

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION
Work Session
October 12, 2020
Assembly Room of Miller Stone, 77 Capital Avenue NE, Battle Creek, MI
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT – BOARD OF EDUCATION

Karen Evans
Catherine LaValley
Kyra Wallace
Charlie Fulbright

Absent

Patty Poole-Gray
Art McClenney
Jackie Slaby

Present – Administration

Laura Ash – Executive Director
Dr. Chandra Youngblood – Director, Elementary Education
Anita Harvey - Director, District Transformation
Dr. Deborah Nuzzi, Director, Secondary Education
Monique Cheeks – Director, Student Services
Mitch Fowler – Director, School Data Systems & Innovations
Nathan Hunt – Communications Manager
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

Kim Carter – Superintendent
Jeff English – Executive Director

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Evans at 5:30p.m. Karen Evans, Catherine LaValley, Kyra Wallace and Charlie Fulbright were present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to approve the Agenda as written.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

Motion passed 4 – 0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

2019-2020 Audit Presentation

Laura Ash introduced Corey VanDyke from Plante Moran. Corey reviewed the June 30, 2020 Financial Report and reported the following audit results:

- Corey pointed out that the Financial Report is a draft. He advised that normally when Plante Moran comes to the Board they are discussing the final report, but this year they are bringing a draft for the reason that the draft rules for auditors haven't been finalized with the Cares Act Funding, specifically the ESSER Funds, and the final Addendum has not yet been received. Plante Moran has seen the draft rules and they don't anticipate any change.

Although the Financial Report is in draft form, Corey indicated the District's books and records are in great order. He discussed a new change for this year is the reporting of Fiduciary Activities (specifically Student Activity Funds). This doesn't change these Funds are there and what they are for, just how they are presented.

- Corey noted the following budget changes:
 - There was less than 1% reduction (\$400,000.00) in the General Fund Revenue from 2019 to 2020.
 - There was an \$800,000.00 change in Special Education Funds from the ISD.
 - There was a \$600,000.00 reduction in State Funds for pupil funding.
- We had a decrease of 144 student FTE.

Corey thanked Laura Ash and Brenda DeMott indicating they both did a great job. He commented that conducting the audit report remotely was interesting, but Laura and Brenda were definitely on top of things and a pleasure to work with.

President Karen Evans asked if there were any questions.

Vice President Catherine LaValley asked the following questions:

- On Page 5 of the Financial Report with Supplemental Information, she asked that Corey explain the information the Board is looking at as far as taxes/liabilities. Corey advised the Board sees this statement once a year and Page 12 would be more common to look at.

Corey reported the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requires full financial statements and fixed assets are not on the books. The full statements are listed on Pages 10-11, i.e. what does the District look like with all capital assets and all debt.

- On Page 5, is the Total net position of (35.5) for 2020 Governmental Activities is negative.

Corey advised it is negative and referenced more details being listed on Page 10. He explained a key reason why the number is negative is listed in the Liabilities section of Page 10 relating to OPEB liability and that GASB requires Districts to put their pension liability on the books even though they have zero control over it. Corey said he didn't do the math, but doing a quick calculation in his head taking all the pension and OPEB stuff out, the District would have a positive amount.

- On Page 7, she liked how the Financial Report laid out the District's Funds. She further commented, as a note to the Board, they were given information about the Building & Site Fund and prioritized a list of projects to be completed over the next three (3) years. She noted that Trustee Jackie Slaby was not present this evening but the Building & Site Fund needs a re-prioritized list of projects. Vice President LaValley added she appreciates this list as a support for our projects.
- On Page 27, she inquired about Leases and asked if Corey would say our District has a lot of leases? She also asked if we have a lease on our copiers.

Laura Ash responded we have a lease for just one copier.

Corey replied leases are made to look like operating lease (capital lease) based on the current structure.

- On Page 34, she asked about the word "defeased" in the third paragraph and what it means.

Corey advised defeased means refunded bonds to get a lower interest rate. He indicated bonds have certain monies and you can't just pay them off. Refunding is when you got money for new debt to pay the old debt that is sitting in escrow and is making the payment for BCPS.

- On Page 43, she commented that keeping the figures under budget was just fantastic and gave thanks to Laura Ash and her team for being under budget, again commenting it is just incredible.

She asked about the line item, under Support Services for Central and wondered what is included there.

Laura Ash reported there are three different categories that fall in the line item under Central. Those are Human Relations, Technology and Pupil Accounting.

- On Page 12 of the recommendations, specifically Information Items, under GASB Statement No. 87 – Leases, it refers back to leases and new accounting things and she asked if we are implementing the new things already.

