

District Parent Council
Meeting minutes
September 20, 2021 12:00 - 2:30pm
Online Zoom during Covid-19

Welcome and introductions - Sarah Allen

Attendees - Niki Robinson, Liz Luyendek, Karen Shapiro, Corinne Dyksen, Carly Patel, John Hood, Sarah Allen, Katie Cavanaugh, Joy Magyar

Superintendent update - John Hood

- Initiatives this year
 - Covid is taking up so much time.
 - Contract tracing is taking up hours and hours of administration time.
 - Covid test site to “test to stay in school” will be open this week.
 - We need support help, in reality we need tests so people can test at home but until that happens the site will be the way to test students so they can come to school.
- New diversity director - Lara Slee, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Dress code has been changed to not sexualize the females.
 - A City Pulse article highlights changes:
<https://www.lansingcitypulse.com/stories/is-your-school-dress-code-biased-against-girls-probably,18187>
 - This is part of our equity work that we are doing as a district.
- The new mascot committee will be starting soon.
- We are in the midst of the implementation of the current bond funds.
 - This is for furniture, air conditioning, and bathrooms. The ac and bathrooms are almost finished.
- Struggling with cleaning staff in the Covid staffing shortages that are happening all over the place. The district is in need of 15-20 paraprofessionals.
- The school grounds are not where they should be. The plan for the new bond next year is to go big on buildings, classrooms, face of buildings, and individual bathrooms. Our buildings need to look better than they do, it is way past time.
- Administration is in the midst of mentoring the new principals. They are all very skilled and good but they still have to learn the culture and ways of the district.
- New HR Director was hired.
- New Food Service Director was hired.
- A new Athletic Director will be hired soon after the resignation of Brian Fuller.
- Mr Hood is concerned for our teachers and staff. He is working to set limits for what they should be required to do during the pandemic. The teachers and staff are having to do the contact tracing work instead of places like the health department and it takes away from their personal time and work time. He is trying to create boundaries for what the district is required to take on when other places get to be finished with work at 5pm but teachers and staff are required to keep doing Covid protocol and tracing.
- The district had to say no to doing virtual school. It would have taken \$1 million to have been able to do it. Okemos didn't get that kind of Covid money. Lansing got a lot more Covid money so they were able to create a virtual curriculum. Okemos will do in-person for as long as we can.
- Mr Hood asks us to be advocates for “stay at home” testing. The district has had to create a testing site at Faith Presbyterian church for students who need to

quarantine to be able to quickly and at no cost get tested if they've been asked to quarantine. Please contact state legislators Julie Brixie and Curtis Hertel to advocate for "stay at home" testing.

- The district needs substitute teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Mr Hood was asked how the parental pushback regarding how everything with the pandemic is going. He said there have been less comments coming into the district. He said the Board meeting attendance is down so that tells him people are happy with the decisions being made. One classroom in the district went online and only one parent complained, the rest shared in gratitude.
- Mr Hood was asked if food service lines had gotten better. He wasn't sure but the council agreed we think they have gotten better.
- Enrollment - district is up 38 students from last year
- Mr Hood was asked about the need to continue to plan ahead for school buildings. Bennett Woods was added onto but is that really going to solve the issue long term? He said an architect has been hired to look at the school building enrollment projections.
- An opinion was shared with Mr Hood that enrollment Kick Start dates at the beginning of the year start too early when people are still traveling. And then when school starts some students aren't prepared because they missed the dates.
- Regarding Covid numbers - we need school families to remember that what they're doing outside of school affects Covid numbers like student sleepovers and sport team dinners.

School Board Update - *Katie Cavanaugh*

- The Covid Handbook was approved.
- Mascot - with the great help from Mr Hood, the Okemos School District was awarded a \$213,000 grant to help with the expense of the Chiefs rebranding.
- Lots of new hires have occurred.
- Preparing for the 2022 bond.
- The new calendar is available to be more culturally sensitive to other religious holidays. The recent day off in the middle of the week was for the Jewish Yom Kippur holiday. More days throughout the year will be happening to be accommodating for religious holidays. They are being adjusted by starting earlier. Some of them have been made into professional development days so that helps the students but there is more work to be done with this so that it also helps the staff with those holidays.

