



**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

**Electronically Held**

<https://youtu.be/ppi9H33s-t4>

PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY O. ESTHEIMER

**DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 7:00 P.M.**

VICE PRESIDENT

ANDREW A. GREEN

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

SECRETARY

DR. DARLENE L. POMPONIO

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

TREASURER

JASON CRAIG

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:** Irvine, Baker-Herring, Wilson

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Estheimer read the District Mission and Vision Statements.

TRUSTEES

NEIL J. FREITAS

RICK LAMOS

SHAWN SAGE

**REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

2020/21-150 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Green, the board approve the April 13, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

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

NO:

**ADMINISTRATION**

SUPERINTENDENT

SHARON IRVINE

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

None

**PRESENTATIONS**

None

**SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE**

Ms. Irvine reported to the board that two of our teachers were selected as PAC Teachers of the Year; Ms. Katie Birch and Ms. Nicole Gruver. Ms. Irvine had Special Education Director-Ms. Kelly Thomas speak about both teachers.

Ms. Thomas told the board our PAC parent representative, Ms. Michelle Muse-Worthy, nominated Ms. Birch and Ms. Gruver for this award. She thought these two ladies have gone above and beyond to make sure each student in their class has been successful in their lives especially this year during the pandemic.

Switching back and forth has been really difficult for the kids they teach. Ms. Muse-Worthy thought they had done an absolutely remarkable job. They teach our students with cross categorical needs, which are students with mild to moderate cognitive impairment. They teach our life skills curriculum; functional academics that will help the students live independently. They focus on the students' self-care, personal finance, job skills and applications as well as improving the students reading, writing and math skills. They have gone above and beyond in creating unique project-based learning opportunities and community-based instruction for all their students so that the students can explore different

**BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

DIRECTOR

BARBARA WILSON, CFO

**CURRICULUM/FEDERAL**

PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

DR. MICHELLE BAKER-

HERRING

Opportunities, so when they leave us they can function independently. In the past they have opened pizza shops, T-shirt shops and a Thrift Store; any profits from these businesses are put toward community-based instruction where students can practice shopping at grocery stores for recipes and using SMART bus transportation. The whole point is for all the kids, when they leave here, they are confident to participate in the world around us and everything they can offer. Ms. Thomas congratulated Ms. Birch and Ms. Gruver for all they have done and creating such an exemplary program. They should be our models for creating absolutely wonderful relationships with kids.

Board members and Ms. Irvine congratulated Ms. Birch and Ms. Gruver and they will be sent a congratulatory letter on behalf of the Board of Education.

## FINANCE UPDATE

None

## CONSENT

2020/21-151 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Lamos, the board approve the Minutes from March 23, 2021, HR Update and the Disbursements for March 2021.

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

NO:

## ACTION

- 1. Approval of the Mode of Instruction for April:** Ms. Irvine reviewed where we were in January when we selected a metric for starting in-person option. We did so because we didn't have any case data for schools being in-person in terms of what we thought would happen or experienced data at that time. We did the best we could and made a decision to tie the return to in-person schooling with a metric, a positivity rate and in our case we ended up with a weighted daily new case average; 9 or fewer for elementary and middle school which put us in-person starting January 25, 2021, for high school a weighted daily new case average of 5 or fewer which put us in place February 19 for freshman and February 22 for everyone else.

At that time we did not choose a metric for the automatic return to remote instruction. We would consider case by case data from our school experiences.

COVID rates in Michigan have escalated. As of April 10 Wayne County is at Severe Risk with 18.9% positivity rate. The weighted daily new case average; 29.06 on April 8. Governor Whitmer recommended a two-week pause for high school and athletics on Friday, April 9. MHSAA and in-person Downriver area school districts opted to stay the course with athletic testing in place and the absence of school-associated transmissions. Outbreaks are not occurring in our instructional program. They are however in athletics; wrestling, cheerleading and basketball were hit hard.

