

**STRONGSVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
JANUARY 14, 2021  
SPECIAL MEETING**

The Special Meeting of the Strongsville Board of Education and any other items germane to the Board of Education was called to order at 6::30 p.m. on Thursday, January 14, 2021, at the **Administration Building, Meeting Room, 18199 Cook Avenue, Strongsville, Ohio**, by President, Richard O. Micko.

All members of the Board and media were notified of this meeting in compliance with Section 121.22 O.R.C., effective November 28, 1975.

The following Board Members answered Roll Call: Mrs. Buckner-Sallee, Mrs. Housum, Mr. Micko, and Mr. Roberts. Mrs. Bissell joined the meeting virtually at 6:36.

Others present were: Dr. Cameron Ryba, Superintendent; Mr. George Anagnostou, Treasurer; Ms. Jenni Pelko, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. David Binkley, Director of Technology; Mr. Stephen Breckner, Director of Business Services; Ms. Erin Green, Director of Curriculum; Mr. Andy Trujillo, Director of Student Services and Mr. Dan Foust, Communications Coordinator.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**BOARD DISCUSSION – 2020-2021 DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

Dr. Ryba shared a brief recap from the retreat portion of the meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The Board was asked to prioritize the areas of focus under each of the four categories: a. Community, Culture, and Opportunities; b. District Operations; c. Finances; and d. Teaching and Learning. Dr. Ryba organized the top three areas of focus under each category. He asked the Board to review the prioritization and to share any items they wish to move to include or exclude.

**Community, Culture, and Opportunities**

In order, the top three areas of focus under Community, Culture, & Opportunities were: 1. Communications/Website; 2. Culture; 3. Diversity.

There was much discussion about focus area, strategic planning, which did not make the top three. Strategic planning is a huge project. To do it correctly, Dr. Ryba stated we would need focus groups, and community engagement. The Strategic Plan is no longer about how to get caught up but how to move forward. A consultant was recommended to help with guidance on how to build a cohesive vision. A new strategic plan will be more challenging and would take six to seven months to do it well. It can be done internally, too, if that is the Board's preference. Dr. Ryba is not ready to make a recommendation at this time. Mr. Micko stated he is not supportive of a comprehensive plan right now He stated it would be difficult to determine where the District would want to be in five years with how unstable everything is now with the pandemic, and Presidential situation, etc. After further discussion, the consensus was to put the strategic plan on hold.

Extracurriculars was another area of focus that did not make the top three. Discussion was had. Dr. Ryba shared the Community group's recommendation to have five extracurricular opportunities: 1. Service learning which could be Student Council; 2. Arts which could be choir; 3. Athletics, could be health-fitness intramurals; 4. STEM which could be Maker Space; and 5. An activity unique to the school. Dr. Ryba will review this area.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION – 2020-2021 DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN** (continued)

### Community, Culture, and Opportunities (continued)

Culture was listed as the second priority. If the Board feels it is in good place, it can be removed from the Board priority list but the Administration will continue to work on it. Based on staff comments, Mrs. Pelko doesn't feel like the staff is understanding and training should continue. The trainers are internal. Live training with internal trainers would be good for new hires. The next step is to plan how to bring it to students but adults must understand the training first. Mr. Micko agrees to deemphasize it at this time.

Communications/Website was placed as the top priority. Mr. Foust shared his wish list item of hiring a Social Media/Web Coordinator. He shared four options.

1. Hire a full-time or part-time person. Mr. Foust recommends a part-time position.
2. Offer it as internship position.
3. Partner with a High School class that could benefit. A challenge would be for the High School class to offer Middle School and Elementary School content.
4. Contract with consultant.

Discussion was had on the four options. The Board would like to see it as part of an educational mission. It was suggested to tie it in with a website redesign and then decide on the type of position.

The summary for Community, Culture, and Opportunities is to concentrate on Diversity; bring in a plan for Communications and Website; Continue work on Culture; Extracurriculars will be a project; and the Strategic Plan will be revisited at a later time.

### District Operations

The top three areas of focus under District Operations were: 1. COVID Contact Tracing; 2. Food Services; 3. Staffing.

Food Services was listed as the second priority. Chef Mike notified the Administration that the USDA Food and Nutrition Service issued a nationwide waiver of Food Service Management Contract duration in the National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program extension. The current food services' contract with Chartwells can be extended for another year instead of going out for bids. Discussion was had regarding going out for a new RFP or to take advantage of the extension. Chartwells is scheduled to present an update on Food Services at the February work session. It was decided to press pause to allow time to gather more information.

Discussion was had as to which areas of focus are still important from the last meeting to now. Food Services was the second priority and is paused for further information. Contact Tracing was the number one priority. COVID contact tracing, tracking, and communication is done in house and is working.

Staffing was listed as the third top priority. Staff absences are increasing due to COVID and substitute staffing levels are low. The District has ten permanent substitute teachers in place. Although 45 PTA volunteers signed up to help when needed for food services and monitor needs, only two showed up. HB 409 was discussed. It justifies allowing substitute teachers without post-secondary credits to obtain temporary licenses as a necessity to ensure schools can employ an adequate number of substitute teachers for the 2020-2021 school year to address the needs arising from COVID-19. The Board of Education can determine qualifications of substitutes, i.e. minimum 21 years of age, etc. The substitute pay rate is fair. When a teacher is quarantined, a responsible adult is needed to manage students while the teacher is remoting in. The sub pool was low even before the pandemic. Substitute positions have been posted on popular education job boards.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION – 2020-2021 DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN** (continued)

### District Operations (continued)

Mrs. Buckner-Sallee asked that “Records”, an area of focus that didn’t make the top three, be moved up as a priority. Discussion was had on the cost for digitizing permanent records and the benefits to it. Mr. Anagnostou will get more information as to what the cost of \$125,000 provides.

