

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Work Session
April 13, 2020**

Meeting held electronically pursuant to Executive Order 2020-15

Zoom identification number Meeting ID: 360 730 362

5:30 p.m.

PRESENT – BOARD OF EDUCATION

Karen Evans
Catherine LaValley
Kyra Wallace
Patty Poole-Gray
Charlie Fulbright
Art McClenney
Jackie Slaby

Present – Administration

Kim Carter – Superintendent
Chandra Youngblood – Director, Elementary Education
Monique Cheeks – Director, Student Services
Mitch Fowler – Director, School Data Systems & Innovations
Anita Harvey – Director, District Transformation
Nathan Hunt – Communications Manager
Laura Ash – Executive Director
Cheryl Johnson – Chief Executive Officer, Human Resources
Jeff English – Executive Director
Wes Seeley – Coordinator of State/Federal Programs & Grants

Absent - Administration

Charles Lipsey – Director, Facilities and Operations

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Evans at 5:30 p.m. Karen Evans, Catherine LaValley, Kyra Wallace, Patty Poole-Gray, Charlie Fulbright, Art McClenney and Jackie Slaby were present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Catherine LaValley made a motion to move items A-M under New Business up to Reports and to add the Board Resolution regarding Board Policy matters as they relate to COVID-19 issues as an item for action under New Business.

Charlie Fulbright supported the motion.

Motion passed 7 – 0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

REPORTS

COVID-19 Update and Review of Continuity of Learning Plan – Superintendent Carter discussed the COVID-19 and Review of Continuity of Learning Plan.

The Learning Plan had to be developed quickly and was done with a lot of input from the team. It was noted that although the buildings are closed, learning has not stopped. We have an At-Home Learning Program that outlines the process. Teachers and staff will reach out often (in many cases, on a weekly basis). We have redeployed all staff needed to support the programs. Teachers will be attend a 2-day Virtual Learning on Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

We are using a mixed media approach, with some of the learning being online and some being paper/pencil, as we realize not all students have the equipment needed for online learning.

Our Distance Learning Program launches on Monday, April 20, 2020. Teachers will assign weekly work in Math and English. Students are always free to do more than what is assigned. Grades PreK-8th will receive paper packets. For Grades 9-12 the majority of the work will be online. High School, Adult Ed and WK Preparatory students will be given priority for technology equipment. Superintendent Carter reported that 130 Chromebooks were distributed today.

Consideration will be given to students with IEP's as needed to support their learning.

Grades K-5 will receive feedback on the work they complete and no student will be penalized for not being able to do what others are doing. The goal is to maintain the present learning curve.

Seniors must meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements in order to be eligible for Graduation. They will be released from any graduation requirements above and beyond those required by MMC.

Charlie Fulbright inquired what happens if a student has not met the MMC requirements. Superintendent Carter advised the team is currently reviewing the Senior Class to determine who has or has not met the MMC requirements. We will work to try and meet the requirements for those who are off-track through virtual learning. Those who cannot meet the requirements will attend another year of school.

Zing Customer Service Proposal – Cheryl Johnson discussed the request for the Zingerman Customer Service Training that she and Monique Cheeks have been working on.

This is a four (4) phase training and up to 30 participants including key leaders and decision makers will attend. The attendees will then return and train all staff in the Zingerman Customer Service Proposal. The estimated cost of the training, after receiving a discount, is \$15,580. All costs will be paid with the WKKF Grant Funds.

Sarah Garrett and Sandy Brunner attended the training and both gave positive reviews and felt it would be beneficial for BCPS.

There was a charter school who attended the same training and Cheryl Johnson thinks more schools are recognizing the importance of customer service, especially in light of schools of choice.

Jackie Slaby inquired about who will attend the training. Cheryl Johnson responded there will be 30 attendees ranging from secretaries and principals and those in between. Superintendent Carter said those attending will return to train all internal staff and administrators.

Catherine LaValley asked if Zingerman is having success with school districts and Cheryl Johnson replied they are and she thinks that's why more schools are becoming more involved, they recognize the importance.

