

MAY 3, 2022

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DISTRICT #63-240 COUNTIES OF
OAKLAND, LIVINGSTON, AND WASHTENAW**

CALL TO ORDER

President Dashner called the May 3, 2022 regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Anthony Abbate, Craig Dashner, Stephanie Junkulis-Pierce, Eric Kennedy, Martin Leftwich, Dan Schwegler, Jennifer Urtel

Absent: None

Administration Present: Mr. Steve Archibald, Superintendent, Lisa Kudwa, Asst. Superintendent, Brian Toth, Asst. Superintendent

Administration Absent: Stacy Witt, Asst. Superintendent

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board, administration and the audience joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION: SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR – *CHRISTI CHYNOWETH*

Mr. Brian Toth explained that this week is dedicated to staff appreciation. South Lyon is very fortunate to have a number of staff members here this evening. He gave a quick shout out to those at the meeting, as well as those out in the district for all that they do to support our students with our learning. He indicated we are very fortunate to have one special educator this evening. Her name is Christi Chynoweth. She is our support person of the year. Mrs. Testani, principal at Hardy Elementary shared a few words about how incredible Christi is. She began by indicating that Christi has been in the district for seven years as a paraprofessional in the K-5th grade self-contained classroom in the Emotionally Impaired program. Christi has made a difference in the lives of many individuals. Ms. Testani added that she is an irreplaceable asset at Hardy. Christi is an advocate for students and develops strong, meaningful relationships with them which helps to build a classroom community of trust and care. She tirelessly works to do what is best for students and their well-being. She advocates for every single one of them each day and is willing to stand up for students in any given situation. She works with Mrs. O'Reilly and gives 110% of herself every day in order to help support Ms. Testani and all of their students. Ms. Testani then offered her congratulations.

SOUTH LYON HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

The South Lyon High School Choir performed a song for the Board of Education and the audience. "Towards a Brighter Future" was led by Andrew Hathikhanavala, SLHS choir director.

A three-minute break was called to allow for pictures before resuming the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered an opportunity for public comments and the following comments were shared.

- *Miriam Corvino* spoke to the Board regarding organizations referred to as the Partners in Public Education. She stated it is a fact that teacher unions have so far contributed 100% of their political contributions in this election cycle to the regressive left. It is alarming to her because education is supposed to be non-partisan. Yet, their donations go to support candidates and political action committees who support candidates representing a party that said in January that they don't know where parents get the idea that they have a say in their children's education.
- *Brenton Montie, teacher & SLEA representative*, shared the following "Good Things" that are happening in our district. He noted that it is Teacher Appreciation Week and gave a shout out to all the teachers in our district.
- *Melinda Towns* and the A Cappella Group at Centennial will be singing the national anthem at our next home track meet this Wednesday. Everyone is hoping this can become a tradition going forward.
- *Mr. Ockaskis* is an amazing teacher at SLHS who is doing a fabulous job for his first year with the district and should be recognized. He does not just look at the students and how they can perform, but he also looks at their mental health and how they are doing on a day-to-day basis. This helps them academically and emotionally. He truly looks at the whole child and makes each child feel like a leader and that they are capable of reaching all of their goals. He makes school fun, and the students know they are welcome and will be successful in his class.
- *Kim Gutierrez* teaches first grade and discovered that one of her students was observing Ramadan this past month. She found a fictional picture book at her local library with a character that observes this time as well. She read the book to her class and allowed her student to share her family's experiences with Ramadan. Kim shared the book with Mr. Montie because he has her student's sibling in his room. It was wonderful learning experience for all of them.
- *Darel Middaugh* nominated *Rachel Braun and Andrea Valenquela-Lazcano* who are choir students at SLEHS. Both Rachel and Andrea were selected to participate in the Michigan School Vocal Music Association All-State Honors Choir. This is the top tier choir for high school students in the state of Michigan. The concert will take place May 14 at Michigan State University. Congratulations to Rachel and Andrea!
- The *GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance)* was nominated by Clara Alberty. The GSA hosted a bake sale fundraiser at SLHS for the Trevor Project at lunch and raised over \$200 in two days for the organization. They also created and sold GSA pride pins that were on sale at lunch. Many staff and students purchased the pins and baked goods.
- The Millennium Middle School *8th Grade Guys Group* run by Mr. Gilders, participated in a community service trip to Food Gatherers. During their volunteer shift, the group completed a combined 22.5 hours of volunteer service and sorted 5,610 pounds of food. Overall, they put together over three pallets worth of food for distribution to local charities, food pantries and individuals, The students did a fabulous job representing MMS while helping others in the community.