Mr. Micko asked that Building and Maintenance be moved up on the priority list and to leave Transportation and HVAC off the list. Mr. Breckner will reach out to other school districts about possibly sharing a bus wash.

### Finances

Finances had two areas of focus: 1. Internal Controls; 2. Time Clocks.

Discussion was had on Time Clocks which was second on the priority list. There were many questions. The Board gave direction to get more information. The District has an Employee Access Center which is to be used for changes in withholding, address, etc. Mr. Anagnostou will continue to research time clocks and electronic timesheets.

Internal controls was the first priority under Finances. Mr. Anagnostou explained that the Treasurer’s Office does internal audits on random areas. He picks a different spot every year. The State auditor does not require the District to do internal audits. Mr. Micko would like to keep this as top priority and would like an update once or twice a year at a Board meeting.

### Teaching and Learning

The category of Teaching and Learning held the most areas of focus with five on the priority list and four others. The top five were: 1. Deeper Learning; 2. Future of Learning; 3. Virtual Learning; 4. Special Education Services; 5. Summer Learning Opportunities for Students.

Mrs. Pelko explained Deeper Learning briefly. Discussion was then had about the bottom four areas of focus and whether they need to be reevaluated and moved to a priority status – 1. Career Development; 2. Model Mustang; 3. Digital Learning Library; and 4. Summer Learning Opportunities for Teachers.

Discussion was had on Summer Learning Opportunities for Teachers. Planning is already underway for future professional development opportunities. Although summer professional development is always offered, the District cannot require attendance during the summer months. If all staff has to experience a training, it has to be built into the calendar. Various options were discussed. Dr. Ryba will look into this further.

Implementation of the Model Mustang is already underway.

Dr. Ryba stated he doesn’t plan to work on a Digital Learning Library at this time unless the Board directs him to do so.

Discussion returned to the number one priority, Deeper Learning. Work is being done at a high level with administrators working to have them understand this is education. The team is working on how to get staff on board so they are affectively teaching. Every premier district is good at this level of teaching. The last two monthly Administrative meetings have had conversation on how to get staff on board. It is multiple years of continuing to grow to get better. How do we move this work forward systematically? A conclusion hasn’t been reached. Ms. Green stated it will take the middle school and high school two years to do it well. It is constantly evolving. The elementary may take three years to do it well. It involves intense digging into

## **BOARD DISCUSSION – 2020-2021 DISTRICT GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN** (continued)

### Teaching and Learning (continued)

standards to make sure students are learning in the depth. After much discussion, the consensus was to keep Deeper Learning a top priority. The process is still in beginning stages, and time is needed to create a three-year plan. Solon is one district that is ahead of Strongsville in this area.

Special Education Services made number four on the list. Is a Remote Learning Plan (RLP) still needed if the pandemic goes away? Mr. Trujillo's quick answer was no. But they must be prepared with a learning framework. Discussion was had. Clarity is needed from Board members.

Virtual Learning was the next area of discussion. Many questions were asked and discussed about what to offer virtually next year for our students. Plans need to be set in motion. Should SCS Connects, Edmentum, Strongsville Academy, Edgenuity and Lincoln Learning all be offered? All these options will take a significant amount of work. How much flexibility and to what degree do we want on-line experience offerings for students? Strongsville Academy was created because students were going to other virtual schools. The SCS Connects experience can be the same next year as this year. Differing opinions were extended on how many options to offer. The Administration needs to know the direction of virtual offerings as soon as possible. Depending on the outcome, staff may have to be hired, and the Middle School and High School will start scheduling classes. Dr. Ryba asked the Board to think about SCS Connects. Is it just a bridge or will it be continued to be offered. If it is temporary, staff won't spend as much effort as they would if it is going to be a long term offering. If it is a long term offering, effort and time will be put into it to continue making improvements to be a great virtual opportunity. Mr. Trujillo does not want to see the asynchronous option going away and asked the Board to consider to continue offering it. The Administration needs more direction on educational frameworks. Dr. Ryba asked the Board to think about it and give more feedback and guidance.

### Wish list

The top three items on the "Wish List" were discussed with the Directors sharing the reasons for the need. They were prioritized as:

- A. Innovation Specialist – Superintendent/Asst. Superintendent and Technology
- B. Special Education Coaches – Student Services
- C. Elementary Curriculum Administration – Superintendent and Curriculum

Mr. Anagnostou and Dr. Ryba will estimate the cost to the district. Dr. Ryba stated he would like to talk as a team and come back to the Board with Administration's prioritization.

The Board will reflect on what has been accomplished so far. Another session is not needed for discussion of Finalization of Desired State and Board Reporting.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**21-01-33** Moved by Mr. Roberts to enter into Executive Session to consider the employment of a public employee and to prepare for or review negotiations with public employees concerning other terms and conditions of their employment, seconded by Mrs. Housum and approved on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Roberts, yes; Mrs. Housum, yes; Mrs. Bissell, yes;  
Mrs. Buckner-Sallee, yes; Mr. Micko, yes.  
Motion carried 5-0

Entered into Executive Session at 9:43 p.m.

Resumed public session at 10:27 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**21-01-34** Moved by Mr. Roberts to adjourn the Strongsville Board of Education Special Meeting, seconded by Mrs. Housum and approved on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Roberts, yes; Mrs. Housum, yes; Mrs. Bissell, yes;  
Mrs. Buckner-Sallee, yes; Mr. Micko, yes.  
Motion carried 5-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

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Richard O. Micko, President

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George K. Anagnostou, Treasurer