Kyra Wallace asked who we are naming as customers. Cheryl Johnson indicated the district has yet to define, but she believes it will include parents and students, as well as how we treat each other and others, a global approach.

Jackie Slaby requested that Cheryl Johnson get the names of the public schools Zingerman has worked with and provide this information to the Board. Cheryl Johnson will request this information from Zingerman.

Jackie Slaby inquired about equity in training and Cheryl Johnson will check on it.

Jackie Slaby asked if other programs that can provide the same training were reviewed. Cheryl Johnson reported Monique Cheeks had talked with KCC. Superintendent Carter indicated the district had previously talked with Bronson. It was noted that Zingerman's has a more integrative approach, they not only train but they also look at the overall system and provide a comprehensive approach for all buildings. Zingerman's came highly recommended from the Superintendent group.

Jackie Slaby indicated she thinks it's a great resource, but she'd like to see a more thorough review of other programs. President Evans advised she is hearing the district has looked at several other places and Superintendent Carter is saying the Zingerman program is the best fit for the district.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

2020-2021 BCPS Police Officer Liaison Agreement – Monique Cheeks discussed the 2020-2021 BCPS Police Office Liaison Agreement and indicated we will be asking the Board to approve the agreement at the April 27th Regular Meeting. Monique advised the Officer also provides services in other capacities. The cost for this service is \$93,500. All costs will be paid from the General Fund.

Catherine LaValley mentioned a typo in the Agreement. On page 1 of the Recommendation Memo, the first sentence under Recommendation "offer" should be changed to "officer".

Jackie Slaby inquired about feedback from students, staff and parents regarding their experience with the officer. Monique Cheeks responded the district has constant conversations with staff about the Officer's role, as well as with students and others.

Jackie Slaby requested the feedback be shared with the Board. Superintendent Carter indicated the district can devise a system for gathering feedback. Jackie Slaby said she would love to see a system be developed to gather this information before the Board is asked to approve agreements.

President Evans noted there is not time for gathering feedback for this agreement. Art McClenney inquired about what type of feedback Jackie is looking for, as we don't want to do anything compromising to the Officer. Superintendent Carter noted the Board will need to approve the Agreement for this year and in a future Work Session meeting the Board can design a process for the future. President Evans indicated she feels the Board needs to decide if they want administration to spend time on something like that, or if their time is better spent on other matters. Catherine LaValley suggested a list of strengths and weaknesses of this service and that being enough.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

LETRS Professional Development – Dr. Deborah Nuzzi discussed the LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling) Professional Development. Dr. Nuzzi shared that LETRS is not a program but rather framework that goes along with our early literacy skills for students. It is sustainable across the years.

Dr. Nuzzi is bringing this before the Board now, rather than the end of the summer because she felt teachers might have the time now, in light of the stay at home order. LETRS training is provided by Sopris Voyager. Teachers receive 2 books at home to read on their own time and they participate in webinars, either live or by watching recorded webinars.

The total cost of the training is \$35,040.44. All costs will be paid from Title II and IV Funds.

Catherine LaValley asked if this would replace DIBELS and Dr. Nuzzi said it does not replace anything. This training provides new ideas moving forward.

Superintendent Carter noted she feels this training is even more critical with schools closing the buildings and it will allow teachers the capacity to improve on their skills.

Dr. Chandra Youngblood noted the DIBELS training provides for what kids need and LETRS will provide for taking kids from where they are to where they need to be. The programs complement each another.

Kyra Wallace indicated this should be good for the 3rd Grade Reading Law and moving students forward in their efficient grade.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

K-3 Summer Take-Home Reading Packs – Dr. Chandra Youngblood discussed the K-3 Summer Take-Home Reading Packs. This initiative is part of our early learning program to motivate kids throughout the summer. We have been doing this for the last 3 years. This year we will send books out to 1,190 students. Bids will be received through Think Stretch and Scholastic and the books will be sent home after the Board approves, rather than waiting until the last week of school as we have done in the past.