- Several South Lyon students participated in the Michigan School Vocal Music Association's State Honors Choir program. Beginning with auditions in October and culminating in several outstanding performances at the annual Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids in January, the following students should be commended for their hard work and dedication in preparing several challenging pieces of choral music and sharing their love of singing with hundreds of young singers from all over Michigan. (*Josilyn Csapo, Addison Vince, Leah Bosworth, Emily Brennan, Olivia Nelson, Alayna Garrison, Hilary Lakinam, Vedika Jain, Andrea Valenzuela-Lazcano, Rachel Braun, Bella Wiegand and Ella Agius*) The choir teachers of these students should also be congratulated for helping their students prepare.
- *Maria Michela* asked the Board to keep the children's best interests in mind when it comes to making changes to the Plus Program. She asked if the current 3rd and 4th grade students in the Magnet Program could be afforded the same opportunity to maintain their friendships into their middle school years. She also asked if there could be additional communication from the administrators with the 3rd and 4th grade parents.
- *Lori Black* asked the Board to take a closer look at the numbers of 5th grade plus students and not to split classes between two schools. Future magnet students should have a choice of school. She asked the Board to offer School of Choice for all kids who entered the Magnet Program believing they would stay together through middle school.
- *Bree Black* stated that she is currently a student in the 5th grade Magnet program. She asked the Board not to split classes between two schools and that future Magnet students should have a choice of school. All Magnet students are a family. Magnet students were told going into the program that they would stay together through the 8th grade. All Magnet kids should have the choice of what school to go to. In conclusion, the Magnet program should not be split.
- *Juliet Black* is sick, but her sister Bree shared her sister's views on this subject. She is a 5th grade Magnet student. She is looking forward to being a Magnet student at Millennium Middle School. She asked the Board to consider the Magnet students and their relationships.
- *Brittani Mizikow* continued sharing the "Good Things" that are happening in our elementary schools.
 - *Melissa Robinson* took charge of March is Reading Month at Salem and did an excellent job of motivating Salem students to read! She organized an entire month of exciting reading activities that were all related to their theme: Read for the Gold! The month ended with a Family Reading Night that she organized. She created several engaging stations for families to enjoy. This was their first in-person Salem event in a long time, and the attendance was high! Families had an excellent time celebrating reading.
 - *Mrs. Lambert* is an amazing 6th grade teacher at Centennial Middle School. She goes above and beyond for her students. She stays after school once a week to help her students who are struggling with any concepts in math. She does this completely on her own. The students and parents appreciate the extra time that she puts in to help to see her students succeed.

- *Pearson Staff* has been outstanding the past two years with all of the uncertainty. Everyone enjoys coming to work and the kids enjoy coming to school. The environment and atmosphere are always welcoming and positive and fun!
- *Leigh Goyings, Salem Music teacher* hosted their 3rd and 4th grade music informance on April 21. She did a fabulous job of putting this all together. The kids were beyond excited, and the love for music she has instilled in them was very apparent. It was a great way to bring the Salem families back into the school to celebrate their students. Leigh has inspired so many students to find a love of music!
- *Michael Rubida* is not just the “Japanese” teacher at SLHS. He brings real life experience into the classroom and is an excellent role model. His classes usually start with what Mr. Rubida has experienced from being to Japan or some of his specialized knowledge about Japan. He creates a supportive and positive classroom climate. He has a positive impact on his students!
- *Salem Elementary Green Team* is involved in activities to maintain their Green School status with the State of Michigan. Salem’s Green team invited students to submit Earth Day posters as part of a contest held by Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. Two of their students, Cecilia in 1st grade and Henry in 3rd grade, were awarded 1st place honors to their grade in the state. They also had several students in other grades receive honorable mentions.
- *Business Buddies* – Lindsey Jackson was able to get the recycling center to come in to talk to the 4th grade students at Brummer about recycling. All the students went home with a recycling bag.
- *Earth Day Clean-Up – 4th grade* – For Earth Day, 4th graders at Brummer cleaned up the school playground at recess.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Dashner asked the Board to approve the agenda as presented unless they had any additions or deletions.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Ms. Urtel to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0. Motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Ms. Junkulis-Pierce, supported by Mr. Leftwich to approve the following minutes as presented:

- April 19, 2022 – Regular Meeting

Roll Call: Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Schwegler-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Leftwich-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. Junkulis-Pierce-yes. Motion carries 7 – 0.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PLUS PROGRAM

Ms. Lisa Kudwa explained that currently, the Plus program is offered at Millennium Middle School (MMS) and students who qualify for the program but are in the boundary of Centennial Middle School (CMS) have to choose between attending their boundary school or receiving the services offered by the program. The goal of our revision process was defined by what was asked of the administrators involved - determine if the program could be offered in both locations as well as consider whether the criteria for English Language Arts (ELA) Plus might be expanded to include additional high achieving students.

The administrative team has considered feedback from staff, students and parents, along with class numbers and staff availability, and are offering the following proposal, which allows for the above grade level math and more rigorous ELA course to be offered in both locations and be more accessible to additional students.

ELA Plus classes would shift to ELA Honors courses which would broaden the number of high achieving students who are eligible for the courses and be offered at both middle schools.

Math Plus classes would continue in the current model where students remain in courses with only Plus students. During the transition, numbers for Math Plus are such that it can only be offered at one school for the incoming 6th and 7th grade students. For students who wish to remain at CMS next year for middle school, two options would be given:

- Attend first hour Plus math at MMS, leaving a few minutes before the end of the hour to be transferred back to CMS for the remainder of the day.
- At the request of the family, stay at CMS and push into the next grade level's courses.

The sixth-grade class of 2023-24 and all future middle school classes would attend their boundary school, unless their sibling is already at MMS for Plus and the family wishes to keep the siblings together. Ms. Kudwa asked the Board to approve the proposed changes to the Millennium Middle School Plus Program as presented.

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Ms. Urtel to approve the updated Middle School Plus Program changes as presented.

Roll Call: Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Ms. Junkulis-Pierce-yes, Mr. Leftwich-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Schwegler-yes. Motion carries 7 – 0.

HIRING OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Mr. Brian Toth explained that a resignation necessitated the hiring of Jenna Smith as a counselor at South Lyon High School. He asked the Board to approve the hiring of Ms. Smith as presented.

Moved by Ms. Junkulis-Pierce, supported by Mr. Abbate to approve the hiring of Ms. Jenna Smith as presented.

Roll Call: Mr. Leftwich-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Junkulis-Pierce-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Mr. Schwegler-yes. Motion carries 7 – 0.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH RESOLUTION

Mr. Archibald stated that each year Oakland Community Health Network hosts an array of initiatives that promote community awareness about mental illness. As part of the endeavor, they have asked school boards throughout Oakland County to partner with them by approving a resolution proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Mr. Archibald asked the Board to approve the resolution as presented. Ms. Urtel read the entire resolution to the Board.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Mr. Abbate to approve the Mental Health Awareness Month resolution as presented.

Roll Call: Mr. Schwegler-yes, Mr. Dashner-yes, Mr. Kennedy-yes, Ms. Urtel-yes, Mr. Abbate-yes, Ms. Junkulis-Pierce-yes, Mr. Leftwich-yes. Motion carries 7 – 0.

SPANISH I MATERIALS PURCHASE

Ms. Kudwa explained that the current textbook used by this course is a book published in 1996. The other issue with this textbook includes the fact that there is no online component available with this book. She stated it lacks authentic speaking and listening activities and does not have meaningful and authentic cultural activities. This requires purchasing new textbooks. Members of the World Language Subject Area Curriculum Committee met this school year to make a recommendation for a new textbook for Spanish I and II. The purchase recommendation in her memo includes materials for Spanish I. During the 2022-23 school year, materials will be purchased for Spanish II. The instructional maps will be updated for Spanish I during the 2022-23 school year to reflect the new resource. Instructional maps for Spanish II will be updated during the 2023-24 school year to reflect the new resource.

