

# OLENTANGY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATE

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 26, 2021

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Vince DeTillio, Assistant Director of Professional Development, began his presentation with sharing the District's belief that high quality professional learning opportunities play an integral role in the success of staff, students and the District. All professional learning is derived from the District's mission statement and strategic plan, the Portrait of a Learner dispositions, and the Olentangy curriculum foundations that create quality learning experiences.

This school year the three district-wide staff professional development days will focus on Learner Agency, which refers to students positioning themselves as active participants in the learning process. Agency is activated in students when they are able to think, learn and create alongside and through others. Agency is developed as students know how they learn best and become more self-aware. Agency grows as students voice their opinions and provide feedback. Last, Agency is nurtured when students make choices that positively impact their learning. It invites students into the learning process and take responsibility for their own growth.

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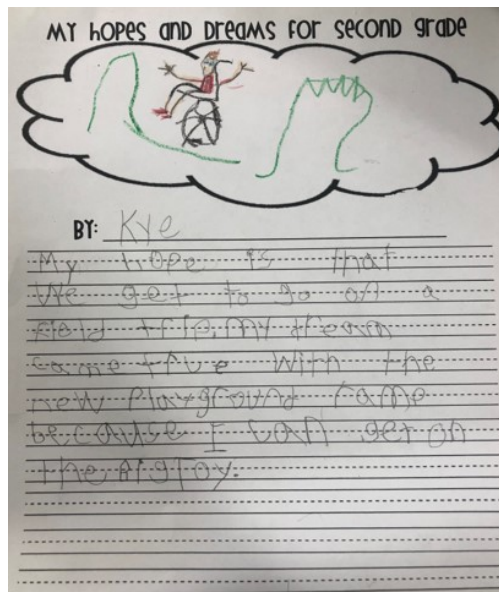
## SUMMER 2021 PROJECTS UPDATE

Director of Business Management and Facilities Jeff Gordon reported to the Board on the progress of summer construction projects, which were funded by the spring 2020 bond issue. Below is a summary of the facility improvements that took place across the district:

- Security vestibules have been added to three high schools, two middle schools and 11 elementary schools.
- 15 elementary playgrounds were renovated to be ADA compliant, handicap accessible and have soft play surfaces.
- Media centers were updated in three high schools and five middle schools.
- Office spaces at Olentangy High School, Liberty Middle School and Orange Middle School received new desk units and carpet.

- Broadcast journalism studios were added at Olentangy High School, Berlin High School and Liberty High School.
- Olentangy High School had the track replaced, received a new front patio, the athletic restroom was renovated, and a new PA/Bell system was installed.
- Liberty High School had an office converted to a conference room.
- Hyatts Middle School received a new bus lane and stadium parking.
- Other improvements included repairing school roofs, HVAC systems, and annual asphalt repairs.

Mr. Gordon received the following feedback on the new elementary structures from a Scioto Ridge Elementary student, who is thankful to finally be able to play on the “big toy.”




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## BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board President Julie Wagner Feasel spoke to the Board, district leadership and the community with the following remarks:

*While serving as school board members, we all have to duty to ensure the educational welfare of all students. We must make sure our school buildings are safe for our students and staff. Last year when the schools were closed by order of the state and students were forced to learn at home, I had a saying “No one took a class on how to teach during a pandemic.” Likewise prior to 2020, no school*

*board member was trained on how to oversee a school district during a pandemic. We are all learning as we go.*

*I understand that everyone has experienced situations we never imagined 18 months ago. I understand that these unprecedented times are causing great stress on everyone. I understand that everyone wants to just get back to “normal”.*

*I will be the first to admit that I thought as soon as there was a vaccine available, and we got through the school year, this coming school year would be “normal”. June 2<sup>nd</sup> came and the state’s health orders expired and I was ready to get on with my life.*

*However, as back to school preparations began, Covid numbers started to go back up. The decision was made to follow the guidance of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers of Disease Control and the Ohio Department of Health to strongly recommend facemasks be worn in the buildings regardless of vaccination status. When that was announced the school board and administration received numerous emails and phone calls against this decision. The communication expressed everything from disappointment to anger to calling for board members’ and the superintendent’s resignation.*