Laura Ash indicated it refers to GASB 87 and the 2 year awareness debt being something we need to be aware of and keep in mind as we do Lease negotiations and possibly lease more things.

- On Page 14 regarding Fraud Prevention and Detection, she appreciates the recommendations for looking at fraud and noted it is something the Board should be on top of to make sure the District is covered security wise. She noted it is incredible how we depend on technology like we have since March. She thanked Corey for these recommendations and appreciates having them in writing.

Corey said they haven't had any issues but share this information as an opportunity for Boards to work on them even though they are not broken. With all the student information out there, there is a loophole for risk.

President Karen Evans thanked Corey VanDyke for his time this evening and for coming out in the rain.

Kitchen Paint and Door Repairs

Laura Ash discussed the recommendation included in the Board Packet for painting the long hallway in the Cafeteria along with several posts that have peeling paint. We are also recommending the removal of several sets of doors that enter into the Cafeteria which need to be replaced due to old age and destruction. The existing doors are a safety hazard to students and staff. The new doors will be able to be used should the building undergo any significant improvements in the future.

Laura discussed the need to spend down the Food Service Excess Fund Balance. The cost of the project is \$24,633.18 and would be funded from the Food Service Excess Fund Balance. Laura advised the Michigan Department of Education of Health and Nutrition Services only allows Excess Fund Balances to be spent on improvements to existing cafeteria spaces or for equipment purchases.

Laura shared we would hire a company to manage this project and they will work with local contractors in Battle Creek for completing the work needed.

President Karen Evans asked if this amount is for the whole project. Laura shared this is the amount the District would pay the main contractor and he will be responsible for paying the subcontractors. This work would be completed in conjunction with the next NWMS project before the Board tonight, i.e. the Bathroom Sink Replacements and Doors.

Bathroom Sink Replacements and Doors

Laura Ash discussed the recommendation in the Board Packet for replacing sinks in the two sets of girls and boys restrooms, along with new mirrors, painting at all four locations of the building and replacing four doors. Laura reported the sinks and the doors are beyond repair and all need to be replaced. They are a safety hazard to students and staff. The new sinks and doors will be used should the building undergo significant improvements in the future.

Laura advised Elite Companies would provide the sink, mirror, paint and door replacement. The cost of this project is \$43,493.12 and the funds would come from the Sinking Fund monies.

Laura reported before the start of this School Year, the District replaced the bathroom partitions in the girls and boys restrooms located at the front of the building.

Laura reported that, if the Board approves this project, the only item that would not be completed by November 2nd is the new doors. It will take six (6) weeks to get the doors in. They will be switched when they come in, at a time when students are not in the building.

Vice President Catherine LaValley thanked Laura Ash for the recommendation for this work and that these items would be reused for future work completed for NWMS, on both projects actually.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy – 1st Reading

Monique Cheeks read the Executive Summary for the new Title IX policy that will be added in the Board Policy Manual.

Battle Creek Public Schools
Title IX Executive Summary

On August 14, 2020 new regulations pertaining Title IX took effect which requires modifications in Board Policy. Refer to proposed Board Policy.

The scope of the regulations focus on sexual harassment¹ as a subset of sex-based discrimination; and applies to harassment of:

- Staff to staff,
- Staff to student,
- Student to staff,
- Student to student

Big changes in the regulations are:

- All K-12 staff have a reporting obligation (i.e., “mandatory reporter”) which includes third party vendors such as bus drivers of Dean, food service workers of Chartwell and ancillary staff of EduStaff.
- A new investigatory model which eliminates a single investigator and is replaced with 4 separate, distinct and non-duplicative roles which must be held by different people:

Key Role Role Definition

Title IX Coordinator Oversees investigation and coordinates school’s compliance with Title IX

Investigator(s) Conducts investigation process

Decision Maker Makes determination of responsibility

Appeals Officer Hears appeals of dismissal and determination of responsibility

- Significant changes in the investigation process with emphasis on due process.
 - o Parties may be accompanied by an advisor of their choosing
 - o Each party must have equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence
 - o Each party must have the opportunity to respond to the evidence before the investigation’s conclusion
- New Terminology
 - o Alleged Victim Complainant
 - o Alleged Perpetrator Respondent
 - o Investigation Grievance Process
 - o Educational Institution Recipient
 - o Interim Measures Supportive Measures
- Seven (7) year record retention requirement
- Requirement that all staff including third party vendors are trained

1 New definition of sexual harassment which is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: 1). Employee quid pro quo, 2). sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking as defined by the Violence Against Women Act, 3). Hostile environment.

