

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DISTRICT #63-240 COUNTIES OF
OAKLAND, LIVINGSTON, AND WASHTENAW
HELD IN SOUTH LYON CITY & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dashner called the October 5, 2021 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, Ms. Lisa Kudwa, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. Brian Toth, Asst. Superintendent, Ms. Stacy Witt, Asst. Superintendent

Administration Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

RECOGNITION

President Dashner announced that the current South Lyon High School Girls Golf Team is being recognized this evening for their state championship title win from the last school year. Coach Skatzka was introduced as well as four of the girls on the team, Gabby Tapp, Logan Foust, Sophia Joseph and Sydney Shisler. Ms. Tapp noted that Ellen Albert was unable to attend the meeting this evening and that Isabella Campbell and Katherine Potter have graduated and moved on to college. Gabby Tapp is a junior and is in her 3rd year on the state's team and is the spokesperson for the team this evening. Gabby began by thanking Coach Skatzka for everything he does for the girls, from organizing hitting in the batting cages over the winter to having a week-long camp with professional instruction during the first week of summer and scheduling the girls for the greatest number of tournaments as possible to make sure they get the most experience than anyone else in the state. She proudly noted that without him they wouldn't be able to be as successful as they are. Most of the girls on the team join their freshman year with little to no experience and become some of the top players in the state by their junior or senior years because they get more instruction and practice time than other teams in the state. All of the long hours and hard work pay off when they get to hold the state championship at the end of the year. The girls have an incredible bond, and even though they have a lot of fun, they know when it is time to focus and put in the work. She stated that nothing will ever top the feeling she had when she found out that their team had finally beat the three-time reigning champs of the state tournament. Getting to hold that trophy with her best friends will forever be one of her fondest and treasured memories. She got that same feeling at the regional tournament where they won for the 10th year in a row and is hopeful that they will be able to win a second state championship and make the South Lyon Schools and community proud again this year. She thanked the Board for all their support. Go Lions!!

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered an opportunity for public comments. The following comments were made.

- **Miriam Corvino** stated that she sent letters to the health department in opposition to the mask mandate. She thanked the Board for leaving the decision regarding mask choice up to the parents.
- **Cherie LaRou** indicated that she watched the last board meeting and heard the Board state that laws have to be followed by the school board. She quoted subsections from the revised school code and public acts of 2021 and then asked the Board if they were picking and choosing the laws that they will follow.
- **Geno Montes** spoke to the Board about how masks don't work and that the Board was defying state law. He asked the Board to unmask our kids!
- **Matt Howton** read Mr. Archibald's letter to South Lyon parents that provided clarification of the status of the OCHD Emergency Order (2021-01) which pertains to the mask mandate. He cited Section 250 and indicated that the district is breaking the law by requiring masks to be worn.
- **Dan Argentati** asked the Board when they are going to stand up to Oakland County Health Department and help our kids. He asked the Board where the end game is. He asked the Board why they are not fighting for our kids.
- **Jennifer Propps** showed the Board the condition of her son's mask that he wore to school today. She wants the Board to make sure that our kids wear proper fitted masks and to hire staff to monitor the mask wearing. Stand up to Oakland County!
- **Joe Cusamano** stated that it is no use to fight the legalities of mandating masks. He asked the Board to look at what they have control of. He asked for some leniency at activities. He also wants the Board to free Brummer! That school is in Livingston County!
- **Carmen Bowman** is a parent and a school employee. She is frustrated with the masks and asked the Board to rethink their mask mandate policy. Go back to optional.
- **Justine Bidigare** stated that she is new to the district. Her children were home schooled, but she was under the impression that masks were optional. Her son has asthma, and it flared up after four days of school. She now has to give him medication so that he can breathe at school. Let our kids breathe.
- **Logan Foust** is a high school student who does not agree with students not wearing masks at school. A mask allows her to get an education safely. She emphasized that the social issues with masks are not there and do not exist.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Ms. Junkulis-Pierce to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0. Motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Dashner asked the Board to approve the September 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

Moved by Ms. Junkulis-Pierce, supported by Mr. Leftwich to approve the September 21, 2021 minutes as presented.

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0. Motion carries.

HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Archibald explained that a new subdivision, Crystal Creek South, is being developed on Eleven Mile Road across the street from Pearson Elementary School. The development will consist of 79 homes. The current high school boundary line splits the development in two. Approximately 75% of the homes are on the South Lyon High School side of the current boundary line. The administration is recommending adjusting the high school boundary line that currently runs diagonally through the Crystal Creek development to run South along Milford Rd starting at Eleven Mile and then turn West - North of Hidden Timbers to where it would connect with the existing HS boundary line. The adjusted boundary would run the same as the middle school boundary to the immediate east and south of Crystal Creek South. The proposed adjustment to the boundary line would send all the students from this development to South Lyon High School. Any adjustment to the boundaries requires Board approval per Board policy 2001. He asked the Board to approve the adjustment to the high school boundary as described.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, supported by Ms. Urtel to approve the adjustment to the high school boundary as described.

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

LEGISLATION

Mr. Archibald noted that there was nothing new to report this evening.

CITA COMMENTS

Ms. Kudwa noted that this report is from last school year.

Annual Bullying Report

Ms. Kudwa stated that bullying of a student is strictly prohibited in our schools. "*Bullying*" means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more School District students, either directly or indirectly, by doing any of the following:

- Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs.
- Adversely affecting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities by placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
- Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health; or
- Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

She emphasized that the district's Board policies, administrative regulations, and student codes of conduct discourage bullying behavior and hold students accountable for high standards. She noted that our disciplinary system is one where clear expectations are set for students, use incidents as teachable moments, and strive to help our students grow into responsible citizens. This is evident in our use of the Restorative Practices- seeking to help students understand the impact of their choices and make amends to those they have hurt.

In addition, the extensive K-12 teaching of the Habits of Mind infuses the buildings with cultures where an appreciation for diversity and a respect for differences are highly valued.

All school buildings have social work support, and all secondary buildings have counseling staff to address the needs of students who are impacted by bullying or exhibiting bullying behavior.

At a building level, each school has the autonomy to determine the practices and anti-bullying programs that best meet the needs of that student population. Across buildings, best practices have been shared and have been found to be helpful in bullying prevention.

State laws regarding bullying require yearly reports to the Board of Education regarding the number of verified incidents and the resulting consequences.

Often through our investigations, we find that students or families may label incidents as "bullying" when the incidents do not meet the definition of bullying. Student conflicts are often misrepresented by one contributing party claiming bullying by the other party. Each of these instances is investigated by administration and, when necessary, Restorative Practices may be used, or disciplinary action may be taken. We utilize these incidents as teachable moments to encourage student reflection and more positive future decision making.

It is also found that some students fail to report incidents to the teaching staff and administration, depriving them of the opportunity to intervene early in a situation. All buildings work with students to encourage immediate reporting of suspected bullying.

During the 2020-21 school year, there were no confirmed incidents of bullying.

She thanked the families in our community for their willingness to participate in Restorative Practices. She also thanked the building administrators, teaching staff and support staff for their efforts to prevent bullying in our district and their quick and consistent responses to confirmed cases of bullying.

Constitution Day Updates

This year, Constitution Day was celebrated on Friday, September 17.

Participation of all K-12 students in an educational program on the United States Constitution is something we must assure in order to receive federal grants such as Title I, Title IIA, and Title III.

On that day, students at the elementary level engaged in an exploration of informational text (print and film) about the Constitution and specifically the Bill of Rights. Students considered the information found in the Constitution and how it impacts our government and our communities. Students made real world connections to the ideas present in the Constitution by considering how it relates to classroom rules and/or creating classroom constitutions.

Classes at the middle school focused on a more in depth look at the Bill of Rights and Preamble to the Constitution. Students studied their significance and their impact on our daily lives and our government. Discussion topics included how citizenship is defined through the Constitution and the core values defined through the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

At the high school level, students participated in a more in-depth study of the Constitution itself as a primary document. Classes studied the Bill of Rights, Preamble, as well as specific Amendments to the Constitution. Additionally, classes considered the powers afforded to our government through the Constitution. She thanked our staff for planning such wonderful Constitution Day events in our schools!