Current Southgate Community Schools Update-April 6-13: Allen Elementary has had 5 positive school associated cases (3 families), 5 classrooms have shifted to remote and 28 staff/students in quarantine. Fordline Elementary has 0 positive school associated cases, 0 classrooms shifted to remote, 11 staff/students in quarantine. Grogan Elementary has 1 positive school associated case with 1 classroom shifted to remote and 17 staff/students in quarantine. Shelters has 3 positive school associated cases (2 families), 2 classrooms shifted to remote and 22 staff/students quarantined. DMS has 0 positive school associated cases, 0 classrooms shifted to remote and 6 staff/students quarantined. AS has 0 positive school associated cases, 0 classrooms shifted to remote and 22 staff/students quarantined.

Prior to the return from spring break, the District sent out a notice to the families of Southgate, encouraging them to take advantage of the District's opportunity to self-select remote instruction. Our families took this seriously and half of our secondary in-person students stayed remote during the week. We can see the remote option making a big difference.

For April we can continue in-person, remote and virtual and handle on a case-by-case basis. Two week pause if in-school transmissions appear. We can pause elementary, middle school, high school athletics and/or individual schools for two weeks, or we can return to remote or virtual until the weighted daily new case average reaches 10 cases or fewer.

The district recommendation is to continue in-person, remote and virtual and handle on case-by-case basis. Two-week pause if in-school transmissions appear. The Rationale; no evidence instructional program outbreaks, option to self-select remote in secondary, option to return to remote for elementary for the rest of the year, practice of switching an entire elementary class to temporary remote with a positive case, athletic testing and outdoor spring sports.

Discussion took place as to how an in-school transmission is defined; if a close contact of a positive case is positive, that is identified as an outbreak. This is identified by the County Health Department.

2020/21-152 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Sage, the board approve in-person, remote and virtual instruction to all Southgate Community School students for April as presented. If the District experiences a school-associated outbreak among students in its instructional program, it will implement a two week pause to in-person instruction.

*Dr. Pomponio stated it is important to consider all the facts as we move forward with regard to students. If a student misses a day of school they miss a lot. We have practiced safe protocols, have measures in place. What is at risk is the mental health of students and their learning just stopping. We can't just stop learning, and then start and stop again. It's the best decision to moved forward and leave it to the parents to decide what's best for their family and for their children. We need to move forward practicing safe measures.*

*Mr. Lamos asked what would trigger a pause.*

*Ms. Irvine commented, if the County informed us we were dealing with an outbreak at one school that would trigger a two-week pause. If multiple outbreaks were occurring at the same time, it is an indicator we are dealing with a different variant and we are dealing with some contagious activity. That would be a whole district pause for a few weeks. If it was just elementary because kids are engaging a recess together and we are seeing the spread happen for the first time it would be seen as an elementary level pause. There is still a discretionary component for how extensive that pause be and what would be relevant.*

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

NO:

- 2. Approval of the Service Agreement with Futures Education for 2021-2022:** Ms. Irvine explained; annually, the District contract with Futures Education to handle special education staffing needs for which the District is unable to directly staff. Specifically, the District contracts for psychology services for Beacon Day Treatment and occupational therapy for the full district. This is the most efficient way to staff, through a third party.

Compared to 2020-2021 prices, the annual renewal presented here reflects no change in the cost of psychology services and a 1.4% increase in the cost for occupational therapy services for 2021-2022.

Discussion took place about what we spend on this and how long the contract was for. We contract because we do not need a full time therapist and only an "on-call" psychologist. The contract is for one year. Further discussion took place as to whether there are other organizations that provide this service. Futures has been the most dependable in providing us with the staff we need, providing us with the same employees over the last 5 or 6 years. We have never gone without.

2020/21-153 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Craig, the board approve the Service Agreement with Futures Education as presented.

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

NO:

- 3. Approval of the Purchase of a DMS Wrestling and Cheer Mat:** Ms. Irvine explained that DMS has been using a wrestling and cheer mat that was passed down from AHS 10 years ago. By the time DMS got it, it had already outlasted its life. DMS is currently paying over \$500 a season for tape to keep the mats together during a meet. It's been a long time that DMS has had their own mat with their brand. We have enhancement money, pay to play was moved out to allow enhancement money in to help fund some of these costs. This is a very necessary cost for that program.

