

## **District Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

### **September 18, 2023 12:00 – 2:30pm – Administration Building**

*Attendees:* John Hood Melanie Lynn, Karen Shapiro, Liz Luyendyk, Corinne Dyksen, Sarah Allen, Sage Hales-Ho, Tere Blanca, Stacey Smith, Jessica Savage, Pamela Jones, Leah Kwapis, Kristin Hundt, Sabrina Potterpin, Niki Robinson  
*On Google Meet:* Katie Cavanaugh and Jane Manfredi

Welcome and Introductions - *Karen Shapiro* - Everyone introduced themselves.  
Welcome to the new school year.

#### Superintendent's Report - *John Hood* -

- Bond update coming to Board of Ed. It's updated monthly online. Currently finishing Central's secure vestibule. Others are later due to supply chain delays. OHS Stadium ribbon-cutting will be after homecoming. Next year, new Hiawatha vestibule and other improvements. Prioritizing health and safety within a tight budget.
- BOE lawsuit on impacts of social media (youth and mental health).
- (Child Vaping) Juul settlement \$70K. Altria settlement coming - \$30K
- New Meridian Police Chief (Grillow). We should invite him as a speaker.
- We hired a new district Director of Safety and Security - Katie Deal (grant from the state). We decided not to hire a school resource officer (with mixed survey results).
- MTSS team (multi-tiered systems of support). We should invite group to speak.
- Hiring principal at Hiawatha underway.
- Met with the Township to create an MOU for our ongoing mutual agreements. Ex. sharing of fields and parks, resource officer (liaison), Senior Center.
- Mr. Hood is presenting at MASA Thursday with our architects.
- Presenting to SEC on securing soon.
- BOE doing policy work (going through and revising). Adopted policies from Thrun (legal). Reviewing more policies every month and hoping to complete 7/1/2024.
- Had a good opening with teachers: HOME theme
- Putting together a start time committee to work on new start times. Ready to change and work with bargaining unit. 3 DPC parents on committee: Jane, Corinne and Tere.

Question: Crossing guard a possibility at Chippewa (after child was hit by a car)?

- This would be a Township position.
- We can put the issue on Nextdoor to raise awareness about flashing lights and lower speeds around the schools.
- Can email about Kinawa Rd. safety to the "At Large Community"

Question: OHS sign replacement- John says it's in the works but will follow-up on details.

Question: Noticed Okemos clothing at Meijer.

- Old contract with them to carry our clothing is now terminated.
- Gabe with Fabricated Customs is for our official needs. For fundraisers, kickbacks go to those schools, but generally to the district.
- Other outlets have permission to sell as well.

Comment: Food service lines have been very long since this year we are offering free lunch. They are trying to streamline to make things run more quickly.

- We need families to fill out FRL (free reduced lunch) forms to get \$ for the district (reimbursement).

Question: Registrations were low as of last May, how are the district's numbers now?

- Numbers are now up from last year. New this summer, we had rolling registrations without the office closing. School of choice is now a waitlist.

#### Board of Education Report - Melanie Lynn

- ID opportunity from advanced efficiency from hiring new director roles/new administration. Difference distribution of work. Hoping for clearer and greater impacts.
- Bond update
- Attendance and behavior update. SEL (Social Emotional Learning) impacts
- BOE meetings are remaining both in person and online. May transition from Zoom to Google.

#### Action Items

*Water Fill Stations (Jane)* - She wanted to make sure all schools had water bottle fill stations and they do.

*Speakers/topics for this year* - Group discussed what speakers we should invite for our 23-24 meetings. Karen and Liz will contact to see when they are available.

1. Meridian Police Chief Grillo with new Director of Safety and Security, Katie Deal
2. MTSS team
3. Ken Hintz, Athletic Director
4. Food Services Director, Emily Swirski (will email with prepared questions and present her answers)
5. Facilities (Kelly Bianchi)
6. Jennifer Eddy and Jen Pricco (Gifted and Talented and Special Ed)
7. Mario Martinez, HR Director

Relating to facilities, the group talked about district insurance policies (OPS asking for an additional insurer. Would like a list of requirements for facility use (can go online for request).

#### Old Items

*Inclusive Playgrounds* - Dr. Slee has looked at and piloting at Hiawatha

New discussion on fundraising. Raise Right is a good fundraising app. Create within PTO. Can get no-fee gift cards and earn money.

