

District Parent Council

11/15/21

Meeting minutes

Attendance:

John Hood, Lauren Schefke, Jayme Taylor, Karen Shapiro, Kristin Arnett, Niki Robinson, Sarah Allen, Liz Luyendyk, Corinne Dyksen, Jane Manfredi, Carly Patel, and Joy Magyar

Welcome and introduction- Sarah Allen

Secretary: a new secretary is needed for this group- role: take notes during the meeting and send it to the DPC admin team, they edit them, then to the website. Dr. Jane Manfredi volunteered.

Superintendent's Report – Mr Hood

- Onboarding 2 additional nurses to help with COVID contract tracing and communication. One from ICHD and CDC grant.
They started training last week
- COVID cases are relatively low district wide (12/5,000, more updates to come today for the counts). The test to stay clinic for close contacts to keep them in school at Faith Lutheran Church 7-9 am all school mornings is successful.
- There is a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Kinawa this week and weekend. We are the only district to hold two as our survey a month ago revealed approximately 2000 elementary age children of the 2,300 in our district were interested. There are parental release forms, and the vaccine is available regardless of insurance status. We are working on an approach to minimize stress to children while waiting for the vaccine and there are privacy barriers.
- At the last Board of Education meeting 2 of the 6 high school representatives talked. We are excited that so many students want to participate.
- Mascot- Next Wednesday a survey will go out to the Okemos community at large asking for three mascot names. There will be programming within Okemos schools regarding the need for the new mascot and encouraging students to participate in the process. The student committee will pare these names down to the top 10-15 and the community will be surveyed again. Students will decide from the top finishers of that survey and there will be a recommendation to the Board by January 1. We are not considering other CAAC names or native themed names and this will be noted in the initial survey. The logo for the mascot (with guidance from our art departments, Nike and Adidas) will be picked before spring break. This process was funded by a large grant (\$225K) from the Native American Heritage Fund and the balance from the District's account. We will retain the traditional Okemos School colors of maroon, white and Carolina blue.
- Bond initiative: in 2 years the district will have no debt, but we would like to maintain the taxes at 7 mils to generate more money to help our buildings, grounds and facilities. We are looking for parent and community at large volunteers to steer the creation of this bond initiative (\$100-200 million total as a goal). The commitment is 3-4 evening meetings before May, starting in December. The hope is

some of the parent representatives could also drive the Vote Yes campaign associated with the measure. DPC reps will reach out to parent members during their PTA meetings.

- Masking requirements: After thanksgiving, the health department passed an order that allows athletes, band members, and those students participating in fine arts performances the option to perform unmasked if they test negative before their event, practice and/or competitions. This is only good for activities within Ingham. There is a concern there may not be enough tests to do this and Mr. Hood is reaching out to our state representatives. High school students have asked if we can slowly do this in order to give more time for our 5-11 yr olds time to be fully vaccinated. The high school trainer and nurses are working on how to track testing. This masking rule would apply to high school and middle school students.
- New Athletic Director, Tempie Brown, starts Nov the 22nd. She was a student athlete, has collegiate experience, and is a great connector with people and kids. She has a focus on athletic accessibility and equity for kids in K-12. She has been a college recruiter and asst basketball coach at MSU and Stanford. She will have significant input into the rebuilding of our football program, garnering help from Paul Palmer and our students.

Principals Report – Lauren Shefke,

- Principal Shefke expressed her gratitude for her warm welcome to Okemos and her excitement at being here.
- The 4th grade classes are excited to get the same lesson regarding the need for the new Mascot as the secondary programs are getting, while it is adjusted for elementary students.
- New lunch tables have arrived allowing for better in person spacing during lunch time. The new adjustable and easily moveable tables and chairs that are in the schools' colors in two of the four new classrooms are well received by students.
- BW and the other elementary schools are starting to seek parent volunteers to help our teachers. A survey will be sent out this Friday to all. Parents will have to be fully vaccinated (more details to be discussed on what this means) and have background checks before being able to volunteer.
- BW hired new at risk aid (2 total now for K-4), while they will focus on literacy skills in K-2, they also address math as well. She has noticed that students in general have greater needs as compared to pre COVID, but this is more on whole classroom basis.
- Into Reading is the new curriculum, and the teachers are receiving monthly training from the company that made it and have time to work with their peers.
- The first field trip of the year- the 4th grade class went to MSU Seeds of Science- was successful (one day rained out but rescheduled).
- Front office staff may be a bit more busy with sick kids, but there should be rooms designated for quarantine on all of the buildings. Kids that have 2 or more signs are declared sick and guardians contacted for pick up.

Board of Education Report – Jayme Taylor

- Board approved the Spanish trip to go to Costa Rica June-July.