Ms. Hinzmann added, DMS has two wonderful programs that lead into State Champion Programs, we would like to bring that quality to DMS for the safety of our athletes and the bright beautiful Davidson Titans on the mat. The flex and Velcro will allow us not to use tape anymore. It's a great purchase and a really good price.

Discussion took place about the condition of the old mat and the quality of this mat. All agreed this is a long time coming and needed for safety.

2020/21-154 It was moved by Dr. Pomponio supported by Mr. Sage, the board approve the purchase of a wrestling and cheer mat for Davidson Middle School in the amount of \$9,520.00 from Dollamur Sport Surfaces as presented.

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

NO:

- 4. Approval of the Purchase of Certified Playground Mulch for Allen, Fordline, Grogan, and Shelters Elementary Schools:** Ms. Irvine explained to the board, the District has not provided its playgrounds with certified playground mulch since 2017. Since 2017, the District has patched together mulch fills with city landscaping mulch. The reduced mulch fill and the type of fill are both hazards for our children on the playground. Additionally, in their current state, our playgrounds are unusable by preschool students. Licensing requires certified playground mulch.

The District is requesting that each playground receive a catch-up amount of 1355 cubic yards, providing a depth of 6-8 inches of certified play mulch per elementary playground area. The District has selected Superior Groundcover to provide this product for the amount of

\$35,907.50 because they provided the lowest quote and the positive experience that the District had with them in 2017.

The playground mulch will be funded through GSRP and/or Enhancement money based on a negotiated distribution with Wayne RESA and the Board's decision on extended GSRP programming. This is a necessary piece for the safety of our children.

Discussion took place about the installation of the mulch and this type of mulch needed to keep kids safe. One of the bids is much higher in cost due to the fact they are from out of state. The current mulch will remain as a base with 6 to 8 inches of new mulch placed on top of that.

2020/21-155 It was moved by Mr. Craig supported by Mr. Green, the board approve the purchase of 1335 cubic yards of certified playground mulch for Allen, Fordline, Grogan and Shelters Elementary schools from Superior Groundcover in the amount of \$35,907.50.

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

#### **EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES**

None

#### **INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Pomponio congratulated Jordan Hunt for signing with Adrian College for hockey and Brooke McClure for signing with the University of Michigan for soccer. Dr. Pomponio thanked the secretaries who hold everything together in our buildings.

Mr. Green congratulated every extracurricular activity in the winter and forthcoming in the spring, trying to get back to normalcy whether it's sports, an activity or a club; the teachers that have supported it, the students and parents that have followed the rules to try to keep those programs going. At every level; elementary, middle school, high school-they are doing a great job. Everyone has worked together, through some heartache and disagreements-which was going to happen. Our plan is solid compared to other districts who have had it rough; hopefully we continue to move in the right direction giving parents choices. He also wanted to mention the food service employees and the diligent work they do and have done during this pandemic, week after week. We are all in this together. Everyone is right in their beliefs and own personal opinion, the board and the district appreciate that. We will continue to work together to make this the best place for children to be in school. He hopes everyone stays safe, has a wonderful two weeks until we meet again.

Mr. Freitas wished everyone taking the SAT test Good Luck. Congratulated everyone that is doing sports in the spring. He also commented on the parents that are following directions, the children that are following the rules. It is wonderful to see Anderson High School abuzz with all the traffic there; people playing sports, enjoying the track and facilities. It's wonderful, it's a great spring, so come out and support us.

Mr. Estheimer thanked everyone for the love and support, his mom is still having a rough time of it but he appreciates the prayers. He gave condolences to Dr. Pomponio's family for the recent death in the family. It's been a rough year for them, our prayers go out to them.

**ADJOURNMENT**

2020/21-156 It was moved by Mr. Lamos supported by Mr. Craig, the board adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

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

*Respectfully submitted by: Theresa Grzechowski*

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Dr. Darlene Pomponio-Secretary  
Board of Education

*For detailed conversation, Board meetings may be viewed in their entirety on our website: [www.southgateschools.com](http://www.southgateschools.com)*



















