



**Minutes of a Regular Meeting, May 19, 2022  
Novi Community School District  
Board of Education**

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A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Novi Community School District was held on Thursday, May 5, 2022, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Present: Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, and Mrs. Hood

Absent: Mrs. Roney

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 Mr. Cook that the Novi Community School Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mrs. Roney, and Mrs. Hood

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

Nancy A. Colflesh Distinguished Alumni Award

Every Spring, the Department of Educational Administration, in the College of Education, at Michigan State University recognizes an exceptional administration graduate. This award is given to one of their alumni who is an excellent practitioner or researcher in the area of educational leadership

This year, the Michigan State University Department of Educational Administration is excited to honor another dynamic educator who is one of our own, Dr. RJ Webber. Dr. Webber is the 2022 recipient of the distinguished Nancy A. Colflesh Distinguished Alumni Award. Tonight, we would like to take the opportunity to express our deep congratulations and appreciation to Dr. RJ Webber.

On behalf of the District, students, staff, and community, who are the real recipients of Dr. Webber's vision for the possibilities of what can be, his exceptional work and dedication to make it a reality, we would like to convey our deepest expression of gratitude for his 12-year journey toward that vision of the future of Novi's students and the District.

Dr. Kinzer introduced Dr. David Chapin, a retired superintendent from the East Lansing Public Schools and a faculty member in the Michigan State University Doctor of Educational Leadership Program, who presented the award to Dr. RJ Webber. He read a quote from Dr. Kinzer's glowing two (2) and a half page nomination letter that summarized things quite well. Dr. Chapin read, "I (Dr. Kinzer) have developed tremendous respect and admiration for Dr. Webber and his unwavering passion and commitment to all students, both in Novi and beyond. He has done an outstanding job with the traditional tasks required of an instructional leader, but

he has also worked tirelessly to develop programming in Novi that provides students with incredible opportunities to grow as human beings, not just students.”

Dr. Chapin congratulated Dr. Webber, acknowledging the importance of building bridges between the teachings on college campuses and the real work being done each and every day in schools across the State of Michigan and beyond.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In the Board Operating Procedures, Election of Officers, and according to M.C.L. 380.11a, the Board shall fill a vacancy in any Board officer position within thirty (30) days of the occurrence of the vacancy. A vacancy among officers of the Board shall be filled by majority action of the Board.

Tonight, the Board discussed and voted to fill the position of Board Secretary.

It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Cook to nominate Trustee Murphy to fulfill the duties of the secretary for the balance of this term.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mrs. Roney, and Mrs. Hood

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### ENTER INTO A CLOSED SESSION FOR THE PURPOSES OF:

- a. First: OMA - Section 8(1)(a) to discuss a complaint against a public officer
- b. Second: OMA - Section 8(1)(h) to consider a written legal opinion from the Thrun Law Firm, P.C.

It was moved by Mr. Smith and supported by Mr. Cook that the Novi Community School District Board of Education move into a closed session.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Mrs. Hood, and Mrs. Murphy

Nays: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board moved into a closed session at 7:35 PM

The Board returned from a closed session at 9:11 PM.

Dr. Ruskin, Board President, reported that the Board went into a closed session because they had a complaint. She opened the floor to Board members who would like to comment, share thoughts, or take action or make a motion, since they were not able to talk about that in the closed session.

Mrs. Murphy, Board Secretary, made a statement outlining violations of Board policies and ethics by Mr. Mena in response to the earlier complaint filed against him prior to making the following motion:

It was moved by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Smith for the censure of Mr. Mena.

Mr. Smith, Board Trustee, made a few comments and then stated he stands by his support for censure.

Dr. Ruskin made a few comments and then stated she will not be supporting that based on the evidence.

Mr. Hood, Board Treasurer, made a few comments and then stated that she supports the motion to censure Mr. Mena for his actions as mentioned.

Mr. Cook, Board Vice-President, made a few comments and stated so he will not be supporting this motion

The Board took a roll call vote on the motion made by Mrs. Murphy and supported by Mr. Smith to censure Mr. Mena.

Ayes: 3 Mrs. Hood, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Murphy

Nays: 3 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, and Mr. Cook

**MOTION FAILS**

Dr. Ruskin read a statement from the Board with regards to the complaint and procedures.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were 13 comments from the audience regarding the superintendent search, FOIA, censure, committees, procedures, and support.

#### ACTING SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. RJ Webber, Acting Superintendent, shared something that is celebratory of our community and that was a list of the Novi Educational Foundation (NEF) grants for the spring. He stated that the grants they were able to give totaled \$25,374 dollars

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McIntyre, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, expressed his gratitude to those who served on the Food Service RFP Committee and stated that the information was sent to the MDE. He stated that we have two (2) bidders, which were Chartwells and Quest Food Management.

Dr. Kinzer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported that he had the privilege of attending the Rotary's Most Improved Student Luncheon. He stated that the Novi High School Counseling Department recognized 10 high school students. Dr. Kinzer mentioned that they were very inspiring success stories. Dr. Kinzer reported that every event we have in our District, where we recognize students, he walks away just amazingly impressed with what our students accomplish and today was a great event.

