
OLENTANGY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATE

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2021

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board President Julie Wagner Feasel and Board Member Dr. Lakesha Wyse are attending virtual forums on equity and racism in Ohio schools. The most recent meeting discussed the challenges of recruiting diverse candidates in education, and how Ohio's colleges aren't producing teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds. Olentangy has partnered with Otterbein University to provide education scholarships to graduates of Olentangy's Teacher Academy.

With the redistricting process underway, Mrs. Wagner Feasel reminded the community to provide constructive feedback for the Superintendent and the redistricting committee to review before making a final decision. The proposed attendance boundary options and survey links are available on the [2021-2022 Redistricting Options](#) page of the district website. The feedback surveys are open through February 28.

Mrs. Wagner Feasel spoke with Representative Carfagna regarding House Bill 1 and fair school funding. They plan to host a virtual school funding community forum on Monday, March 22, and will also invite Representative Brenner and Representative Jordan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Mark Raiff and Chief Academic Officer Jack Fette discussed the value in reviewing Olentangy's testing data, but also the logistical challenges of state testing this year. The federal government has communicated to states that testing should move forward, but ask states to be flexible as tests must be administered in person in a safe way. We await Ohio's response and if penalties will be removed from the state report card as a result of testing.

Superintendent Raiff reemphasized that the Governor's COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines by County has only been one data point in considering the in-person attendance models. The attendance models are not directly tied to the color-coded map. **Students will remain in their current learning option**, with Committed Distance Learning students continuing in CDL and students attending school in person moving to daily attendance on March 15. Below are answers to questions that the district received following the last board meeting's daily attendance announcement.

First, Olentangy Schools will follow health authority's recommendations of 3 feet social distancing between students wherever possible, with layered mitigation. He shared how schools will address distancing in regards to class changes, classrooms, shared spaces, hallways and more.

Second, lunch rooms have been of concern, as that is when students remove their masks. Each school building will use additional spaces as needed to maximize distance between students while eating.

Third, Mr. Raiff stated that face masks have proven effective, attributing to the low incidents of cases and contacts coming from school. The face mask policy remains in effect, and face masks will continue to be worn by all staff and students.

Fourth, Mr. Raiff cited the CDC to answer questions regarding community spread and the potential for students' exposure to COVID in school as well as the risk of bringing the virus home to families. The CDC states that all the available data shows that in person learning has not been associated with community transmission, and that layered mitigation has prevented students from contracting the virus at school and bringing it home to their families.

There are anticipated logistical challenges to address when returning to five full days of in person attendance March 15, similar to the first week of school. Spring athletics will continue to take place regardless of daily attendance or if there should be a need to move back to hybrid attendance.

The Superintendent's Report also covered spring events and ceremonies for the 2020-2021 school year. High school graduation is 12 weeks away and Olentangy's district leadership has spent several weeks having planning discussions with principals, taking into consideration input from high school seniors. Graduation is a district event, and will be the same for all four high schools.

Sunday, May 23 is currently reserved for the four high school graduations at the Schottenstein Center. Other locations researched were Huntington Park, Nationwide Arena, and using the high school stadiums, all of which have significant downsides that may not make them viable options. Drive-through graduations are a possible solution, as they allow graduates more guests, and the district is prepared to produce these personal ceremonies regardless of weather. The ceremonies would be pre-recorded and broadcasted for viewers at home.

Other high school spring events that are being discussed are options for prom, senior breakfasts, senior picnic and clap outs. These are all school-specific events, and principals are analyzing options on how they can be done safely this year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Emily Hatfield shared that the finance team will begin their eFinance Plus conversion in March. To answer community questions regarding the CARES Act funding, Mrs. Hatfield clarified that these funds are classified under Fund 510 on the district's financial statements. The \$1.4 million that Olentangy Schools received in Coronavirus relief was spent on PPE mitigation strategies when school began.

DISCUSSION OF DEBT ISSUANCE

In June of 2020, the district sold \$42 million of the voted authority from the levy passage to fund Shale Meadows Elementary School, security vestibules, playground updates, mechanicals, bus center updates and lane improvements, the Hyatts Middle School field parking, and purchasing the administrative offices. Olentangy Schools is preparing to sell the next wave of bonds to fund construction of Elementary School 17 and Middle School 6, purchase buses and make building improvements.

In reviewing preschool and kindergarten enrollment numbers with the addition of Shale Meadows Elementary School, Treasurer Emily Hatfield brought forward the discussion topic of delaying the building timeline for Elementary School 17 and the potential impact.

Postponing the construction of Elementary School 17 by one year would impact both the five-year forecast and the dept capacity. Olentangy Schools has \$1.7 million in operating

costs that would be delayed, moving the expenses from fiscal year 24 to fiscal year 25. The delay would also reduce the district's debt by \$27 million for one year, and save \$1 million in interest costs. However, pushing back the timeline may increase construction costs, and interest rate fluctuations are a factor. The resolution to sell the bonds will be submitted for board approval at a later meeting.

The Board of Education meeting is available on the district website [Board of Education meeting livestream](#).
