

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Work Session
April 12, 2021**

**Meeting held electronically pursuant to Executive Order 2020-15
Zoom identification number Meeting ID: 868 6339 1938**

PRESENT – BOARD OF EDUCATION

Catherine LaValley
Kyra Wallace
Patty Poole-Gray
Charlie Fulbright
Jacqueline Slaby
Art McClenney
Nathan Grajek

Present – Administration

Kim Carter – Superintendent
Dr. Chandra Youngblood – Director, Elementary Education
Dr. Deborah Nuzzi, Director, Secondary Education
Monique Cheeks – Director, Student Services
Mitch Fowler – Director, School Data Systems & Innovations
Nathan Hunt – Communications Manager
Rhonda Potts - Executive Director
Cheryl Johnson – Chief Executive Officer, Human Resources
Wes Seeley – Director of Grant, Federal Programs and Adult Education
Charles Lipsey – Director, Facilities and Operations

Absent – Administration

Dr. Anita Harvey – Director, District Transformation
Jeff English – Executive Director

MINUTES

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

REMOTE ATTENDANCE SCRIPT

As required for compliance with the Open Meetings Act for conducting Electronic Board Meetings, each Board Member read aloud the Remote Attendance Script, as follows:

- *I, Catherine LaValley, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in Bedford Township, Calhoun County, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this public announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Kyra Wallace, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this public announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Patty Poole-Gray, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this public announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Charlie Fulbright, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this public announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Jacqueline Slaby, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this public announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Art McClenney, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

- *I, Nathan Grajek, am attending this April 12, 2021 Work Session remotely.
I am physically located in the City of Battle Creek, in the State of Michigan.
I am able to have two-way communication for this Board Meeting.
Please record this announcement in the Meeting Minutes.*

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Treasurer Charlie Fulbright to change the Agenda by adding Senate Bill 218 for discussion after the second Public Comments, to delete the Promise Zone Update from tonight's Agenda and add it to the May Work Session and replace it with the pause in In-Person Learning for 2 weeks for students in Grades 9-12 (BCHS and WK Prep) and a pause in Spring Athletic Sports for Grades 9-12 for 2 weeks.

Trustee Nathan Grajek supported the Motion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion passed 7 – 0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Superintendent Kim Carter read the Public Comment.

Melissa Johnson

35 26th St, Battle Creek MI

Just curious on if school will be shut down. We are top county with COVID and it is getting scary with the hospitals getting full.

President Catherine LaValley thanked Melissa for her comment.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2021-2022 Calhoun ISD General Fund

Rhonda Potts discussed the 2021-2022 Calhoun ISD General Fund Budget and noted that every year the ISD is required to provide their budget to the local Districts for approval.

Rhonda reported the Calhoun ISD budget shows they will end the 2021-2022 school year with a 21.7% Fund Balance.

Resolution Appointing a Member of District Library Board of Trustees

Superintendent Kim Carter discussed the Resolution Appointing a Member of District Library Board of Trustees. The Resolution will re-appoint Kathleen Baker as a Member of the District Library Board of Trustees for the term beginning July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024.

The Board would like to receive updates to have a better understanding of what the Library Trustee's service entails. President Catherine LaValley mentioned possibly the Board could receive this information at their next meeting.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

BCCHS Summer Take Home Reading Packs

Wes Seeley discussed the BCCHS Summer Take Home Reading Packs. The cost is \$41,600.00 with the funding source being Title I Funds.

Wes advised the RFP has been sent out and students should receive between 5-8 books over the Summer. The number of books will be determined after the RFP's are received.

The RFP process will be completed prior to the next meeting and Wes will provide the selected vendor at that time.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

Scholastic Middle School Summer Reading Books

Dr. Chandra Youngblood discussed the Scholastic Middle School Summer Reading Books. The cost is \$19,598.55 with the funding source being the EC Extended Learning Grant 35g(5). This program will provide 5 books to each Middle School student and the books will be mailed to their homes.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

K-5 Bearcat Bridge Summer Math Curriculum

Dr. Chandra Youngblood discussed the K-5 Bearcat Bridge Summer Math Curriculum. The cost is up to \$23,474.00 with the funding source being the ESSER Grant.

