



**Minutes of a Regular Meeting, August 5, 2021
Novi Community School District
Board of Education**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Novi Community School District was held on Thursday, August 5, 2021, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Present: Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook
and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Absent:

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. Mena and supported by Mrs. Murphy that the Novi Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook,
and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

There were ten comments from the audience regarding the return to school and mask mandate/policy.

CONSENT AGENDA 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 July 8, 2021

- B. Approval of Field Trips
 - a. Grand Haven Volleyball Tournament

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

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook,
and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

Personnel Report

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

A. New Hires

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Barnes, Bethany	VS	5-6 Math/Science Teacher	New Hire	MA	08-30-21
Bianchini, Maria	MS	Special Ed Teacher	New Hire	BA+15	08-30-21
Chinn, Rebecca	HS	Counselor	New Hire	MA+15	08-19-21
Eldan, Lara	MS	Literacy Specialist	New Hire	MA	08-30-21
Elenbaas, Blakely	VO	Special Ed Teacher	New Hire	MA	08-30-21
Masserant, Kelsey	HS	Special Ed Teacher	New Hire	MA	08-30-21
Allerton, Elizabeth	ECEC	PS Teacher (Site Sub)	Position Chg.	Hourly	08-30-21
Cross, Elizabeth	ESB	Accounting Assistant	New Hire	ADNU	08-16-21
Landau, Denise	ESB	HR Admin. Asst.	New Hire	Level A	08-16-21
Martinez, Deborah	NW	CARE Leader	New Hire	Level B	08-30-21
Rathinavel, Sadhana	VO	Special Ed Para	New Hire	Level B	08-30-21
Rzucidlo, Kathryn	TBD	Special Ed Para	New Hire	Level B	08-30-21
Sad, Nicole	NATC	Special Ed Para	Rehire	Level B	08-30-21
Vartanian, Knar	ECEC	Special Ed Para	New Hire	Level B	08-30-21
Otte, Jennifer	TRAN	Perm. Sub Driver	Position Chg.	Hourly	09-07-21
Schultz, Andrea	TRAN	Perm. Sub Driver	Position Chg.	Hourly	09-01-21
Summers, Timothy	TRAN	Perm. Sub Driver	Position Chg.	Hourly	09-08-21

B. Retirements and Resignations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Decker, Erica	PV	4 th Grade Teacher	Resigned	08-02-21
Lecher, Lori	VO	ESL Teacher	Resigned	08-10-21
McKaig, Heather	HS	English Teacher	Retired	06-28-21

C. Leaves of Absence

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bldg.</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Cemborski, Gretchen	TRAN	Bus Driver	LOA #2-Health	2021-2022 School Year
Milliken, Katrina	HS	Social Worker	LOA #2-Health	2021-2022 School Year

It was moved by Mrs. Hood and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Board of Education adopts the personnel report recommendations as presented.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

2021 Site Improvements

On July 1, 2021 bids for site improvement projects that includes the pond clean-up and restoration at the middle school and high school were opened and publicly read aloud.

Three (3) bids for this project were received and have been analyzed and tabulated. Mid-American Group was the lowest qualified bidder with a base bid of \$226,687.80. Plante Moran Cresa (“PMC”) conducted reference checks for Mid-American Group and reference were very positive.

It is recommended that the Board of Education award the 2021 Site Improvements Program to Mid-American Group, in the amount of \$553,437.10, with a 10% contingency of 55,343.71 for a total of \$608,780.81 to be funded from the 2019 Bond Program. Attached are the letters of recommendation and bid tabulation from SME and PMC.

It was moved by Mr. Mena and supported by Mrs. Roney that the Novi Community School District Board of Education award the 2021 Site Improvements Program to Mid-American Group, in the amount of \$553,437.10, with a 10% contingency of 55,343.71 for a total of \$608,780.81 to be funded from the 2019 Bond Program.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook,
and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Novi Woods and High School Roofing Restoration

On July 2, 2021, two (2) bids for the roofing projects at Novi Woods Elementary School and Novi High School, received from qualified bidders. Both bids presented tonight have been reviewed with the contractors and it was determined that Grunwell Cashero Co. was the lowest qualified bidder.

