning is consistency. That is why we stress attendance and why teachers craft learning routines. In our district, even in the midst of the pandemic, we have offered a consistent weekly schedule since September 8.

There were two disruptions this fall. First, at the high school in early September, we had to close the in-person hybrid option for two days when we had nine students test positive and were not able to conclude our contact tracing. The second event was in November when the governor closed high schools for in-person instruction for several weeks. In both cases our high school students were transitioned to a virtual environment.

The question that we are now struggling with is how do we move back to a more “regular” school environment.

In December, the board approved a recommendation that extended our current approach to January 22 – the end of first semester. Parents were asked to commit to either the virtual or hybrid in-person options for second semester starting January 25. Parents who wanted to switch – either from virtual to hybrid or hybrid to virtual – were asked to complete a survey. Those who did not want to change did not complete the survey.

In the survey, parents were told that the choice made would last for the entire second semester. Additionally, those who kept or selected the hybrid in-person were told that it might be possible to transition back to five-day per week in-person if the COVID-19 numbers substantially improved.

The question for this board is will it be possible to transition our hybrid students back to five-day per week in-person classes during second semester.

The numbers, while greatly improved from the peak in November and December, are still well above where we were when we made the decision to go virtual and in-person hybrid in August and when we started school in September.

No specific guidance has been provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Governor's Office, or the Oakland County Health Division. An epidemiologist for the Oakland County Health Division, in a phone call, suggested that the best indicator is local data – the cases per school district.

However, basing this decision on one data point does not seem appropriate.

Additionally, we are just now one week removed from New Year's Eve and our Holiday break. We are unsure if numbers will rise again due to travel or small group gatherings.

Michigan State University's (MSU) Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) study, *To What Extent Does In-person Schooling Contribute to the Spread of COVID-19*, states:

*The important exception is that we do find some evidence that in-person modality is associated with increased COVID spread in communities with relatively high pre-existing levels of COVID. In Michigan, for instance, districts offering an in-person instructional modality show increased COVID spread for daily average case counts over 21 cases per 100,000 (this is about the 95th percentile of the pre-existing case count distribution in our data); there is no significant evidence that school systems offering hybrid instruction increases COVID spread.*

The Oakland County Health Division provides numbers in units of cases per million and cases per 10,000. 21 cases per 100,000 would be 210 cases per million and 2.1 cases per 10,000.

The Oakland County Health Division *Guidance on In-person Instruction* document identifies two county level indicators – cases per million and positivity rate. Their recommended numbers per million cases are significantly more conservative than this study by MSU's EPIC study.

Low risk: <7 cases per million; <3% percent positivity  
Level A: 7 to <20 cases per million; 3 to <7% percent positivity  
Level B: 20 to <40 cases per million; 7 to <10% percent positivity  
Level C: 40 to <70 cases per million; 10 to <15% percent positivity  
Level D: 70 to <150 cases per million; 15 to <20% percent positivity  
Level E: 150 or greater cases per million; 20 or greater percent positivity

Given what we know at this time, I would recommend the following.

1. We make no decision based on numbers today as we wait to see if there will be a surge following the holidays.
2. That we focus on three indicators:
  - a. Cases per million in the county
  - b. Cases in our three zip code areas of the Novi Community School District
    - i. This in essence is our neighborhood pod
  - c. Cases per 10,000 in the Novi Community School District
3. Recommended levels to return to five-day per week in-person instruction would be:
  - a. 150 cases per million in the county

- i. Three consecutive weeks
- b. 20 cases per 10,000 in the three zip code areas of the Novi Community School District
  - i. Three consecutive weeks
- c. 20 cases per 10,000 in the Novi Community School District
  - i. Three consecutive reporting periods

There is no right answer. We must use our collective best judgment to create conditions where students can learn and where they are safe.

I would ask that the Board continue to consider these options and make a decision on January 21 on the direction that we should move as second semester begins.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Capital Projects Committee

Willy Mena, Board Secretary and Chair of the Capital Projects Committee, reported that committee had a robust discussion around Walsh College. He stated that things are going well and that they will be presenting this information to the Board soon.

### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were two (2) additional comments from the audience this evening regarding the District's DEI initiatives.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steve Matthews, Superintendent of Schools, reported that he is excited about our return to school this week. He stated that he had several conversations with the Oakland County Health Division who indicated that they had received 5,850 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and anticipate that they will receive more doses in the coming weeks. Dr. Matthews said that they opened an appointment schedule with an opportunity for school staff to be vaccinated and that it had quickly filled.

He mentioned that there are over 18,000 school personnel in Oakland County. Dr. Matthews requested a specific vaccination site for our staff, but was told that it is not possible at this time. He reported that we will continue to try and find ways to protect our staff and will continue the effort to ensure safety in our District.