Dr. Youngblood advised last Summer we were vetting this program, but we went virtual instead. This hands-on program pairs nicely with our NWEA assessment and at the end of the Summer, we will be able to see where the gaps exist and where students have needs to be filled.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

K-5 Think Stretch Books

Dr. Chandra Youngblood discussed the K-5 Think Stretch Books. The cost is up to \$24,795.00 with the funding source being the ESSER Grant.

Dr. Youngblood advised we have purchased the Think Stretch Books for the last 4-5 years as a Summer Workbook for students. She noted that, although we have many options using technology, our families are requesting the Workbooks and love them.

The distribution plan is for books to be sent home with in-person students at the end of the year, to schedule pick-up dates/times for virtual students, and to provide delivery to those families who may need this service.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

Food Service Equipment for NWMS & SMS

Rhonda Potts discussed the Food Service Equipment for NWMS & SMS. The cost is \$130,940.54 with the funding source being the Food Service Excess Funds.

Rhonda reported Michelle Morrissey put together a list of needs for NWMS and SMS and noted many of the needed items fall under the items on the pre-approved MDE list so we do not have to go through the RFP process. The dishwasher for SMS does not fall under the pre-approved MDE list or the threshold set by the State, so that item will be sent out for RFP's.

Rhonda reported future planning for a complete remodel at the OEC, plans are currently being discussed and she hopes to have information for the Board at the next meeting.

There was discussion about this equipment and if it would be used or replaced as part of the passing of the Bond Project for NWMS and SMS.

Michelle Morrissey advised it was her understanding the kitchens in both buildings are not part of the Bond Project and everything in the kitchens will remain "as is".

Technology Roadmap Report

Mitch Fowler discussed the Technology Roadmap Report presentation, which shared our technology transformation from 2019 to the present.

CISD Technology Services Contract

Mitch Fowler discussed the Calhoun ISD (CISD) Technology Services Contract and shared this will be a strategic partnership providing the District access to a vast variety of services. The cost is \$446,209.00 with the funding source being the General Fund.

Sam Lutgring from CISD discussed the partnership opportunities and expressed CISD's excitement about working with BCPS.

There was discussion about the need to include ADA compliance in the District's Technology Plan. Mitch will look into this further and report back.

It was noted that BCPS and CISD will work together to design the Service Contract. The Board requested that Rhonda Potts reach out to Thrun Law Office for their assistance in developing the guidelines and also that Thrun review the Service Contract. Sam Lutgring reported the Service Contract is a 5-year agreement, but there is a 60-day out in the Contract.

There was discussion about no longer working with Manpower for staffing needs as these would be covered under the CISD Service Contract; staff would be employed by CISD and assigned to BCPS. There is an opportunity for having additional staff assistance on larger projects.

There was discussion about sharing costs with neighboring Districts and consortium needs.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

Career Academies Curriculum Development with GVSU

Superintendent Kim Carter discussed the Career Academies Curriculum Development with GVSU. The cost is \$147,607.00 with the funding source being the WKKF Grant.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

Miller Stone & 3 West Administration Roof Replacement

Charles Lipsey discussed the Miller Stone & 3 West Administration Roof Replacement. The cost is \$702,218.00 with the funding source being the Sinking Funds.

Charles reported RFP's were sent out and bids received. It was noted the roof work at the 3 West Administration building is not for the whole building as the Willard Library portion was replaced a few years ago, so this would be for the Administration side.

Superintendent Kim Carter reminded the Board that BCPS owns the 3 West Administration building and not Willard Library.

The plan is for the roof replacements to take place this Summer with the hope of being completed prior to the start of school in the Fall.

The Board will vote on this item at the Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.

Learning Pause for Grades 9-12

President Catherine LaValley discussed this matter having been brought to her attention through a phone conversation this afternoon with Superintendent Kim Carter.

This is based on a recommendation from MDHHS, which is supported by the Calhoun County Health Department and encouraged by the Governor, that mitigation measures be put in place to provide for a 2-week pause to in-person learning for High School students and a pause in all youth sports.

