

District Parent Council
Meeting minutes
October 18, 2021 12:00 - 2:30pm
Online Zoom during Covid-19

Welcome and introductions - Sarah Allen

Attendees – John Hood, Jody Noble, Melanie Lynn, Lara Slee, Niki Robinson, Kristin Arnett, Karen Shapiro, Joy Magyar, Liz Luyendyk, Corinne Dyksen, Katie Cavanaugh, Jane Manfredi, Joanna Purkiss, and Sarah Allen

Superintendent update - John Hood

- Finalizing mascot committee members
 - Criteria shared
 - After the idea is figured out the graphic will be created
 - Student led with community input
 - Hoping to have idea ready by January
- Bond
 - Community survey and video coming out soon
 - Significant money needs to be put into our outdoor and indoor facilities
 - Community committees will be used to help in this process
 - Believe we can raise over \$100 million without raising taxes, extension but not raising
- Athletic Director
 - Interviews happened this week
 - Four candidates interviewed
 - Recommendation will go to Board in November
- Covid
 - Mitigation measures are going well
 - Currently 4 student, 2 staff active cases – this is VERY LOW for the amount of students and staff we have – we can be really proud at how well we are protecting everyone
 - UofM data masked vs. unmasked – significantly higher, 2.5% rate higher for unmasked schools
 - Elementary principals looking to loosen up volunteer rules, proof of vaccination will be required, so the volunteers can come in and help. Parents are wanting to come in and teachers want help.
 - Reassessing events as well at that level.
 - Faith Lutheran has been great to help us with the Test to Stay testing clinic.
 - Health Dept. may hire a part-time person to help us with contact tracing.
 - Hiring new school nurse to help as well.
 - Legally can't use volunteers like the DPC asked in last meeting for volunteers to make phone calls (without knowing confidential names).
- Sub coverage is biggest stressor right now
 - May start to have a sub set for each school so they have consistency.

- Sub shortage every day. Typically nine each day, have had up to 17 a day in the district.
- \$90 rate a day.
- Consortium around us so we aren't stealing subs from other districts.
- Lansing pays \$200 a day because it's harder to get subs into that district.
- Budget
 - Equalization of Covid relief money that will have strings attached, 4 million is what we received.
 - Budgeted for zero increase of students, which helped us now because we're still about 100 students down pre-Covid.
 - Last year we were down 100 students, we budgeted to stay down at 100, and we did stay down 100.
- High School
 - Academic help, shifting out detention, after school help time.
- Diversity Equity Inclusion
 - Eastern Michigan Certification DEI Leadership Training.
- New ideas from new principals and staff, but other principals and directors are doing great at helping with mentoring.

Discussion/Idea

- DEI – costume swap.
- Elementary schools have been having the discussion to start a costume closet.
- How can we make Halloween more inclusive and we make sure we do Valentines Day so it's inclusive as well.
 - We are going to be intentional with these events. We have a great deal of families that enjoy those events. We are not looking at cancelling those events at this time. We want to make sure we look at them with a DEI lens.
 - Mosque – Staff training years ago, the Imam said it was important not to strip kids of the American culture, and Halloween is part of the American culture.
 - Dr Slee says the East Lansing Halloween decision was multi-faceted.
 - Treats and parade expectation for the parents to be there, etc. made it difficult on families.

School Board Update – *Melanie Lynn*

- She wanted to say thank you for how Mr. Hood focuses on process, it is so important, it helps us identify what we're going to do. It's important that we are a good community partner.
- Thank you to Jody Noble.
- Ecstatic to have Dr. Lara Slee with us today.
- Board had a focused conversation about being intentional about projects we have going on. To make sure we have the administrative capacity to handle this work and make sure we're doing the right work.
- The Board will have training in the next few months (policy-making focused).
- We ask ourselves to make sure we are doing what's best for our students.

- It's important to be focused especially during Covid to make sure we are providing the best for our students.
- We need to be prepared for the 2022 year budget.

Principal's Report - *Jody Noble*

- Thank you for the picnic tables, she'll never go back. The students have three options for lunch and she's really pleased with this.
- In August we spent a lot of time looking at emotional and educational needs.
 - For how staff could deal with the Covid stories that they were going to hear when the kids came back.
- In September
 - Presentation on the whole child to welcome them back without the instant stress of school. Need balance between stress of school.
 - Mary, Native American, spoke with staff about the importance of the mascot change. Staff needed tools as the students manage that change so staff would have tools to discuss with them.
 - Data Days going on to help figure out each student to create plans if needed for the students.
- Student support team has been created after Covid.
 - The staff team has certain students to check on.
 - MySaebars test was taken to identify any students that are quietly struggling.
 - Last year a lot of students in the red. Being back the numbers are down.
 - The students are seeing the counselors A LOT, but that's good.

Question about behavior

- The behaviors are younger behaviors than typical like touching and running.
- It's not malicious behavior. It's a lot of energy. The stuff that Kinawa teachers had trained them to do aren't necessarily there yet.

It would be important for the whole community to know that ALL the students are being looked at.

Dr. Lara Slee – Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Shared about her family. Their family also had a tough time getting their kids through school. There were times when their kids struggled to get through the rigors of school like many others.
- Dr. Slee taught at the Lansing alternative school. She's excited to be in this district to help it become better at DEI. She said we've done well but we have more to do. For example, if a Lansing student had been transferred over to Okemos, they would not have been well served. We have some kids that could be served better.
- Would like to adjust and expand the equity definition in the school handbook.
- Will be looking at policies. How are we interacting with the community, parents, and connecting with resources outside?