The total cost will not exceed \$16,000. All costs will be paid from the Early Childhood Literacy Extended Learning Grant.

Catherine LaValley has heard parent comments they are looking forward to the workbooks.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

Continuity of Learning Book Packs – Wes Seeley discussed the Continuity of Learning Book Packs. This effort is to continue to provide support for students in compliance with the Governor’s Order. There will be five (5) books for students and a parent guide sent home for Grades K-12.

An RFP has been sent out and is closing at the end of this week.

The total cost will not exceed \$90,000. Wes reported that due to school closing, we should be able to use 21(h) funds to cover this cost.

Catherine LaValley thanked the team for including the Middle School and High School students in the book distribution, she thinks it will be good for them.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

Cereal City Science Outreach Software Upgrade – Jeff English discussed the Cereal City Science Outreach Software Upgrade. The current software was built in 1997 and will be outdated in October, 2020 and the security pieces will no longer be supported. The new software is industry standard (WPF and C+).

This has been an 8 month effort and was finalized in April to bring to the Board for approval. Cereal City Science would like to begin the new programming in May, 2020.

This project was put out to bid and Great Lakes Software was the vendor chosen.

The cost of the software upgrade is \$64,500. All costs will be paid from Cereal City Science General Fund.

President Evans asked if the new system would look different to users and, if so, would there be training for them. Jeff English reported this is a technical rewrite and the displays will be identical to today.

Outdoor Education Center Swim Docks – Jeff English discussed the Outdoor Education Center (OEC) Swim Docks. The docking system has reached its end of life. It is pulled out each fall and much work was done this past year to keep it going another year. This past Fall it was taken out with the intent it cannot be put back in.

An RFP was put out and two companies responded. DockMaster in Richland was chosen as the vendor.

The new docks will be identical to the current design but will be built with the composite feature that has a 20+ year life.

This matter is being brought before the Board to gain approval in April so that as soon as the Governor's Order is lifted, the new dock can be installed.

The cost of the new OEC Swim Docks is \$16,300. All costs will be paid from Barry County Foundation and BCCF Grants.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

2020-2021 Calhoun ISD General Fund Budget – Laura Ash discussed the 2020-2021 Calhoun ISD General Fund Budget. Laura Ash shared the Calhoun ISD General Fund Beginning and Ending Fund Equity balances.

There was discussion about special education reimbursement. Next year's special education reimbursement will be 87%. The current reimbursement rate is 85%.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular meeting on April 27, 2020.

Northwestern Middle School Roof – Laura Ash discussed the Northwestern Middle School Roof Restoration.

Bids were received at the end of last Spring, however, the work was not able to be done during the summer while students were away, so it was postponed. All vendors were honoring their previous bids.

There are 4 sections of roof to be repaired. A diagram of the roof was provided in the Recommendation and the sections in need of repair are F, G, M and P.

3 bids were received, 2 were valid and the third one was not valid and the vendor didn't complete the Application.

Tichenor, a local vendor in Battle Creek, was the vendor chosen for this project.

The cost of the project is \$762,791. All costs will be paid using Sinking Funds.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

Purchase of Chromebooks and Hotspots for Continuity of Learning Plan – Mitch Fowler discussed the purchase of Chromebooks and Hotspots in response to COVID-19 efforts.

We obtained REMC competitive prices and 1,000 Chromebooks and 300 hotspots were ordered after an online vote was held by the Board since immediate approval was needed. Mitch indicated there would be another order for Chromebooks and hotspots as needed.

The total cost for continuous learning-related materials (Chromebooks, hotspots, webcams, microphones and software licenses) will not exceed \$500,000. All costs will be paid using WKKF Grant Funds.

The Board will officially vote on this matter this evening, in follow-up to the online vote originally conducted.

5 Year Lease Lit Fiber Contract with CTS – Mitch Fowler discussed the 5 Year Lease Lit Fiber Contract. This is our internet service.

A full RFP was conducted to provide internet for all of our buildings and 6 bids were received. Some of the bids were incomplete and didn't report providing service for all buildings. Climax Telephone Service (CTS) is our current vendor and they are reducing the cost and providing 2GB speed rather than 1GB.