Superintendent Kim Carter reviewed the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan Update, dated April 12, 2021. This recommendation affects Battle Creek Central High School and WK Preparatory High School and would result in a pause to in-person learning effective Tuesday, April 13th, through Friday, April 23rd, with students returning to in-person hybrid learning on Monday, April 26th.

Numerous related items were discussed, i.e. Student Vaccination Clinics, why the MDHHS recommendation did not include Middle Schools and Elementary Schools, the recommendation results in the decision being left to Board of each local education institution, and that some Districts are choosing not to pause in-person learning for High School students.

It was noted that voting on this item was not included in the Agenda Approval changes and that voting could be handled through the practice of unanimous consent by the Board. The unanimous consent practice was clarified.

Motion by Trustee Jacqueline Slaby to add moving to Remote Learning for Grades 9-12 Instruction and pausing Athletic Sporting events for a vote this evening.

Treasurer Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion passed 7 – 0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Superintendent Kim Carter read the Public Comment.

Toni Ardis

3085 W Michigan, Battle Creek

269-986-5760

Will the District be rechecking their submission of information for PEBT cards as it is not correct. Students virtual for September through January received the hybrid amount instead of fully virtual.

President Catherine LaValley thanked Toni for her comment and advised someone would be in touch with her.

DISCUSSION

Senate Bill 218

Treasurer Charlie Fulbright discussed that he requested to have this topic added to the Agenda for discussion tonight in follow-up to Trustee Jacqueline Slaby's Legislative Report last month.

This Senate Bill relates to participation in interscholastic activity. Trustee Fulbright wishes to clarify about girls participating in Football. He shared he reached out to Senator John Bizon who indicated he will be supporting this Senate Bill. Senator Bizon suggested Trustee Fulbright reach out to the other Representative's Office (Jim Haadsma).

Treasurer Fulbright asked for the Board's thoughts on this Senate Bill. He said it is still in the introduction stage of the Senate, so it's in the beginning stages, but with the Board being 7 different individuals with 7 different thoughts, he wanted to have a conversation and hopes the Board can make a determination, similar to what the MASB does, as to whether they support this Senate Bill.

Trustee Jacqueline Slaby reviewed the information provided in the Legislative Report regarding Senate Bill 218. There was discussion about various other athletic scenarios this Senate Bill might affect.

Trustee Slaby noted there might be a loophole using Title IX, which might allow a student who identifies as a transgender male/female rather than a biological male/female to continue participating in a sport if it is not offered, referencing that we do not have a Girls' Football Team.

Superintendent Kim Carter noted that Treasurer Fulbright is looking for the District to make a statement that we do not support this legislation. She commented that, as an Administrator, we see every student by name, need and strength and our equity imperative does not agree with anything that excludes any child who is not seen for who they are. Board Members expressed agreement with this.

Superintendent Kim Carter stated she will work with the Communications Team to develop something in this regard and we will bring it back to the Board for review.

President Catherine LaValley asked if that sounded good to all Trustees and everyone was in support of this plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Food Service Equipment for NWMS & SMS

Motion by Treasurer Charlie Fulbright to approve the Food Service Equipment for NWMS & SMS in the amount of \$130,940.54 using Food Service Excess Funds.

Vice President Kyra Wallace supported the Motion.

A Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion passed 7 – 0.

Learning Pause for In-Person Instruction for Grades 9-12 and Interscholastic Sports

Motion by Treasurer Charlie Fulbright to approve immediately Remote Learning for Grades 9-12 and sports for 2 weeks.

Trustee Art McClenney supported the Motion.

President Catherine LaValley clarified this pause would be for BCCHS students and WK Prep students.

President LaValley asked if there was any discussion.

Trustee Jacqueline Slaby moved to make a Motion to Amend to include Pre-K through 8th Grade as part of this immediate Remote Learning transition.

Secretary Patty Poole-Gray supported the Motion.

President Catherine LaValley requested the Board talk about this Amendment and discuss why it was made.

There was lengthy discussion about this matter and Board Members stated their thoughts.