#### Other questions/Comments?

District nurses? Not in schools. Needed for medical action plans.

School Reports (following)

*OHS – Niki Robinson, Sarah Allen, Karen Shapiro*

*Chippewa –Tere Blanca, Carly Patel, Dawn Crandell*

*Kinawa – Liz Luyendyk, Leah Kwapis, Amanda Brush*

*Cornell – Corinne Dyksen*

*OPM – Sage Hales-Ho and Mike Callahan*

*Bennett Woods – Jane Manfredi*

*Hiawatha–Jessica Savage, Stacey Smith, Joy Magyar*

## DPC Building Reports

### Kinawa 5-6

- We have had a great start to the school year. Students have learned their routines and are doing well with the start of the school year.  
This year we are really focusing on being a part of our community. To help with this we have set up fall field trips to really focus on team building and fun for our students.  
All Kinawa 6th graders went canoeing at Heavner Canoe Rental at Proud Lake State Park
- All 5th Grade students will be going to Howell Nature Center October 2 and 3
- All students just completed their NWEA testing in Mathematics and will be taking the ELA NWEA assessment on 9/15
- We have a general KPG mtg scheduled for 9/20 at 6:30 via Zoom
- KKM will be 9/22- We would love to have as many volunteers as possible. This is our primary fundraiser for the school year.
- On September 25 we have Ken O'Connor coming to present to the Kinawa staff as we work to transition towards Standards Based Grading in the next couple of years.
- Kinawa's Picture retake day is Sept. 29

### Bennett Woods Elementary

- We have been working on our school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and are working towards earning our first school-wide celebration next Friday for being kind, safe, and responsible in the building.
- We took NWEAs.
- Next meeting is sept 21

### Central Montessori Elementary

- Welcome Back Popsicles on the playground event right before school started went well

- Spirit Wear Sale is ongoing and ends on 9/17 featuring a shirt with a "Peace begins with me" design that includes both the wolf and Montessori dove logos. This phrase the students at each morning as a part of the peace pledge and emphasizes the focus on peace through the Montessori lessons.
- Eat Out fundraiser for September was on Sept 13 at Henry's Place & Asian Buffet.
- Upcoming eat out will be on Oct 11 at Kaiyo Sushi & Grill that will be opening sometime in September.
- PTO will be providing food for teachers during fall conferences in October
- OPM is decorating a float for the parade
- District Parent Council representatives will be Sage Hales-Ho and Michael Callahan.

## Hiawatha Elementary

- We had a very well attended first PTO meeting of the year with more than 20 parents and a handful of staff members.
- Next month we will start presentations if there are staff members that want to share formal reports on school happenings.
- Adrienne Hagon RTI coach will present in October.
- All event planning has begun, and we are adding another event back into the mix this year--multicultural night.
- Jody Noble, our interim principal, provided a very thoughtful update on our staffing challenges as well as shared training information about the new math and science programs that will happen during the upcoming PD day.

## Okemos High School

- Dr. Kemsley has been reworking the carline, especially while the athletics lot has been closed, to help it run more smoothly.
- The high school is asking parents not "excuse" students to go to lunch. Appts during lunch time will be excused WITH A NOTE; unfortunately, some parents are trying to circumvent the closed campus policy by "excusing" their students for lunch which is not acceptable.
- October 12th, LifeTouch will be coming back to take photos of kids who did NOT get a photo taken/ID or want to order picture retakes.
- Clubs are starting to be in full swing. They are encouraging students to join.
- October 6th, the HS will be mailing home State assessment data from last year and the results from the NWEA, a diagnostic assessment taken by all English 9, Lit Comp 9, Studies Algebra, and Algebra students.
- Each grade is getting \$250 for Homecoming week preparations.  
 HOMECOMING WEEK:  
 Kickball Tournament - Monday, October 2nd  
 Bonfire - Tuesday, October 3rd  
 Homecoming Parade/Game: Friday, October 6th  
 Homecoming Dance: Saturday, October 7th

- Parents can sign up for Kroger Rewards for OHS fundraising.
- Updated information is on the Okemos High School Parent Group Facebook page.
- The next OHS Parent Group meeting is Friday, October 27, 9am.

Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** October 16, 2023, 12-2:30pm, Chippewa 7-8

Email: [Districtcouncil48864@gmail.com](mailto:Districtcouncil48864@gmail.com)

Website: [www.okemosk12.net](http://www.okemosk12.net) – Families – District Parent Council