Dr. Kinzer reported that we are progressing through our hiring process for our next assistant superintendent of academic services and that they will be narrowing that group down to finalists. He mentioned that we will be on track to make a recommendation for hire on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### BOARD COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Hood, Board Treasurer, reported that she stopped by the varsity baseball tournament on Monday to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month and on Saturday, our baseball coach had a tournament for Breast Cancer Awareness and all the boys wore their pink jerseys.

Mr. Cook, Board Vice-President, reported that he attended the high school choir concert. He stated that Claire Schurig did an outstanding job with all choirs.

Dr. Ruskin, Board president, reported that there was some question about how long people are allowed to speak and whether they are allowed to speak twice, so it was decided that we would have one opportunity for public comment. She mentioned that we want everyone to have the opportunity to speak.

Dr. Ruskin reported on the three minutes they put there, so that really everyone has the opportunity to speak. She stated that it was put before any action items, so that we could hear a public comment from the audience.

Dr. Ruskin encouraged everyone to attend the senior events. She reported that the seniors last day is next Friday. She stated that there was the spring signing yesterday and commencement is on Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Dr. Ruskin mentioned that MLI is coming on Monday for the Board meeting and that it is an open meeting. She stated that they are going to be walking the board through some of the process. She reported that she had the opportunity to go to meadows yesterday and meet with Mr. Brickey. Dr. Ruskin commented on Mr. Mena abstaining versus voting and he is allowed to do either according to the MCL statute.

Mr. Smith, Board Trustee, reported that there is a new organization in Novi, the Friends of Novi Schools, and the focus is purely on mental health, security, and safety for our students. He mentioned that it is not just students. He announced that the executive director for that organization is going to be Jason Smith.

Mr. Smith reported that he had the opportunity to visit the high school on Tuesday morning. He stated that he was talking to Marianne in the attendance office and mentioned with the language barriers. Mr. Smith recognized Mr. Mena offering his support.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

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 April 21, 2022

It was moved by Mr. Cook and supported by Mrs. Murphy that the Novi Community Schools Board of Education that the Board table the consent agenda to a future meeting to make revisions and corrections on the meeting minutes.

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, and Mrs. Hood

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>
Day, Rebecca	NW	Special Ed Para	New Hire	Level B	05-20-22

##### **B. Retirements and Resignations**



## INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

### Policies Updates and Resolutions

The Governance and Policy Committee met on March 14, 2022 and the again on April 4 to review two (2) policies: Policy 3004 – Textbooks and other instructional materials; and Policy 8010 – Digital Communications, a Social Media Policy. They are bringing them before the Board tonight for information and discussion.

#### **Revised Policy:**

##### **3004 – Adoption of Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials**

*For purposes of this policy, textbook shall mean the principal source of instructional material for any given course of study, in whatever form the material may be presented.* The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to *recommend and* purchase ~~and recommend~~ to the Board, for its approval, instructional materials, including textbooks that are compatible with the School District’s curriculum. The Superintendent may utilize well qualified administrators and teachers to assist in the selection of instructional materials, including textbooks, to be recommended to the Board.

#### **Revised Policy:**

##### **8010 - Digital Communications**

*Social Media add a value as a way to promote public education and the District.* Digital communication (including social networking) that occurs on District premises or involves the use of School District equipment is governed by the Acceptable Use Policy and this Policy. This Policy also applies to digital communication that occurs off District premises and/or using non-District equipment.

Digital communication (including social networking) provides educational and other opportunities for staff and students. The *Board* of Education expects that staff and students who engage in digital communication will do so in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Specifically, digital communication between staff and students, or to which students reasonably may be exposed, should be professional and of the same content, tone and demeanor as in-school communication between staff and students. Similarly, digital communication between staff and parents, community members, and other adults, or to which staff members, parents, and community members reasonably may be exposed, should be professional.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different user name or have a “personal” account, a public school employee’s online presence can be connected to your employment as a Novi Community School District (NCS D) employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as an employee of the NCS D in what you do or say online. Behavior unbecoming of an NCS D employee as determined by administration is subject to disciplinary action and/or termination.

The district recognizes an employee’s first amendment rights and the complicated issues surrounding free speech. The district is not trying to limit speech but wants to ensure that employees and students recognize that speech can result in discipline. For employees that discipline can be up to termination.

Students may be subject to school-imposed disciplinary sanctions when their digital

communication violates the Student Code of Conduct, interferes with the rights of others or is reasonably anticipated to result in or actually does cause a disruption of school or school activities. Separately, the School District reserves the right to report suspected digital communication that demonstrates criminal misconduct to police authorities.

Digital communication between staff members, parents and other community members or adults should always be professional. This applies to direct or indirect communication.

The use of social media while on District property, during work hours, or while using District-owned devices must not interfere with District educational purposes or work performance and must not be used in any manner that violates this Policy, Policy 8001 – Acceptable Use, or federal or state law.