Superintendent Kim Carter pointed out the need to provide choice, noting that families who were not comfortable sending their students have the option to keep their students at home and they will be excused. There is data that states our Elementary students have not fared well in a remote learning environment and we want to continue to make recommendations that are in the best interests of students. She urged the Board to create choice for families by allowing Elementaries to remain open.

President Catherine LaValley noted we were only asked by the Governor, who was relaying the message from the Department of Health & Human Services, that they would strongly recommend a pause in in-person face-to-face learning for High School students.

At the Board's request, Superintendent Kim Carter discussed the call with the Calhoun County Health Department this morning and she reported their support of the recommendation to pause in-person learning for High Schools and Youth Sports because the age group to target is ages 14-18. She noted a pause only works in everyone actually quarantines and, as we have seen with remote instruction, it doesn't mean people stay home, they still gather. This weighed into her decision-making as she brought this recommendation to the Board this evening.

President LaValley reminded the Board that we do follow the recommendation of the Local Health Department and they have been coming forth with good recommendations for the safety of all our students as well as staff. Our practice is and is stated in our COVID Learning Plan approved every month that we will follow what the Local Health Department says to us.

President LaValley noted the Board would vote first on the Amendment.

A Roll Call Vote was taken.

Amendment passed 4 – 3.

President LaValley noted we now go back to the original Motion, which has been amended to include Pre-K through 12th Grade.

She noted discussion continues since the Motion was amended.

There was lengthy discussion about the Amended Motion.

Superintendent Kim Carter noted the District is absolutely not prepared for students to engage in remote instruction as early as tomorrow for Kindergarten thru 8th Grade because they do not have their Chromebooks or access right now so that will be a challenge for our families.

Superintendent Kim Carter offered for consideration that no other schools are closing down and advised this will create a hardship for students who are already situated farthest from success and most vulnerable.

Trustee Jacqueline Slaby motioned to close the debate.

President Catherine LaValley said that is called to Call for the Question and there has to be a second.

President LaValley reported that MHSAA recommended sports carry on.

Trustee Jacqueline Slaby moved to Call the Question.

Treasurer Charlie Fulbright supported.

President LaValley clarified it was time to vote on the Motion to approve Pre-K through 12th Grade to go on remote basis for instruction for the next two weeks, effective immediately.

A Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion passed 4 – 3.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Superintendent Kim Carter reported she wanted to celebrate the Northwestern Band and how they have increased the number of students involved. She also wanted to celebrate that our Elementary art and music programs are continuing to grow. She appreciates all the work being done to expose our students to the arts and she thanked the staff.

Superintendent Carter noted that based on this evening's vote, there are lots of moving parts and we will work to get communication out as quickly as we can. She asked that families recognize that buses will not move tomorrow and we will work to get students what they need as soon as we can.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Art McClenney commented that he thought what happened tonight was terrible for parents who have to work tomorrow and for those who depend on food to eat. He hopes the District can get a program up and running for those students who depend on breakfast, lunch and sometimes dinner. He said if this was going to happen, the Board should've given Superintendent Kim Carter time to get this in place. Trustee McClenney said the children the Board is trying to protect are some of the ones who are not going to eat tomorrow and these are the children who are harmed.

Vice President Kyra Wallace said she echoed Trustee McClenney's comments and she offered a heartfelt apology to parents who now have to pivot with no lead time. She stated we appreciate the parents and as a District we are trying to do the best we can to make sure everyone is as good as they can be in this situation.

Trustee Nathan Grajek commented this was a hard decision and he thanked the staff who worked so hard to get this going before and he knows we can get it going again. He regrets this decision had to be made but safety is our number one priority. He thanked Treasurer Fulbright and Trustee Slaby for working on Senate Bill 218 and agrees it will be good for the District to take a stance.

President Catherine LaValley noted her sadness about what happened tonight, but she knows the staff the Board dearly loves and appreciates will step up to this mighty challenge which affects transportation, food service, families. She wishes the Board was not put in this position. She encouraged families to follow staff directions about the distribution of materials in order for learning to continue during this 2-week pause.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Submitted by
Patti Worden

Patty Poole-Gray
Board Secretary