Dr. Matthews highlighted that our girls swim and dive and volleyball teams continue their fall sports tournament. He stated that the swim and dive meet is January 15 and 16 and the volleyball quarter final is Tuesday, January 12. Dr. Matthews said that they are limited on the number of fans allowed at these events, so he would report back on how our girls' teams do.

He welcomed everyone back and stated that he looks forward to a great start to the second semester, which starts January 25.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Dr. Gary Kinzer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, wished everyone a happy new year. He recognized the Board for School Board Recognition Month and expressed his gratitude to all of the Board members for their dedication and wisdom since the beginning of the year. He stated that

he appreciated their leadership.

Dr. Kinzer reported that in December the business office and human resources combined to complete a pretty significant project, the Michigan Department of Treasury's teacher and school support staff COVID-19 grants, the hazard pay grants. He stated that this a major undertaking to apply all of the criteria and identify all of the eligible employees. Dr. Kinzer said that the vast majority of employees will receive those grants in February. He mentioned that the State of Michigan just announced that they are moving into phase two of that program. Dr. Kinzer reported that they have allocated additional funding for some categories of employees who were no eligible the first time. He stated that we do not have detailed information on how that is going to work, but we will be looking for guidance and will follow through.

Mr. Greg McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, wished everyone a happy new year and welcomed them back. He stated that he looks forward to a successful second half of the school year, both academically and financially.

Mr. McIntyre expressed his gratitude to the superintendent and the Board for their consideration of the Plante Moran auditing contract.

Dr. RJ Webber, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, shared two quotes from Eli Wiesel, who survived Auschwitz and won the Nobel Peace prize for peace in 1986: first, "When a person does not have gratitude, something is missing in his or her humanity." And second, "A person can almost be defined by his or her attitude towards gratitude."

Dr. Webber shared PowerPoint showing an initiative that came out of the Incubator class. He reported that a number of students came up with different pitches, different ideas that would be of service to the community and the 29.6 one launched today. Dr. Webber stated that the Incubator students are ready to beta test their new tutoring service called Leverage, pairing Elementary English Language Learners with high school students who speak the same language. He said that parents can sign.

Dr. Webber expressed love and gratitude to the students who put their energy into this and to Ms. Ringle, who was pivotal in helping them with 29.6. He mentioned that the 29.6 is the percentage of Novi elementary students who are in our ESL program and the problem with virtual learning is they cannot read lips, do not have one-to-one communication or individual help, so leverage was created.

Dr. Webber reported that the idea is to have high school students help out elementary student with their homework. He stated that they would match ESL students with volunteers who speak the same language in order to encourage English comprehension, so dual language learning. Dr. Webber said this infuses English with the student's native language, so they can connect the concept with something they already know.

He reported that this program model is students, parents, and high school volunteers, brought together by the levered team. Dr. Webber stated that the benefit to the Ell students would be a higher reading and English comprehension leading to high WIDA scores. He mentioned that they were going to need 46 volunteers and, no surprise, they ended up with 82. Dr. Webber said there

will be a book activity where the kids are actually going to be published authors written by the ESL students. He reported that each student will contribute a short story, with the help of their tutors, and in the end the book will be published by a local publisher or our community school district. Dr. Webber stated that this is the power of public education and what happens when you think creatively like the Incubator and allow students to choose their own path, paths that exceed our expectations.

He shared another Eli Wiesel quote, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides." Dr. Webber said that today our teachers had to answer a lot of questions from students (with regards to the march on the U.S. capital). He expressed his gratitude to those teachers for not standing idly by and for engaging our bright, curious students who deserve to have conversations about these things.

Dr. Webber thanked the school Board during this appreciation month and to Paul, Danielle, and Tom who chose to run again in the midst of the pandemic, which says a lot about them because this is a heck of a job, exceptionally difficult and stressful. He stated, please know how much the community appreciates your commitment to our kids.

#### BOARD COMMUNICATION

Mr. Paul Cook, Board Vice-President, stated that they had stayed out of the schools due to COVID and social distancing, and requested the Board member building assignments, so that they could start getting back in the schools, after the 15<sup>th</sup>, to meet with the principals and see what is going on. Dr. Matthews responded that we will look at the orders given by the governor to check and see if it is still in effect.

Dr. Ruskin, Board President, asked Dr. Webber to please share the presentation with Sheila, so that she can send it out to the Board. She wished everyone a happy new year and stated that she looks forward to the day when we can all be in person again. Dr. Ruskin said that we look forward to being together and the camaraderie just as the students do with their teachers.

#### ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Hood that the Novi Board of Education Regular Board meeting be adjourned

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney

Nays: 0

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for January 21, 2021 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://www.novi.k12.mi.us)