The team is recommending that the project be awarded to Grunwell Cashero Co in the amount of \$99,000.00 with a 10% contingency of \$9,900 for a total cost of \$108,900.00. This purchase will be funded from the 2019 Bond Program and the work will extend through September 2021.

It was moved by Mrs. Roney and supported by Mr. Smith that the Novi Community Schools Board of Education award the 2021 Roofing Projects to Grunwell Cashero Co in the amount of \$99,000.00 with a 10% contingency of \$9,900 for a total cost of \$108,900.00. This purchase will be funded from the 2019 Bond Program

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook,
and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Chromebook Purchase

The federal government created the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) this summer to assist school districts in providing devices for students to narrow the homework gap. The intent of the program is to reach those students in need to provide devices for home use and school. Nationwide, the total allocation for this fund is \$7.1 billion.

Based on the District enrollment and free and reduced percentage, we anticipate 200 students will be eligible for a device through the ECF funding.

The administration is recommending the Novi Board of Education approve the following purchases from the General Fund in the total amount of \$73,000. The pricing for these purchases is based on the REMC Educational Cooperative Bid. The purchase is contingent upon the Federal Government’s acceptance of the District’s ECF submission. If the Government awards the \$73,000 to the District, the District will be reimbursed through the

ECF. If the ECF request is not awarded, the District will not proceed with the purchase.

The Administration is requesting the Novi Community School District award to Presidio in the amount of \$73,000 (seventy-three thousand dollars) for the purchase of 200 - 2 in 1 Dell 3100 Chromebooks with 8 gigabytes of RAM. The purchase is contingent upon the approval of the district ECF application. The funding source is the Emergency Connectivity Funding and the General Fund.

It was moved by Mr. Mena and supported by Mrs. Murphy that the Novi Community School District Board of Education award to Presidio in the amount of \$73,000 (seventy-three thousand dollars) for the purchase of 200 - 2 in 1 Dell 3100 Chromebooks with 8 gigabytes of RAM.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

There was a brief break beginning at 8:24 PM and returning at 8:31 PM.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2021-2022 Return to School Plans

The beginning of the 2021-2022 school year on September 7, 2021, will look different the first day of school on September 8, 2020. In September 2020, we started school with two options – hybrid for in-person learning and virtual. In September 2020, the in-person option was a hybrid consisting of both in-person and at-home days.

For September 2021, the Novi Community School District will again begin the year with two options. We will continue the virtual option for families who opted in during our spring enrollment. Our in-person option will be a return to five-day per week in-person. We have about 350 K-12 students registered for our virtual school, while the rest of our students will be in-person.

However, it is important to note that there is still a COVID risk. But our experience, research, and the vaccine have created a much different situation than existed in September 2020.

The daily counts and 7-day averages this year compared to last year show some positive trends.

August/September 2020			June/July 2021		
	7 day average of daily cases	Counts by day		7 day average of daily cases	Counts by day
Monday – August 10	110	110	Monday – June 28	15	14
Monday – August 17	111	67	Tuesday – July 6	19	8
Monday – August 24	96	78	Monday – July 12	29	37
Monday –	91	65	Monday –	31	27

August 31			July 19		
Monday – September 7	75	55	Monday – July 26	60	102

The cases by school district also show some positive trends.

	Fall 2020		Spring/Summer 2021
8/13 – 8/26	6.7	6/24 – 7/7	1.5
8/20 – 9/2	9.1	7/1 – 7/14	1.8
8/27 – 9/9	8.8	7/8 – 7/21	4.9
9/3 – 9/16	12.2	7/15 – 7/28	8.2

When looking death rates between January 2020 through July 24, 2021, we can see that COVID had a differential impact based on age. There were 603,504 deaths in this 19-month period attributed to COVID. ([Provisional COVID-19 Deaths by Sex and Age | Data | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(cdc.gov\)](#)) Of those, 340 were children between the ages of 0-17 – or less than 1% of the total deaths attributed to COVID. By comparison, during this same period for this same age group there were 831 deaths attributed to pneumonia. The COVID deaths for age 0-17 were markedly different than the risk for older Americans. There were 31,090 COVID deaths in the 45-54-year-old range, 96,318 in the 50-64-year-old range, and 134,601 deaths in the 65-74-year-old range.