President Karen Evans asked if there were any questions.

Vice President Catherine LaValley thanked Monique for reviewing the very detailed information, noting this information goes along with the online training the Board Members recently completed. She asked if the Board would know soon who the relevant parties for the roles identified in the new regulations will be.

Monique advised the roles have been determined and shared they are as follows:

- Title IX Student Coordinator – Rebecca Bolden
- Title IX Staff Coordinator – Pat McCann
- Investigators – Principals and Other District Professional Staff
- Decision-Maker for Students – Monique Cheeks
- Decision-Maker for Staff – Cheryl Johnson
- Appeals Officer – Superintendent Kim Carter

BCPS Athletic Handbook

Monique Cheeks noted the BCPS Athletic Code of Conduct was included in the Board Packet. The Handbook was prepared by the Athletic Department. She asked if there were any questions.

Vice President Catherine LaValley commented the document is very detailed, yet brief, the way it should be. She asked if parents receive a copy of the Athletic Handbook. Monique advised she believes they do.

LETRS Professional Development

Dr. Deborah Nuzzi discussed the recommendation in the Board Packet for the 2020-2021 LETRS PD for K-3 Teachers, ICs, DTCs, Reading Specialists and Principals. Dr. Nuzzi indicated LETRS stands for Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling.

Dr. Nuzzi reported this work will be a continuation of the focus of the BCPS Transformation for building early elementary literacy skills so that as students go forward their Literacy proficiency will serve as a strong learning foundation for all content areas.

This training will be for K-3 Teachers which is definitely part of the transformation we have focused on to raise the literacy of K-3 students. This work allows us to be ahead of the 3rd Grade Reading Law. This work is extremely important. LETRS is not a program, it is a way to raise the capacity of early grade teachers. When this training is over, the program is not over because it is not a program. We are building for years and years of teaching to come.

Dr. Nuzzi indicated she left the original wording defining the LETRS training in the recommendation to the Board for ready reference.

The recommendation is for the continuation of LETRS training for teachers. LETRS training covers Units 1 thru 8 and is quite an investment for the District. All K-3 teachers received training in LETRS Units 1-3a between April and August, 2020.

This recommendation is for Units 3b-4 and the new teacher cohort, so the new teachers are not left behind. Looking ahead, there is a plan to continue the LETRS training during the 2021-2022 school year for Units 5-8.

Dr. Nuzzi reported the cost for the LETRS training for Units 3b-4 and the new teacher cohort is \$18,000.00. The training will be done during the half day Professional Development dates on October 30, 2020, January 18, 2021 and March 12, 2021 and in the summer for new teachers. The funds to cover this cost will come from the Regional Assistance Grant (RAG) Funds.

Truth in Titus

Dr. Deborah Nuzzi discussed the recommendation in the Board Packet for Truth in Titus. She discussed that BCPS believes in equity and noted we have had a lot of training, personal inside work and outside action work.

We have partnered with the National Equity Project (NEP) and also with Truth in Titus, who are local to us, and put equity in the perspective of our community.

We are working with our teachers on equity initiatives through the Teacher Transformational Institute (TTI) and are asking to continue that equity work thru TTI.

This proposal is for BCPS to engage in learning sessions focused on equity. The sessions will be broken into three different tracks, Introductory, Advanced & Equity. All sessions will be done through Zoom for the Fall semester, and perhaps the entire academic year, due to COVID.

Dr. Nuzzi advised this is an extremely important and different track for all of us. Truth in Titus looks at equity from all views and engages people in different ways. It is not one size fits all. It is mind, body, spirit and history with accountability. They cultivate creating a safe space where people feel safe enough to risk authenticity, vulnerability and growth. Both inside and outside of formal training, Truth and Titus offers love and support, which is very important when working with equity.

Dr. Nuzzi advised the cost for the Truth in Titus training is \$23,940.00 and funding will come from the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright inquired about all of the sessions being done thru Zoom for the Fall and perhaps the entire year and wondered if the price would go up if we transition to in-person training. Dr. Nuzzi advised the price is for the entirety of the sessions regardless of whether they are Zoom or face-to-face. She indicated if we are able to return to face-to-face, we will do so.