*When school started a week ago, administrators monitored mask wearing and unfortunately the number of students wearing masks, especially for those in the grades where students are not eligible for the vaccine, was not as high as we had hoped. In order to keep students in school and out of quarantine, the decision was made to mandate masks starting Monday, August 23. When that announcement was made, the school board and administration received numerous emails and phone calls against THIS decision. The communication expressed everything from disappointment to anger to calling for board members’ and the superintendent’s resignation.*

*As board members, we render all decisions based on the available facts and our own independent judgment rather than succumbing to the influence of individuals or special interest groups. The fact of the matter is, when students and staff members are not wearing masks and they are exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid, they have a better chance at being quarantined, thus missing important time in the classroom. This is what we are all trying to avoid. No decisions were made based on the numbers of emails and calls received from either side. In fact, after one week of school, Total impact of 211 (188 students, 23 staff) and 59 positive cases, (44 students, 15 staff) and 152 quarantined (144 students, 8 staff) with two entire classes (total 40 students) quarantined after two days of school due to exposure to an unmasked positive case. We’ve received 409 mask exemption forms equally 2.65% of the impacted population.*

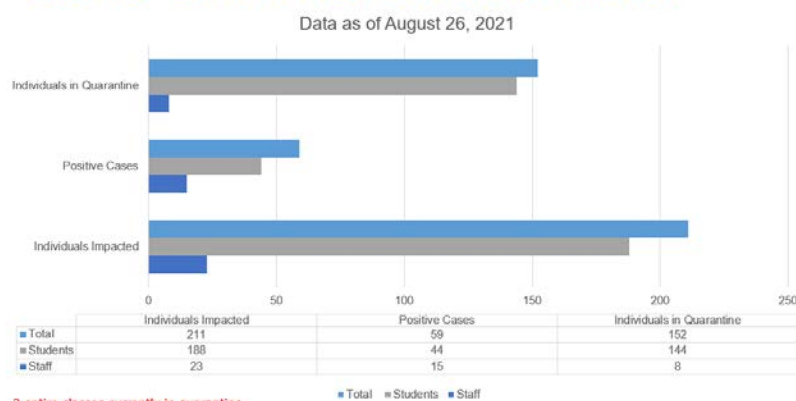
Let me be clear – ensuring students have access to in-person learning is a key priority of the Board and masks are an important prevention strategy to reduce the spread of illness and help limit the instances of isolation and quarantine.

Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.67 authorizes boards of education to make and enforce such rules to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the students attending or eligible to attend the schools of the district, as in its opinion the safety and interest of the public require.

I am sorry that we continue to face the unknown with this pandemic. I'm sorry that this issue to mask or not mask has divided our community. I'm sorry things are not back to normal. However, I am not sorry for acting in the best interest of our students and staff to ensure they can stay safely in our buildings.

And finally, act in kindness. There is too much ill-will in this world to have neighbors angry at neighbors. No one here knows what the future looks like, I keep looking for the crystal ball, and acting out in anger does not accomplish anything nor does it set a good example for our students.

## COVID-19 IMPACT ON OLENTANGY



The Board of Education approved the Olentangy Emergency Powers Resolution to:

1. Extend the Emergency Powers Resolution (Board Action Item 20-180) adopted on August 27, 2020 for a time period during the 2021-22 school year until December 31, 2021, with an automatic roll over through May 31, 2022, unless the Board acts to terminate it; and
2. Amends Policy 8450.01 - Use of Face Masks/Coverings, as attached and incorporated by reference .

This means that the Board has extended Emergency Powers to the Superintendent through May 2022 and amended the Face Mask/Covering Policy 8450.01 to require face masks to be worn by PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade staff and students.

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Emily Hatfield reviewed the July board financials, highlighting a supply and materials budget item, and a multi-year renewal of a district-wide subscription of electronic textbooks.

The District is not eligible to receive ESSER II or ESSER III funds. Therefore, all additional pandemic related expenses, like additional cleaning and sanitary measures, are being expensed to the general fund.

Mrs. Hatfield explained that to lower the district's debt cost, the Treasurer's action items include advanced refunding of bonds of just over \$80 million. This will decrease the cost of holding debt, creating a 7% – 8% net present value savings of the original amount of debt issued.

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The livestream of the Olentangy Schools Board of Education meeting on August 26, 2021 is available on the [Board Meeting livestream webpage](#). The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 9 at 6:30pm. All meeting information and records are posted to the [Board Meeting Records page](#) on the district website.