



ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

501 West University Drive, Rochester, Michigan

BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION

January 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM - Virtual

MINUTES

Call to Order

A Work Session, open to the public, of the Board of Education for Rochester Community Schools, Rochester, Michigan, was held virtually on Monday, January 25, 2021, via Zoom Webinar and YouTube Live. President Kristin Bull called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Sienna Ray, North Hill Elementary 4th grade student, led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Team Rochester administrators shared their appreciation of the Board.

Roll Call

Members Present: Kristin Bull, Kevin Beers, Mike Zabat, Michelle Bueltel, Barb Anness, Andrea Walker-Leidy and Scott Muska

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Debi Fragomeni, Elizabeth Davis, Dana Taylor, Carrie Lawler, Cory Heitsch, Concetta Lewis, Cindy Lindner, Matt McDaniel, Dave Murphy, Josh Wrinkle, Dave Pontzious, and approximately 315 visitors.

Communications

A. Secretary of the Board of Education

Michelle Bueltel shared the nine email communications received: Marissa Miller contacted the Board regarding the hybrid schedule and asynchronous learning; Meredith McCutcheon contacted the Board regarding the agenda for the January 11 board meeting and comments made during the January 11 board meeting; Amie Ackerman contacted the Board regarding COVID test results and shared an article; Chad Smith contacted the Board regarding the return to in-person learning; David Vrtachnik contacted the Board regarding in-person board meetings; Julie Benzenbower contacted the Board regarding her appreciation and support of the Board; Michael VeCasey contacted the Board regarding academic achievement and honors criteria; and Bruce Fealk contacted the Board regarding a staff email about the inauguration.

Additional emails that were received, though not through the RCS website: Jenny Hulway, Andrew Weaver, David Recknagel, Melissa Haddad, Christine Larkins, Meredith McCutcheon, Brad Scott, Patrick Wood, Jennifer Foster, Kara Fautz and Dawn Schultz.

B. Citizens Requesting Placement on the Agenda

None

C. Members of the Board of Education

Michelle Bueltel received an email from Meghan Murphy regarding full-time in-person instruction.

Kristin Bull received emails from: Sara Bakeman regarding a recording of a meeting; Matt Mollan regarding sharing ideas and feedback; Kim Kelly expressing support; David Recknagel sharing feedback and ideas; Peter Andrews sharing research and feedback; Julie Parks sharing research; Oakland County Commissioner Tom Kuhn regarding water fountains; State Representative Mark Tisdell and Oakland County Commissioner Adam Kochenderfer regarding scheduling a meeting; and Mary Beth Almond, Rochester Post reporter, John Wisely Free Press reporter and Jennifer Chambers, Detroit News reporter, each seeking a comment for a story.

Work Session

A. Return to Learn Update

Debi Fragomeni, Cory Heitsch, Carrie Lawler, Concetta Lewis, Dave Murphy and Beth Davis reviewed the timeline through present day. Cory and Debi went on to review the following items: COVID-19 Summary for Oakland County; Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) Oakland County Schools Weekly Report; Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and OCHD School Guidance at a Glance; Michigan Guidelines for Operating School Safety; safety protocols; updated MDHHS guidance (spacing, movement, lunch, cleaning, and quarantining); MI Safe Schools rationale; evolution of state and county guidance; athletics update; antigen testing in partnership with the Michigan High School Athletic Association; building resources; OCHD drive through testing sites; COVID-19 vaccine goal and approval process; OCHD Save Your Spot; five-day in-person learning return dates; Return to Learn Committee update; assessments; scholarly distinctions; no changes to scheduled breaks in school calendar; new RCS website; and a summary of recommended timeline.

Board discussion included: why the MDHSS matrix is now obsolete (which became obsolete prior to the variant strain being reported in MI); factors for moving from/to remote/in-person instruction; factors that may require one building to close/quarantine; prioritizing schools means shutting down the community before closing schools again; PPE (face masks and Plexiglas barriers); elementary specials and limiting movement between classes; antigen testing; how many staff members have been vaccinated to date; classroom and cafeteria capacity with spacing requirements; para support; phase-in process; quarantine procedure once back to full-time instruction; the things within control that RCS is most optimistic about as well as what poses the biggest challenge; appreciation for opening schools in a thoughtful manner; the importance of mitigation protocols; appreciation for committee work and the RCS team; accommodations for teachers with concerns; substitute availability in buildings; preparations for the fall; whether the Virtual Campus will have any changes as in person learning returns; and how to address those families who are apprehensive about returning to in-person learning.

Cabinet members addressed the Board to answer their questions.

Additional Business

A. Citizens Present at the Meeting

District parent Jamie Waterfield addressed the Board regarding asynchronous learning, using a hybrid model without asynchronous learning, and live-streaming in classrooms.

District parent Dave Recknagel addressed the Board regarding emails to the Board, timing related to returning to in-person instruction, and communicating challenges.

District parent Jim Skrobosinski addressed the Board regarding contact tracing, positive cases in classrooms/buildings and notifications to parents, symptoms that require a student to remain home, enrollment, and moving Special Ed Cohort C to five days per week.

District parent Peter Andrew addressed the Board regarding full-time in-person instruction.

District parent Jessica Opfer addressed the Board regarding concerns of full-time in-person instruction.

District parent Andrew Weaver addressed the Board regarding decisions made to return to full-time in-person instruction.

B. Members of the Administration

Debi Fragomeni shared that Neighborhood House is offering various classes students can take part in.

C. Members of the Board of Education

Michelle Bueltel shared that the Rochester Area Youth Assistance and the Rochester Hills Public Library are offering a "Culture and Identity" program on February 18.

Barb Anness shared about the Art on Auburn contest with the Paint Creek Center for the Arts and the City of Rochester Hills.

Announcements

January 25 – Welcome back, Elementary and Special Education students

February 1 – Middle Schools return

February 8 – High Schools return; Board of Education Regular Meeting

February 22 – Board of Education Work Session

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 p.m.

Moved by: Barb Anness

Seconded by: Michelle Bueltel

Vote: 7-0

Respectfully submitted:

Christina Whitmore
Recording Secretary

Approved by:


Secretary, Board of Education