NEW BUSINESS

Kitchen Paint and Door Repairs

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to approve and authorize Elite Companies to provide door replacements and paint the Cafeteria walls at Northwestern Middle School at a cost of \$24,633.18 with funds coming from the Food Service Excess Fund Balance.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

Motion passed 4 – 0

Bathroom Sink Replacements and Doors

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to approve and authorize Elite Companies to provide sink, mirror, paint and door replacement at Northwestern Middle School at a cost of \$43,493.12 with funds coming from the Sinking Fund.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

Motion passed 4 – 0

LETRS Professional Development

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to approve the contract with Sopris Voyager to continue LETRS training for K-3 teachers as recommended for a cost of \$18,000.00 using funds from the Regional Assistance Grant (RAG).

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

Motion passed 4 – 0

Truth in Titus

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to continue the equity work with Truth in Titus to continue their teaching and influence with BCPS teachers for a cost of \$23,940.00 using Coronavirus Relief Funds.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

Motion passed 4 – 0

MASB Delegate

President Karen Evans discussed information included in the Board Packet about the MASB Delegate Assembly. She reported that the Assembly will be held remotely this year and the MASB Delegates are not allowed to vote on anything. This year it will be more of an informational session and anyone may attend. President Evans asked that any Board Members interested in attending the MASB Convention or the Delegate Assembly to please get their information to Patti Worden, Executive Assistant, in the next couple of days. The Conference is the first weekend in November. There will not be any CBA classes, just open sessions and clinic sessions.

Vice President Catherine LaValley indicated she already signed up for Friday and Saturday sessions. She is fine with attending the Delegate Assembly on Thursday.

President Karen Evans indicated she did not believe a vote was required on this topic because the Board is not sending someone to vote on anything.

2020-2021 Superintendent's Goals

President Karen Evans advised the 2020-2021 Superintendent's Goals were before the Board for approval this evening, noting these Goals were discussed in detail over the last month.

The 2020-2021 Superintendent's Goals are as follows:

Strategic Goal #1: High Academic Achievement

Increase student reading and math performance in the aggregate by June 1, 2021 as measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment in the areas of reading and math.

Strategic Goal #2: Healthy Organizational Culture

Strategic Goal #3: Human Capital Strategy

Implement strategies to recruit and retain high quality, diverse staff

Strategic Goal #4: Effective and Efficient Use of Resources

Maintain a balanced budget

Strategic Goal #5: Active Partnerships With Our Community

Implement strategies to improve family involvement and engagement

Strategic Goal #6: World-Class Infrastructure

Implement a system for ensuring that all facilities are well maintained and aligned to the COVID-19 safety protocols identified by the state and local health officials.

Motion by Vice President Catherine LaValley to approve the 2020-2021 Superintendent's Goals as recommended in the document included in the Board Packet.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright supported the Motion.

President Evans asked if there was any further discussion on these Goals. It was noted that Goal #2 regarding Healthy Organizational Culture is on hold right now. The Board has done a good job over the last few weeks of discussing these Goals, as recommended by Superintendent Carter, so she can proceed with them unless someone wants to add something else. There were no comments from the Board.

Motion passed 4 – 0

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Executive Director, Laura Ash, who was running the meeting for Superintendent Carter indicates did not have any comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Vice President Catherine LaValley shared the following:

- She noted Karolyn Ferguson delivered Hall of Fame Spaghetti Dinner invitations at the Board Meeting tonight. The dinner will be on Tuesday, October 27, from 4:30-7:30pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Dinners will be for take-out.
- The BCCHS Career Academies Council is still requesting volunteers for the Career Academies Board. Please send requests by Friday, October 16th.
- She commented it was remarkable the Board could see each other this evening, noted that hasn't happened in a long time. She complimented it was a nice set-up today and a successful meeting. She thanked the staff for setting tables up and making everyone comfortable.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright asked if there was an update on Grades 6-12 going back to in-person learning. He mentioned a November date and noted an increase in COVID cases in Calhoun County right now. Laura Ash asked Dr. Deborah Nuzzi to update us on this matter.

Dr. Nuzzi reported we are in the throws of planning what it will look like to bring Grades 6-12 students back for in-person learning. The Team is looking at a cohort hybrid model first. They are being careful in their planning by talking with other Districts about things they found were successful and things they wish they had done differently. Dr. Nuzzi advised we hope to bring students back in November, but we do not have date whatsoever set at this time. The Team is working on the return plan for whatever time it can be.

Trustee Charlie Fulbright sent wishes for “Happy Indigenous Day”.

Secretary Kyra Wallace had no comments.

President Karen Evans added to Vice President Catherine LaValley's news about the Hall of Fame Spaghetti Dinner that the dinner will be held at Barista Blues. She said they have a fantastic spaghetti dinner and she highly recommends it.

Meeting adjourned – 6:23p.m.

Submitted by
Patti Worden

Kyra Wallace
Board Secretary