Mitch Fowler explained the use of Federal E-Rate Program Funds to offset the cost of these improvements. This results in 90% of the cost of this project being covered by Federal dollars with the district only paying 10%.

The total cost for the 5 Year Lease Lit Fiber Contract is \$576,000. 90% (\$518,400) of this cost would be paid using Federal E-Rate Funds. The district cost would cover the remaining 10% (\$57,600) using General Funds.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

Structured Cabling Contract with Soltech Technologies – Mitch Fowler discussed the Structuring Cable Contract and reported this proposal is to install network cable at LaMora and Verona Elementaries. LaMora Elementary doesn't have any phone drops and Verona only has a few.

An RFP was sent out and Soltech Technologies was the only bid received.

Mitch Fowler explained the use of Federal E-Rate Program Funds to offset the cost of these improvements. This results in 85% of the cost of this project being covered by Federal dollars with the district only paying 15%.

The total cost for the Structured Cabling is \$37,520.85. 85% (\$31,892.73) of this cost would be paid using Federal E-Rate Funds. The district cost would cover the remaining 15% (\$5,628.14) using General Funds.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

Head End Switch Contract with Delta Technologies – Mitch Fowler discussed the Head End Switch Contract. Mitch Fowler talked with the Board last June and laying out the infrastructure. The Head End Switch is a main piece of equipment that routes internet to all of our buildings. The current equipment is well out of date. Charlie Fulbright inquired as to how long this equipment typically lasts and Mitch Fowler reported 6-8 years and the current equipment is 10-12 years old.

The plan is to get on a 3-5 year replacement plan and not wait until the equipment is out of date.

This project was sent out for bid and Delta Technologies was the only bid received. We are familiar with Delta and Mitch Fowler is comfortable with the price point.

Mitch Fowler explained the use of Federal E-Rate Program Funds to offset the cost of these improvements. This results in 85% of the cost of this project being covered by Federal dollars with the district only paying 15%.

Mitch Fowler gave a shout out to the technology team for their incentives to qualify for using Federal E-Rate Funds. There are a lot of stipulations and requirements to qualify and Mitch Fowler is proud the district will be able to use these funds to beef up our infrastructure.

The total cost for the Head End Switch is \$94,740.96. 85% (\$80,529.82) of this cost would be paid using Federal E-Rate Funds. The district cost would cover the remaining 15% (\$14,211.12) using General Funds.

The Board will vote on this matter at the Regular Meeting on April 27, 2020.

DISCUSSION

- A. Board Resolution Regarding COVID-19 Matters – Superintendent Carter presented the Board Resolution and discussed the purpose is to comply with information in the Executive Order as far as it relates to virtual learning and relaxing Graduation requirements. She has consulted with our school attorney and they drafted the Resolution.

Catherine LaValley made a motion to approve the Board Resolution.

Charlie Fulbright supported the motion.

Kyra Wallace read the Resolution aloud.

President Evans indicated because this is an electronic meeting a roll call vote is required and she asked Patti Worden to do a roll call. The roll call vote was taken and each Board member indicated their approval of the Resolution.

Motion passed 7 – 0

- B. Purchase of Chromebooks and Hotspots for Continuity of Learning Plan – President Evans discussed that, although the public didn't know, the Board had previously done an online vote to approve this purchase as this matter needed immediate attention. President Evans reported tonight the Board would take an official vote to approve the purchase of Chromebooks and Hotspots for the Continuity of Learning Plan.

Catherine LaValley made a motion to approve up to \$500,000 for the purchase of continuation of learning-related materials through May 29, 2020, which could include Chromebooks, hotspots, equipment for staff such as webcams and microphones and software licenses for continuous learning.

Kyra Wallace supported the motion.

Motion passed 7 – 0

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were submitted online via Facebook Live.

President Evans read each of the comments aloud.

The following comments were received:

Toni Ardis
242 Oriole Drive

Thank you to everyone involved in taking care of our students during this crazy time!