The CDC states that for young children the “risk of serious complications is higher for flu compared with COVID-19” and that for adolescents the “risk of serious COVID-19 illness is less than in child younger than five.” (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>)

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is trying to balance concerns about the Delta variant and its impact and the benefit of offering five-day per week in-person learning for students. The CDC emphasizes that children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with proper prevention strategies in place. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>)

The CDC identifies a series of prevention strategies. In our district, we currently support the following CDC prevention strategies:

- Promoting vaccination
- Improve ventilation
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick with follow up testing
- Cleaning and disinfecting

On July 18, 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) came out with a recommendation that all students should wear a mask in school. (<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>)

The latest CDC guidance for schools states that the CDC “recommends universal indoor masking

for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.” The CDC recently recommended that fully vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of “substantial or high transmission.” Currently, Oakland County is in the substantial or high transmission bandwidth, recently moving to that category the week of August 2.

We must also recognize that children under the age of 12 cannot currently receive a vaccine.

In Michigan all emergency COVID orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) were rescinded effective June 22, 2021, including the mask mandate. The Governor recently stated that she does not expect another pandemic order in the “near future and maybe not ever.” (<https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-health-watch/cdc-recommends-indoor-mask-use-dont-expect-mandates-michigan>)

With these conflicting recommendations and data, we must continue to recognize that for any age serious illness from COVID can occur. Incidents of serious illness have been noted in people of all ages but those at increased risk for serious illness include older adults, people with medical conditions, and pregnant and recently pregnant people.

It is important to note as well that we cannot mandate the COVID vaccine because it is still classified as experimental.

There is some disagreement over what needs to occur on school buses. The CDC mandates masks on public transportation. I would not consider buses public transportation and thus they would be exempt from the mandate. This is, as of yet, unresolved.

Finally, an important consideration is that the MDHHS, the CDC, and the AAP provide recommendations and not mandates. Some in our community support these recommendations and some do not. Currently we have mandated vaccinations in our state and students must have them before they can attend school with a few medial exemptions. But now, in our polarized society, school districts are left to decide how to proceed.

Our recent experience has shown us this:

- Last spring, we administered over 2000 COVID tests to our spring athletes and less than 1% came back positive.
- This summer we had a mask optional policy in our Preschool – 12th grade summer programming. We had one student quarantine because of a pending COVID test that proved to be negative.
- This summer many of our high school students wore masks even though it was optional.

I recognize that our responsibility is to provide safe school environments. I also recognize that we should follow guidance from experts, in this case scientists and doctors who study infectious disease. The dilemma that I am faced with is that the data presents a muddled picture.

Some might argue that we should err on the side of caution. I would suggest that we create a plan that provides us with a cautious but realistic approach to supporting staff and students.

As I consider the information available and the approach we should take this fall to in-person instruction, I would recommend the following:

- Promote vaccination for staff
- Promote vaccination for students who are eligible
- Option for continued wearing of masks – recommend, but not require, wearing of masks
- Emphasize handwashing and respiratory etiquette and provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes
- Emphasize cleaning and disinfecting.
- Only quarantine students and staff who are positive and monitor others
- Create social distance when possible (lunchrooms, media centers)
- Emphasize that if students or staff are sick they should stay home.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were four additional comments from the audience. Three regarding the return to school and masks and one regarding DEI and hiring.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Steve Matthews, Superintendent of Schools, reported that he and three (3) other administrators in the district are participating in an 18 month long course through the Michigan Superintendents’ Association called Beyond Equity. He stated that there are 17 districts in Michigan who are also participating. Dr. Matthews said they had their first meeting this week and it will be a course that helps districts think about and through how they plan for and implement issues related to DEI. He mentioned that this fits with our continuous improvement plan, which we will talk about next week.

Dr. Matthews reported we will be implementing a portion of it at the building level DEI committees as we move forward. He stated that we will continue that conversation on multiple levels over the course of the next 18 months.