Guiding Equity Questions

- Who is (not) benefiting from the way we are doing things?
- Whose voices are missing from the conversations? Oftentimes it's the parents. Sometimes it's the student.
- Critical Consciousness
 - Self-Awareness
 - Recognizing our own biases
 - Understanding power and privilege
- There are a lot of different identities that affect and impact what we're doing.

Update the District Equity Plan

- To include more action steps
- To know when we've been successful in our plan

Dr. Slee would like to do many Informal group discussions amongst the parents

Question about ableism

- Ableism is on the agenda. How are we integrating general ed and special ed? How are we making plans for field trips, etc. Are we making them accessible to all?
 - All these to be made sure they are being taken care of.

Question about parent group discussion

- Can Dr. Slee's study groups happen in any group like with PTO groups? Yes, definitely.
- We want to work on building anti-racist white educators

Question regarding the school vandalizations

- Restorative Justice is used with the students who vandalize.
 - By asking "How do your actions impact other students?"
- The vandalization has died down.
- There is a renewed appreciation by students (Mrs. Noble speaking directly about Chippewa) for being in school now. They are glad to be here and aren't taking it for granted. We have been so appreciative of the students' mask compliance. There is a tangible feel of being glad to be back. Noble had three high schoolers ask if there is anything they can do to help since the teachers are overwhelmed. Before Covid she's never had that before.

Regarding Okemos Chief spirit wear

- High school is working to repurpose items. Anything that has value can't be donated because it was purchased with taxpayer money, but if it has no value then we can donate. Clothing is being donated, was approved by the school attorneys. Community spirit wear turn in program to get a discount. Then use the students again to recycle stuff.

Will all schools be going to ONE mascot?

Mr Hood says that will be a process of discussion, he's not sure.

Building updates

OHS – *Niki Robinson*

- Parent Teacher conferences coming soon
- After school homework help has started
- Proud of High football for persevering

Chippewa – *Karen Shapiro and Kristin Arnett*

- Fall conferences (via Zoom) are approaching. Opportunities for a virtual conference via Zoom will take place on:
 - Tuesday, November 2: 12:00 - 2:30
 - Tuesday, November 2: 4:00 - 6:30
 - Wednesday, November 3: 4:00 - 6:30
 - Thursday, November 4: 4:00 - 6:30
- The Zoom link will be emailed to the address you use to register for conferences. Registration for conferences opens on October 18 at 5:30pm and closes on October 28 at 8:00pm. Conferences will be scheduled at: MY CONFERENCE TIME
- Homework club will be 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.
- The CMS 2021-2022 yearbook is on sale now for \$35. Orders are through jostensyearbooks.com. Last year's yearbooks are still available next week for current 8th graders.
- Discussions regarding school field trips are taking place, but no decisions have yet been made.

Kinawa – *Sarah Allen and Niki Robinson*

- The Prism club is committed to a vision of justice in schools that includes supporting and including all students while offering a safe, non-judgemental space. In order to achieve this, our club is committed to promoting tolerance and acceptance throughout the school community.
- Have conversations with your child about the vandalizing of bathrooms that is occurring.
- Offering counseling through signing up through Counseling Google Classroom pages. One for the 5th grade and 6th grade. Codes are available to access.
- Always needing lunch supervisors.
- *Keep Kinawa Moving* happened with a great day of weather. The students had a great time. We're waiting for a final number for how much was raised.

Cornell – *Liz Luyendyk and Corinne Dyksen*

- Annual PTO fundraiser was on October 15th, the goal of raising 15K has been met and the PTO is expecting a bit more this upcoming week. The kids had a great time and the rain held off.

- Picture Day October 20th
- Friday October 29th our students are able to bring simple costumes for festivities taking place during the afternoon.
- Teachers getting ready for conferences
- A change in drop off time happens on November 1st. School doors will not open until 8:45.

OPM – *Katie Cavanaugh and Niki Robinson*

- Coupon book fundraiser
- Trunk or Treat on October 22 from 6-8pm

Bennett Woods – *Nathan Schuster and Jane Manfredi*

- This is the largest amount we have ever raised at our fall Fun Run Fundraiser, \$26,090! Because of a successful Fun Run, our students earned a recess dance party, pajama day and the staff will be dressing up in a costume voted on by the students. We were also able to give each teacher \$200 for use in their classroom as well as a bonus \$100 if they met their classroom Fun Run goal! We are planning to provide lunch to the staff one day during the week of conferences.

Hiawatha – *Carly Patel and Joy Magyar*

- Offer costumes for Halloween
- New flag for school
- Working on getting the announcement board to work again
- Behaviors/acting out so they are asking parents for help
- Need lunch supervisors and substitute teachers

New Business

- Paper Gator
 - Recycles books and paper, it makes money for the school everytime it is emptied.
- Okemos High School – discussion about energy of students, maybe need some outdoor activities to release pent up energy?
- Trash is an issue at the high school.
- Okemos Chiefs items to be trashed – Bernadette from a meeting Sarah Allen was in, she is an Okemos high school student interested in fixing this issue – Responsibly deal with Chiefs stuff that will be thrown out.

Other questions asked:

- Are the student Zoom accounts going to go away? No they have them all year long.
 - Zoom protocol has been discussed with the students.
 - Expectations
 - Parameters
- Teachers and staff vaccinations?
 - 96% compliance

- Will offer on site testing for those employees who have applied for exemption

Next meeting - November 15, 2021, Chippewa, online Zoom at 12:00 - 2:30pm Eastern Time.