

## District Parent Council Minutes

December 16, 2024 12:00 – 2:30pm, Cornell Elementary School Library

Attendees: Karen Shapiro, John Hood, Shannon Beczkiewicz, Katie Cavanaugh, Jane Manfredi, Tracy Ojerio, Candice Pizzo, Kristin Hundt, Corrinne Dyksen, Giselle Claux, Liz Luyendyk, Sarah Allen, Vanessa Grant, Tamara Marshall

Via Zoom: Leah Kwapis, Amanda Brush Thornburg, Mary Verhanovitz

Welcome and Introductions - *Karen Shapiro, DPC President*

Superintendent's Report - *John Hood, Superintendent*

- We have 2 new Board of Ed members - Leeni Shrestha and Jason Burns. They are going through orientation which Katie and Andy are leading.
- Mary Gebara resigned as she accepted a position with "Prevent to Protect." Okemos applied and was accepted into that program. We need to fill her position by January 9th. Applications are due tomorrow at noon.
- Bond: New design for Cornell. Placing all needs within design.
- Chippewa bids to build most of Chippewa and amenities. (Now just foundation and groundwork.) Bid closer so not so expensive for future unknown inflation. Christman is overseeing (construction manager). Tower Pinkster - architecture.
- Concerts happening across district.
- Shannon B - Nathan Brown is our new Digital Communications Specialist. He will be managing website updates.
- Points of Pride - Great relationship with Township Police (Chief Grillo).
- MI heart safe designation - all schools (Fib, trainings, materials)
- Revised budget - We are in a deficit due to increased insurance costs, our foundation allowance did not increase as expected, and higher (unexpected) environmental remodeling costs. New aides as well. Can take from fund balance (12.9% rainy day fund).
- Received FilterFirst - clean water grant \$93,000
- Also received other funds from the stated for environmental remediation \$100,000.

Board of Education Report - *Katie Cavanaugh*

- Mary stepping down. She was president the last 3 years. We had 30 days to fill Mary's BOE spot (per ISD). Board met Thursday to decide on interviewees.
- Interview Jan. 6th - must be Okemos resident. January 13th for new president.
- Universal accommodations in our schools - giving kids what they need (extended time, verbal vs. written, breaks, flex seating, preferential seating). Each building has their own universal accommodations. (Hopefully they will all be the same in the future).
- High School - all work is due at the end of a unit.
- This is the trend across districts, but more at the elementary levels.
- Discussion of Universal Accommodations. Positive, but with some concerns pertaining to college prep.
- Two new members have been trained.
- Sleep seminar (U of M presenter) November 19th. Would be good for high school.
- January 28th - Board of Ed sleep/nutrition for wellness presentation at Kinawa.

- New Strategic Plan
- \$1 million Kinawa remediation (mold) - removing all carpets and retiling
- 6% increase for teachers' union insurance.
- MASB conference - October. Discussed school start times with other Ingham County schools. Will invite in January to present to them.

#### Principal's Report - Tracey Ojerio, Cornell Elementary Principal

- Bond work - really thinking about what we want to create here. Two year temporary move to Chippewa, Fall 2026. Thinking about what we will need there.
- New audio enhancements, cameras - Better view inside and out. Safer now with secure vestibule.
- Last year created vision of Cornell - empowering student voice. Classroom leadership/mentorship.
- Diversity - Global Cornell event and more.
- Cross-grade interaction: reading buddies/equity lens
- Dislexia training
- Looking at multi-tiered levels of support. Getting counselors involved for those who need support.
- Cornell now has 470-475 students. 115 new dwellings just built in the Cornell area.

#### Presentation - Brian Lieber - Director of Operations & Facility Use

##### **Bond**

- New Chippewa under construction - Can now see the new gym
- Maintenance areas being built
- Looking into how Cornell will flow in (temporary Cornell at the Old Chippewa). A lot more children in the building.
- Looking at old contracts vs. new contracts. Our day and night cleaning crews are different. Day cleaners are Okemos employees, night cleaners are private contractors.
- New grounds person hired (from MSU)
- Working on new equipment (costly) for grounds.
- Every school has one lead daytime custodian. All spots are filled.
- Still need to hire maintenance workers.
- Wolf mascot will arrive at the end of Jan./beginning of February. Available for all big events!
- Q: Corrinne - Since most schools have big fall fundraisers, is it possible to move the Okemos summer run earlier? Schools are thinking that the summer run has interfered with fall fundraising efforts. A: Will look into. Possibly May.
- High school having heating issues - a computer issue. The building is 30 years old, so there are problems that need to be addressed. Consumers and Trane will look at HS HVAC system. (Can stretch bond money).
- Q: Will 3 lunch periods stay at the HS? Yes. One period is split, but may be altered.
- Wardcliff property - just for storage now. Still hoping to demolish in the future.