The police liaison position at the high school is a vital position and needed. CPL Young does an amazing job during school and after school activities. His interaction with the students and staff whether in good times or bad, is outstanding. If Trustee Slaby wants feedback, I am sure students and staff would love to talk to her. I hear nothing but good things about him.

Edward Plegue
124 Country Club Terrace

As a teacher, coach and parent in the district, I want to applaud all levels of leadership in this time of potential turmoil. Yes, the situation is unprecedented in its unique set of needs. But the response has been student-centered and attentive to families' needs....in my humble estimation.

Cpl Young, the current police presence, at Battle Creek Public High School is a great team member, having established positive relationships with students and staff in many circles, adding to a substantially more positive climate. He has also provided training for the district as a whole with great ability. He is known by a great majority as one who displays respect in all situations and in some very difficult situations.

Brenda McGrew
409 McKinley Ave N

We're supposed to get the information in the mail this week or next week about what program we are using for children. Are there certain times of the day that they're going to be on school or is it just when we are able to get them on line to do the work?

Casey Bess
19 Woodmer Ln

As a teacher at BCCHS I just wanted to comment on our liaison officer. Corporal Young is the MVP of our building in my opinion. His presence, the relationships he builds with students, and his energy is irreplaceable. While a liaison officer is important and very much needed, it is my belief that Corporal Young being that officer is even more important. Do whatever you need to do to keep that man in our school!

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Superintendent Carter commented she wanted to celebrate the Super Star staff, especially our Food Services staff who have been working weekly throughout the closure to feed our families. They continue to reflect and adjust as needed to continue this work. Superintendent Carter stressed that she cannot say enough how much their efforts are appreciated!

Superintendent Carter gave a shout out to the Communities In School staff for delivering food to families in need. She is impressed with the CIS and their collaboration with Food Services.

Superintendent Carter gave kudos to the Tech Team and shared that in less than a week, they came up with a distribution plan for rolling equipment out to families. She also gave kudos to the Cereal City Science staff for helping with the distribution of equipment.

Superintendent Carter shared that these efforts and those of all of the staff goes to show BCPS will do whatever it takes for student success.

Superintendent Carter gave a shout out to teachers reading books online, writing handwritten notes to students and calling students on the phone.

She finished by commenting that Battle Creek Public School is a Great Place to Be!

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Catherine LaValley reported the CASB Annual Award Ceremony in Homer has been postponed and will be rescheduled.

President Evans commented that Charlie Fulbright will be recognized as being a member of the Honor Board with Charlie Fulbright becoming certified.

Jackie Slaby reported she appreciated the real time feedback on Officer Young's importance at BCCHS and noted it is great for the Board to have this type of feedback to be able to form opinions about contracts for special positions.

It was discussed that the Hall of Fame Award Ceremony has been cancelled and will be held in April 2021. Refunds are being issued.

Jackie Slaby shared that the local Fire Departments are doing drive-bys between 1:30-3:00pm for children under 12 with birthdays to help celebrate their birthdays during social distancing times.

Kyra Wallace gave a shout out to all BCPS staff for the work being done.

Kyra Wallace gave a reminder for everyone to complete the Census survey. It is 9 questions, takes about 10 minutes and affects 10 years.

Charlie Fulbright commented he believes "Great Things are Happening at BCPS". He said that was for Dr. Anita Harvey.

Charlie Fulbright thanked all staff for helping students succeed and gave thanks to those helping us stay safe.

Charlie Fulbright shared he was happy to see more public comments virtually than the Board receives in their regular meetings.

Art McClenney noted these are unprecedented times and he would like to say Congratulations and Good Job to the whole staff!

Art McClenney indicated that Charlie Fulbright stole his thunder about the Facebook public comments and thanked the public for their feedback.

President Evans thanked all BCPS Staff and everyone helping out during this time. President Evans commented “You guys ROCK and are so appreciated!”

Meeting adjourned – 6:54 p.m.

Submitted by
Patti Worden

Kyra Wallace
Board Secretary