Discussion about Topics to explore this year

- Tech discussion
 - what are kids doing with technology?
 - We need to be proactive, not reactive
 - Is it possible for families to get admin rights to their child's device?
- Invite Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to meet her.
- Invite Director of Food Service to meet her.
- Bond - for Jan/Feb - invite Mark Fargo to discuss landscaping for the district and to learn what the PTO's role in it should/shouldn't be
- Music program - we'd like to know how the district music program is going and what kind of impact has the pandemic had on it.
- Invite Stacy Bailey - for Jan/Feb - to discuss curriculum
- Invite School nurse - are students taught the Heimlich maneuver?

- Invite the new, not yet hired, Athletic Director - for May - meet the person and also want to find out how to make our athletes more marketable to colleges. How to get more colleges to come in and look at our athletes?
Also, invite Dr. Hyliard from the high school to discuss what role the guidance counselors play in helping the students

Questions to ask the presenters:

We are a group that is trying to be part of solutions

Building Reports

OHS – *Niki Robinson*

- Homecoming September 29-October 2
 - Outdoor bonfire, pep rally, dance
 - PSAT/SAT on October 13

Chippewa – *Karen Shapiro and Kristin Arnett*

- Picture day is September 26th. Students will have their pictures taken during their PE class
- Picture makeup day will be November 9th.
- Chippewa needs students to cross streets safely going to and from school. They would like parents to remind their child(ren) to utilize appropriate crosswalks/stoplights when crossing the streets. It has been shared that our students have been darting across streets and not patiently waiting for stoplights to activate.
- Fastbridge Reading, Math and mySaEBRS assessments are given three times during the year. The first assessments will be given over the next three weeks Language Arts, Math and BASE (mySAEBRS) classes. These assessments are a valuable screening tool to help us determine the specific needs of students.
- There will be a Chippewa Middle School Science Olympiad Team for the 2021 – 2022 season, applications were due on 9/17. There was an introductory Zoom meeting on 9/12.
- Drama Club has decided that the show must go on...LIVE! This year, The Chippewa Theater Program will be producing a Fall Stage Play: Faery Free-for-All, and a Winter Musical (details TBA). Ms. Lindsay Post will be continuing on as our Stage Play Director. We are also pleased to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Chad DeKatch. They will be joining us as our Musical Directors for the winter performance. At this time, we are registering Cast and Crew for Faery Free-for-All. The cost is \$30 for the session. Optional spirit wear items are also available. The fall session of the Chippewa Drama Club will (generally) meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the Chippewa Middle School Auditorium.
- On September 15th, concrete is being poured on our new tennis courts.
- Principals - please put in newsletter for vehicles to go slower.
- Field trips will be on a case by case basis.

Kinawa – *Sarah Allen and Niki Robinson*

- Annual Fundraiser, Keep Kinawa Moving will be this Friday, September 24, 2021. The hope is to have it outside with some adjustments due to Covid but still able for the students to enjoy the event.
- In need of lunchroom supervisors

Cornell – *Liz Luyendyk and Corinne Dyksen*

- New principal: Angie Tyrpak
- Current enrollment is 448. We are using 4 buses and only one is beyond capacity(77) at 89.
- Our first parent meeting was held in the evening on September 15 on Zoom. The PTO plans on keeping the meetings on Zoom until deemed not necessary.
- Cornell's annual fundraiser will be in early October, all activities will be outside for the event and in accordance to school policy.
- Lunch staff is needed.

OPM - *Katie Cavanaugh and Niki Robinson*

- Trunk or Treat is occurring in October

Bennett Woods – *Nathan Schuster*

Hiawatha – *Carly Patel*

- 36 people on Zoom PTO
- Popsicles Open House
- Money will be given to teachers and staff
- New playground balls for the students
- Hawk Walk on October 8

New Business

- PHASE application volunteers needed
 - Liz, Nike, and Sarah will review the applications
- DPC was asked to help consider making button photo pins for each student in the district to help with their faces to be seen
 - DPC members discussed and decided not to move forward with this request because:
 - Pins on little people would be difficult and lost quickly
 - They are seeing each others faces during recess
 - Many teachers have put up their photos around their classrooms

Next meeting - October 18, 2021, Chippewa, online Zoom at 12:00 - 2:30pm Eastern Time.