Dr. Matthews presented Mrs. Hood with her an award certificate for her completion in Advocacy Skills Specialty from the MASB. He said that he was keeping it short because the Board was going into a closed session to discuss negotiation items.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Greg McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, updated the Board on the Safe Routes to School Project. He reported that it is about a one-billion-dollar project that got started last Monday. Mr. McIntyre stated that we are starting at Deerfield and moving our way down to Parkview, Novi Woods, Novi Meadows, and Orchard Hills elementary schools.

Dr. Gary Kinzer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported that the Bard is aware of the District’s relationship with HumanEx Ventures, which is a human resources support company. He stated that they helped us develop very strong hiring protocols that our administrators worked through this past month to hire all of the teachers and other staff members that we were able to recommend.

Dr. Kinzer said that they do more than build a hiring process. He mentioned that they support professional development for our staff and support our efforts to build the best culture we can possibly have in the District.

Dr. Kinzer reported that He and Dr. Webber took a team of principals and directors to HumanEx Venues Impact Summit, in Kalamazoo. He stated that they had the opportunity to take in some really dynamic Keynote speakers' presentations and attend breakout sessions presented by some really progressive school districts from across the Midwest. Dr. Kinzer said then their own team was able to engage during their planning times and it was a really positive, impactful experience.

Dr. RJ Webber, Assistant Superintendent for Academics Services, reported that shortly in your mailboxes there will be the Engage Magazine with an article in the middle of it on the Novi Virtual School, which we are very proud to be launching this year. He stated that the article provides some better detail on what that entails.

BOARD COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Roney, Board Trustee, reported that Frog Force received the Chairman's Award, at the World Championship Level. She stated that they also received some other Kudos. Mrs. Roney said that they have an event coming up, Robots in the Park, and they have something on the 16th and we are all invited.

Mr. Mena, Board Secretary, reported that we had our first, hopefully, annual Novi Twilight Mile, last Saturday. He stated that there were about 60 participants, which they were pretty happy with given that this is the first year.

Mr. Mena said that they did have to delay quite a bit because there was a storm that came through for the second time. He mentioned that most of them were underneath the weight room. Mr. Mena reported that our football field can handle a lot of water, but the entire field was literally flooded where their tent was set-up. He stated that they had tarps covering the computers and stuff they use for the timing system. Mr. Mena said that one of our principals, Mr. Brickey, helped out and had to take off his shoes because the water was up over his ankles in certain parts of the field. He mentioned that within 15 minutes the entire thing had drained.

Mr. Mena reported that next week is Band Camp and the following week will be the beginnings of all of our athletics, cross country, football. He stated that this is the week where MHSAA starts allowing everyone to have practice, so there will be a lot of activity on our fields. Mr. Mena said that he was really excited to get rolling on our fall sports season.

Mrs. Murphy, Board Trustee, reported that the Novi Mental Health Alliance had their second book club this evening at the Novi Public Library, but their first kick off meeting of the year will be August 16th, which is Monday, at Border Cantina at 6:30 PM. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Mrs. Murphy stated that a nearby coalition is hosting a Festival of Hope, which is to meet local organizations that offer programs, services, and resources for individuals and families. She said that will take place on Sunday, August 22nd from noon to 4:00 PM, at the Novi Civic Center.

Mrs. Murphy mentioned that the Novi Community Coalition works closely with the Novi Mental Health Alliance and their mission is to empower youth and enrich communities. She encouraged everyone to find out a little more about what resources are out there for parents and families. Mrs. Murphy reported that there are a lot of giveaways and raffles.

Dr. Danielle Ruskin, Board President, expressed her gratitude to Mr. Cook for running the last couple of meetings, while she spent some much needed time with her family and stated that she looks forward to seeing everyone in person.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Smith that the Novi Board of Education Regular Board move into a Closed Session to discuss wage reopeners with our union representatives.

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: 7 Dr. Ruskin (remotely), Mr. Smith, Mr. Mena, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Hood, Mr. Cook, and Mrs. Roney (by Roll Call)

Nays: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for August 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., at the Educational Services Building.

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)