“Social media” refers to any publicly accessible internet-based service that enables a user to share communications, images, or videos with others or participate in social networking. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, document sharing and email.

While using social media on or off duty, Staff must:

- A. not engage in criminal activity;
- B. make it clear that the employee’s views are their own, not the District’s, as applicable;
- C. refrain from using a District email address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools for personal use;
- D. engage in appropriate communications with students, parents/guardians, or other staff members;
- E. maintain staff and student privacy and not disclose confidential staff or student information; and
- F. Not communicate false or misleading information.
- G. not defame, insult, or embarrass other staff members, students, parents, or community members.
- H. report to the appropriate administrator(s) any behavior or activity which endangers student or staff security, safety, or welfare.

Employee use of social media in violation of this Policy detracts from the District’s educational mission, adversely impacts the District, and may result in discipline, including discharge.

The School District does not have the inclination, resources or ability to police the off-duty behavior of staff members. At the same time, staff must be cognizant of the fact that they serve as role models for our students. Furthermore, their communications and behavior may affect the reputation of the School District and their colleagues. For these reasons, staff are reminded that off-duty digital communication may result in investigation, disciplinary sanctions or discharge when those communications, or characterizations or depictions of staff behavior, disrupts the educational environment or adversely affects or undermines their ability to perform their jobs.

Staff social media accounts that are branded with “Novi,” “NCSD,” “NCSD Schools,” or similar monikers will be considered Novi Community School District accounts and should refrain from being overtly political *or for personal gain (fundraising)*.

These proposed policy revisions are submitted to the Board of Education tonight for information and discussion with approval at the next meeting of the Board of Education on June 9, 2022.

#### Novel Purchase

Sarah David, English Language (ELA) teacher and ELA Department Chair at Novi Middle School, is requesting that the Board please review the information being submitted for a new eighth grade novel, *Everything Sad is Untrue*. She is asking for the Board to please consider the purchase for the fall of 2022 at Novi Middle School.

No new novels have been purchased for the students to read as part of their curricular experience since 2005 and the department is looking to add a novel that is relevant, engaging, and appropriately challenging for our middle school students. Students were surveyed and many expressed an interest in novels that explore injustice, real-world problems, war, and survival.

This novel came before the Curriculum Committee at their May 12 meeting and was recommended for Board information and discussion tonight.

This novel comes before the Board tonight for information and discussion and will come back for approval at the June 9, 2016 Board of Education meeting.

#### OCSBA Election 2022

Two individuals have filed as candidates for the two 6-year term seats open for the Oakland Schools Board of Education Biennial Election.

**Connie Williams**  
**Barb DeMarco**  
**Steven Gottlieb**

**Brandon Kalasho**  
**Charlie Gandy-Thompson**

Oakland Schools board members are elected by an electoral body composed of one (1) person designated by the board of each constituent school district. The Revised School Code prescribes that each constituent school district board must designate a representative to this electoral body by adopting a resolution that will:

- 1) designate the person to vote in the election on behalf of the local district board,
- 2) direct the designee which candidate the board supports for each position to be filled,
- 3) direct the designee to vote for those individuals, at least on the first ballot taken by the electoral body.

The designated electors must cast their ballots **in person** at the election scheduled to take place between **5:30 – 7:30 PM on Monday, June 6, 2022** in Conference Room B of the Oakland Schools building located at 2111 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford. **The revised school code prohibits the acceptance of absentee ballots.**

According to the revised school code, districts shall consider the resolution at no less than one (1) meeting before adopting the resolution. Districts have interpreted this language differently and historically have used one of the following three options to consider and adopt their resolutions:

- Consider the resolution as a discussion item during an open meeting and adopt the resolution as an action item during another open meeting, with each meeting occurring on a separate date
- Consider the resolution as a discussion item during an open meeting and adopt the resolution as an action item during a second open meeting immediately following the first open meeting



- Consider the resolution as a discussion item and adopt the resolution as an action item at the same open meeting (Local school districts selecting this option should seek independent legal counsel confirming a singular open meeting to consider and adopt a resolution is compliant with the revised school code).

According to the revised school code, districts must adopt their resolutions no earlier than twenty-one (21) days prior to the election (**no earlier than May 16, 2022**).

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Capital Projects

Mr. Cook, Board Vice-President and Chair of the committee, reported that the committee met on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, in the Novi Middle School Media Center, conducted by Plante Moran Cresa. He stated that the committee is supporting their recommendation letter. Mr. Cook said that they will attend the May 23<sup>rd</sup> finance committee, which is Monday, at four o'clock, to present and further discuss these recommendations.

### Governance and Policy Committee

Mr. Smith, Board Trustee and Chair of the committee, reported that the committee met and that they will end up with a recommendation for the curriculum committee to move forward.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

Ayes: 6 Dr. Ruskin, Mr. Mena, Mr. Cook, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Murphy, and Mrs. Hood

Nays: 0

## **MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m., at the Educational Services Building.

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Bobbie Murphy, Board of Education 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)