#### New Business/Action Items

- Future presenters?
  - Possible: 1 ½ nurses, sexual health chair, arts/music (Mark Stice), Sciences, Distin Short/Chief Grillo, Liz Lentz. Next year - Community Education

School Reports

*OHS – Liz Luyendyk, Sarah Allen, Tere Blanca, Karen Shapiro*

*Chippewa – Leah Kwapis, Amanda Brush, Giselle Claux*

*Kinawa – Liz Luyendyk*

*Cornell – Corinne Dyksen and Kristin Hundt*

*OPM – Sage Hales-Ho and Mary Verhanovitz*

*Bennett Woods – Jane Manfredi, Tamara Marshall, Vanessa Grant*

*Hiawatha – Stacey Smith and Pam Jones*

Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** Monday, January 27th, 12-2:30, Okemos High School

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

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

# OPS Building Reports

December 16, 2024

## Okemos High School

- A new student club at OHS is the Okemos Fun Squad. The primary goal is to help bring about joy and connectedness at OHS. This year they have been creating new events and activities for students, decorating class hallways, and now they are hoping to bring some joy to their teachers. They launched a door-decorating contest and completed a survey of teachers where they asked them to share what supplies they need most and are asking for donations.
- Winter music concerts this week.
- Earth Club and ACTION participated in a cleanup of the Red Cedar River with the Michigan Waterways Stewards
- On 12/2 there was a Financial Aid & FAFSA Night presented by the LCC Financial Aid office at the high school for interested seniors.
- OHS Shoe Drive - gently worn, used and new shoes 11/25-1/17
- Toddler Day was 12/13

## Chippewa 7-8

- Winter Wonderland on 12/20 for students! Dancing with. DJ, board games, gym time, crafts, and cookies!
- CPG gifting the staff an air fry/convection oven combo and having a Sign-Up to STOCK THE STAFF LOUNGE!

## Kinawa 5-6

- Reminder to parents that phone and smartwatches are not to be used during school hours.
- Please refer to the Spirit Week flyer for daily themes.
- Science Night is scheduled for February 13th.
- Asking parents to remind students to clean out lockers this week, no food or unnecessary items home.

## Cornell Elementary

- Cornell/Wolf gear sale has been completed as well as Raise Right gift cards
- We are planning for science night in February
- Just finished a book fair through Literati
- Whole reward from Wolf Pack Run- popcorn, movie, pj day was Friday Nov 22

## OPM

Upcoming PTO Events:

- Thurs, Feb 6, 6pm to 8pm - Science Night
- Okemos High School Action Kids will appear twice.
- Bricks and Minifigs has generously volunteered to be a free exhibitor. They have offered to create a Lego Okemos Wolf at cost. The small version measures 3x3 and costs \$125, while the large version measures 5x5 and costs \$475. The school will get to keep whichever model is chosen. This offer is available for all Okemos Public Schools.
- Thurs, Feb 27, time TBD - Impression 5
- Past PTO Fundraisers
- December: Buff City, raised \$153.00
- January: Launch, raised \$TBD (PTO meeting held before fundraiser)
- Call for Volunteers for 2025-26

- Social media poster
- Flyer creator (templates available for future use)
- Newsletter (templates available for future use)

### **Bennett Woods**

- Social meeting at Tiny Bit of Wood was a success
- Coffee hour with the principal was well attended
- Planning for science night is underway- possible sharing of resources with Kinawa
- Parents night out with victory martial arts coming up
- Plans for a pollinator garden with organization from the high school club
- PBIS celebration went well
- Thankful November wrapped up and was appreciated by the teachers and staff

### **Hiawatha**

- Huge lift by the PTO and the Hiawatha Helps committee to fulfill a record sized holiday wish list. We had 20 families with needs this year.
- NWEA testing went well
- Mr. Corr is going to start Coffee with the Principal in Jan/Feb
- Countdown to break is happening this week for the staff along with spirit week for the students