- Approved Personal Health Sexuality Advisory Board (PHASE). There were a lot of good candidates. Good discussions.
- Asst Superintendent Bailey- fall screener (MySaebrs and academic data), most exceed the national averages. There are still gaps in results with students with disability and certain demographics (BIPOC). Trustee Lynn wanted to see trending data for our screeners over time. Assistant Superintendent Bailey will look at that.
 - A discussion evolved into how do we help teachers teach better to those demographics as this has been an issue for some time. The new DEI director (Dr. Slee) is looking at this and Mr Hood continues to do so as well, with a greater emphasis on teachers.
 - https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1DRJqS4ERc_Ey1Q0C1rFQj-6LB7k534KPs8fU45zc_Nk/edit#slide=id.p
 - There was some concern there was a lack of flexibility in moving between academic groups, with students identified as one academically performing class in 5th grade and then being “stuck” there. Mr Hood indicated we are seeking to be more flexible.
- Two of the new high school reps addressed the board and the board is excited 6 students are interested.
- The Board approved the recommendation for Tempie Brown to join as athletic director.
- Because of the amount of turnover, the board approved a 3rd party to assist the district and the new administrators.
- Equity update: Dr. Slee has been great about communicating to the staff, newsletters about holidays and events, and resources for the staff for eg. framing of thanksgiving and its impact on Native Americans so teacher can talk about this in their classrooms. She is working on curriculum, policies, and procedures with the DEI lens. Plan to come after Jan 1st. Mr Hood indicated a committee is being put together from focus groups from the different interest groups. Mr Hood indicated our commitment to good teaching using primary sources, with different vantage points/perspectives, with an emphasis on critical thinking.
- Policy committee- policies currently under review.

Presentation – None

Building School Reports

OHS – Niki Robinson

- No parent group meeting this month.
- Three new interim principals. Be still January, kids are very interested in representing to the board. Fall athletics, we won volleyball, football played. All doing well with a lot of changes. High school pool issues? Andrea is the interim. In the spring we will open competitively this spring. Another admin out because of illness. Should know more at the end of the first semester. MESB? asked for retired admin with exper and DEI at their core and Andrea an dHS team interviewed 3-4 and offered to best candidate. Dr Mark Sharp has done the work in the DEI area (Howell) in an area where it was more difficult than Okemos. Custodian issues are ongoing

(elementary better). Two have resigned and harder to find night custodians. Getting quotes from third party vendors now. Can't find people to hire.

- Parents help at the high school to pick up trash etc. in other locations. Put in the newsletter to help pick up trash!
 - Discussion followed:
 - ACTION group etc. get the students involved to help our own community.
 - Help on the outside helps with the inside.
 - Fine for parents to email to say they will clean up so the school knows why they're around the outside of the building.
 - Subs also an issue- can't find coverage.
 - Ok with transportation, but Lansing not.
 - Para-pros leaving saying rather work at Costco and make more money. Principals are cleaning up at lunch.
 - Lunchroom is the worst in the high school and the bathrooms.
 - Teachers and admins scrubbing toilets and sinks. Someone on site to use chemicals appropriately to supervise parents on site. We could pay them if parents became employees to help.
- New tables in the lunchrooms?

Chippewa – *Karen Shapiro and Kristin Arnett*

- CPG held its last meeting on Friday, 11/12.
- It was decided that 7th grade camp will not be held as usual this year. They will provide a substitute camp with a few field trips and a few in-school programs. They will also include the 8th graders in some activities since they missed 7th grade camp last year.
- Some new COVID funding will be used for afterschool activities.
- Homework club is held every Monday and Tuesday from 2:50 pm until 3:30pm. The supervising teacher is Ms. Kregelka and the tutors are from the Okemos High School ACTION club.
- They are creating a new weight room/fitness club, 2 days/week.
- AMC Math Club will be testing soon.
- Kinawa hosts a Friday video gaming club. The games/materials are older, but the kids that participate enjoy it.
- The parent group is doing a holiday gift card program for teachers, centralized electronically via signup.com.
- Kinawa continues to use Amazon Smile and Kroger Rewards for fundraising.
- The next Chippewa Parent Group meeting will be held on December 10, 8:30 am

Kinawa – *Niki Robinson and Sarah Allen*

- Preparing for reproductive health classes to continue
- Math competition opportunity for 6-8th graders
- Science Olympiad is back. Online form for signup by November 16, 2021.

Cornell – *Liz Luyendyk and Corinne Dyksen*

- Care Bear project will go on again, collect food and adopt other families. ID within the school, PTO help with logistics for this project.
- Meeting this Thursday

OPM – *Katie Cavanaugh and Niki Robinson*

Bennett Woods – *Jane Manfredi*

- Bennett Woods students had a fun Halloween dress up afternoon.
- The day before Thanksgiving break, the Teachers will dress up as like they were on Zoom (as voted on by the students) because the school had such a successful Fall Fun Run Fundraiser.
- Parent teacher virtual meetings were held. We recently stocked the teacher's lounge with snacks and drinks for some teacher appreciation. We know conference time makes for long days, so we wanted to provide some snacks. We were able to provide each classroom teacher, specials teachers, and several other staff members (school social worker, office, special education etc) with \$200 to use on classroom materials.
- We were hoping for an update on the crossing guard hiring situation
- Mr Hood is looking into crossing guard hiring updates.

Hiawatha – *Carly Patel and Joy Magyar*

- Fall food drive.
- November 22/23, 4-6 PM families in need can come in a take what they can use. PTO to purchase turkeys that would like one. Self service food drive.
- Benefit night Dec 8th and Culvers night in January.
- Pancake breakfast at Applebees, just starting to discuss if this is possible once this year.
- Need volunteers for the yearbook.
- PTO provided Halloween treats donuts and apple juice.
- Chapelure Box lunches to the teachers once. Last Thursday we delivered Tropical Smoothie.
- Coming up with an event for the kids.
- Printing and laminating signs of positive affirmation around the mirrors. Thinking of ideas around mindfulness for students and staff.
- Repaving of path of Fairhills to their school- is the township or school thing? It needs help.

New Business

Technology- when websites are updated with correct teachers and locations. In process.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: December 13, 2021 – Cornell (online)

Email: Districtcouncil48864@gmail.com

Website: www.okemosk12.net – Families – District Parent Council