Six textbooks were reviewed. Student and teacher materials, including online resources, were carefully examined and reviewed. Features such as rigor of text, readability, text layout, introduction and use of vocabulary, inclusion of graphics and maps, and the adaptability of content to differentiate for a variety of learning styles and levels were all weighed carefully. The committee members also determined whether the textbook met the expectation of South Lyon Community Schools and was appropriate for middle and high school students.

Teachers piloted lessons using two of the reviewed textbooks. A chart with a summary of the pilots was shared with the Board.

Dr. Weber answered questions from the Board relative to the lifespan of the textbooks.

This item will be brought back before the Board for approval at the May 17 board meeting.

LEGISLATION

Mr. Archibald indicated that the budget process at the state level has begun with the Governor. He reminded everyone that this is a lengthy process with some hope of having a finalized budget in mid to late June. He noted that our budget will come before the Board prior to July 1 as required. Mr. Archibald is anticipating some legislation to make its way to the Governor's desk. If signed into law, it would eliminate the work keys from the MME. The second one involves components of a financial literacy course as a requirement prior to graduation. If and when these do become law, he will share more information.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Legislative** – Mr. Archibald did not have anything additional to add. They will meet again tomorrow.
- **Policy** – The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on May 17.
- **Finance** – Their meeting was postponed to next Monday.
- **Facilities Planning** – They met before the board meeting. They discussed what will be going out with the pool addition this summer. General update on construction in the district.
- **Curriculum & Communications** – They met last week and discussed the Spanish textbook purchase and the Plus Program changes.

OTHER

Mr. Archibald indicated that at his weekly meeting with the Oakland County Health Department today they shared that the COVID 19 community level by the CDC tracker has been moved from low to medium. The main cause for that is the case rates per 100,000 in Oakland County have exceeded 200,000 for a seven-day period. They do anticipate by their data that what we are experiencing right now we should be nearing this peak leveling off. The only change in terms from moving from low to medium is that individuals with a high-risk health category should consult with their physician regarding any additional precautions. Requiring masks is not being considered at this point. Masks are optional for those who wish to wear one. Mr. Archibald shared with the Board that his Executive Assistant, Judy Wiemer is planning to retire at the end of June. She has been with the district since September 14, 1987 and has worked with five superintendents. He added that she does a tremendous amount of work, not only for him on a daily basis and with him, but for the Board of Education as well. He added that she is an absolute delight to work with and is a great assistance to the Board. He wished her and her husband all the best in retirement.

He also noted that this is Teacher Appreciation Week, and it is important to take the opportunity to recognize all of our staff members. Therefore, they consider it Staff Appreciation Week. Mr. Archibald acknowledged the amazing staff members who make up the SLCS staff family. Regardless of one's role in our organization, however big or small, every single one of them play a part in impacting the educational experience of our most precious young people. The SLCS staff make a positive difference each and every day. Mr. Archibald stated that he remains in awe from this staff from one end of this district to the other. On behalf of administration, he offered his heartfelt and sincere appreciation to our staff who make excellence in education the standard here in South Lyon.

REPORTS

South Lyon Educational Foundation – Ms. Junkulis-Pierce stated that they are hosting a photography fund raiser that will be on May 14th and 15th. Pictures will be taken at the Maybury State Farm. The photographer is our teachers within our district. The shoots are about 15 minutes. Get some fun Spring pictures for your family and help support the foundation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered a second opportunity for public comments.

- **Brenton Montie** gave a shout out to Catherine Phelps for her time and effort in the district for 35 years.

- *Miriam Corvino* addressed corrupt health divisions throughout the counties. She indicated they have a right to mask our kids. It is unconstitutional and not supported by any MCL on the books. She stated there is litigation happening right now. She encouraged everyone not to put their guard down. She is fighting against what is happening to our school systems. She stated that one half of 3rd graders in Michigan can't read. Our math has social emotional learning in it. She is currently working on organizing into a format, gathering speakers and putting together a venue that will be open to our community to educate everyone on what she is learning about the corruption in our education system, and in our Partners in Education from the local state and national level. She hopes everyone will keep an open mind.
- *Chaudana Tallury* thanked Mrs. Kudwa for hearing parent concerns regarding the 5th graders going into 6th grade. She questioned whether we are looking at lowering standards in the testing of kids going into the Magnet program to support the numbers.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Dashner acknowledged the following correspondence:

- *Retirements*
 - *Jennifer Smith – Literacy Intervention Teacher @ Brummer/Dolsen, effective 6.30.22*
 - *Amy Miller – Science Teacher @ MMS, effective 6.30.22*
 - *Catherine Phelps – Health Teacher @ MMS, effective 6.30.22*
- *Resignation*
 - *Julie Eddy – not returning from leave*

MEETING DATES

Mr. Dashner acknowledged the following meeting dates.

- May 17, 2022, *Special Meeting, 6:15 p.m.*
- May 17, 2022, *Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.*
- May 31, 2022, *Special Meeting, 6:00 p.m.*
- June 6, 2022, (Monday), *Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.*
- June 21, 2022, *Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.*

BOARD COMMENTS

- **Mr. Kennedy** thanked the teachers who came to the meeting this evening. He appreciates them. He is sad to see Judy leave and extended a thank you to her and Catherine Phelps. He wished them both all the best. He thanked the choir for singing to everyone this evening and also a special thanks to Andrew, the choir director.
- **Ms. Urtel** reiterated congratulations to Judy on her retirement. She will have a fabulous time doing whatever she likes to do. She also extended her wishes to the other retirees. She thanked all the staff, from teachers, kitchen helpers, custodians, maintenance and everyone else. They are the ones who keep everything going whether you see them in front of your students or the ones behind the scenes. She went to see Grease this weekend and noted the phenomenal talented actors, dancers and singers. She also thanked Mr. H for being able to do what he does with our kids to make them shine.

- **Mr. Abbate** thanked the choir for their performance this evening. They are fantastic. He also thanked our teachers for what they do every day. He congratulated Judy on her retirement and noted that she is a phenomenal fixture in the district. The Board will miss her. He wished her all the best in the next chapter in her life. He also wished Jennifer Smith, Amy Miller and Catherine Phelps all the best and noted they are one of the finest people you will meet. Congratulations to all the retirees.
- **Mr. Schwegler** mentioned that he loved watching the choir. He added that it would be great to see the other high school's choir perform at a meeting. Teachers are incredible. He wished Judy good luck and to enjoy herself and don't think about work. It's been great having her supporting the Board. He also spoke to the parents of the Magnet students to relay to their kids that what the parents have done is clearly heard. The kids won't lose friendships and will make new ones.
- **Mr. Leftwich** echoed the gratitude and accolades already spoken. He acknowledged teacher appreciation week and thanked everyone for everything they do.
- **Ms. Junkulis-Pierce** thanked all of our amazing staff who go above and beyond on a daily basis. Kindness, grace and passion are making a difference. She also thanked the PTO, students and parents for making this week a success at all of the schools. She thanked the local businesses for offering specials and ways to acknowledge our staff. She added that she saw Grease this weekend and was blown away by the production. It was phenomenal and great to see. She offered her congratulations to Mrs. Chynoweth. She thanked all the parents, staff and students who continue to come and speak at their meetings. She welcomed Jenna to the district. She also reached out to Judy and noted that she and the Board will miss her. She stated her knowledge is unmatched after 35 years in the district, and her position will be hard to fill. She wished her all the best in her retirement.
- **Mr. Dashner** echoed a lot of the points that were already made. He offered his congratulations to Dr. Weber. He recognized all the good people we have in the district and thanked all the teachers and staff members for all their efforts in making the district what it is. He wished the retirees good luck and congratulated Ms. Chynoweth for her support person of the year. He also thanked the choir for coming to sing at the meeting. He mentioned that he doesn't know what the Board is going to do without Judy. He warned the public that if the board meetings start falling apart in July, you will know why. He added that Judy is the only one who comes to every one of their meetings but never gets to talk; but she's ok with that. In closing, he conveyed to Judy that the Board is going to miss her and thanked her for everything she has done for them.

ADJOURN

Moved by Ms. Junkulis-Pierce, supported by Mr. Kennedy to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Ayes – 7, Nays - 0. Motion carries 7 - 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Urtel
Board Secretary