Graduation Requirements for the Graduating Class of 2022

Ms. Kudwa indicated that our Administrative Regulations outline the requirements for a student in our district to earn a high school diploma. Normally, participation in the Michigan Merit Exam (or MME), which includes the SAT, is a graduation requirement. As this assessment was not mandated by the State of Michigan last school year, she stated that we are again adjusting our requirements. For the graduating class of 2022, completion of the MME/SAT will not be required for graduation.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Dashner acknowledged the following board committee reports:

- **Legislative** – Mr. Leftwich stated they are meeting tomorrow.
- **Policy** – Mr. Abbate stated their next meeting is scheduled on October 19.
- **Finance** – Mr. Schwegler noted they are scheduled to meet on October 18.
- **Facilities & Grounds** – Ms. Urtel reported they have not met since their informational meeting last week with the contractor and architect. They will meet next week.
- **Curriculum & Communications** – Their next meeting is scheduled in November.
- **Oakland Schools Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – Neither Ms. Urtel nor Mr. Leftwich were able to make their last meeting.

OTHER

Mr. Archibald wanted to assure the Board and the residents at the meeting that he has never advocated either in a group or individually against any recommendation he has made to this Board. His only work with the Oakland County Health Department had to do with the quarantine.

REPORTS

- **South Lyon Educational Foundation** – Boo Bowling is scheduled this Sunday, October 10. There are still some tickets available. It is a great event. Everyone can dress up in their costumes and have a lot of fun. There are great items to bid on. The Lyon Twp. Fire Department is offering a ride to school on a fire truck for all the schools in Lyon Township. The South Lyon Educational Foundation *Strong Together* apparel is still available to purchase until October 17. They continue always to look for members to volunteer.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Dashner offered a second opportunity for public comments. The following comment was made.

- **David Strange** spoke against requiring masks.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence for Mr. Dashner to acknowledge.

MEETING DATES

Mr. Dashner noted the following meeting dates.

- October 19, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- November 9, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- December 7, 2021, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- January 18, 2022, (Tuesday) Organizational/Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- February 8, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- March 1, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- March 15, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- April 19, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- May 3, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- May 17, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- June 6, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- June 21, 2022, Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

BOARD COMMENTS

- **Ms. Junkulis-Pierce** thanked all the community members who came out to voice their concerns, especially our high school student who came and had her voice heard. The Board wants to see our students participating in civil discourse. Congratulations to all of the new SLHS National Honor Society inductees who got to attend the SLHS event last night. SLEHS is having their event on Thursday. It is great to see the academic excellence that is occurring in our high schools. Sports teams have been phenomenal this year. The Equestrian Team just won the Regionals, our golf team is going to States and our football teams are doing excellent. She has also seen truly great accomplishments on our swim team on Twitter. She has seen some phenomenal fundraisers going on in the elementary schools. The Sayre Sharks have raised over \$50,000 this year. Hardy has one going on right now. They are over \$21,000. Brummer is over \$10,000 now. There are more going on now in the other schools. It is great to see community members coming together to support our schools. She encouraged the parents to speak directly to the teacher regarding student masks if possible or bring it to the principals. If it doesn't get handled at that level, please take it to administration and ultimately to the Board. She also noted there is an accommodation for students with a medical condition who cannot wear a mask. You must have a doctor's note. She encouraged those students to contact Ms. Lisa Kudwa, and she will work with the student.
- **Mr. Leftwich** noted that it is a breath of fresh air to have the golf team join the board meeting tonight. The board loves to celebrate excellence and their success and to be reminded of why they got involved with board work. They are looking forward to seeing others achieve academically and athletically become their best selves. He looks forward to more of these moments of celebration. The Board hears everyone and sympathizes with their position regarding the mask mandate. He emphasized that the administration and Board are still going to follow their legal advice. He also mentioned there is a Tik Tok trend going around right now where kids are destroying school property. Another new trend is students who will try to slap teachers. That behavior is very distressing to him. He indicated that administration has support of the Board for the fullest level of Code of Conduct disciplinary action.

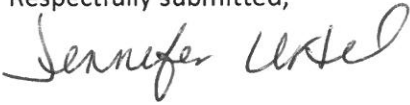
- **Mr. Schwegler** indicated that he loved seeing the golf team at the meeting. He hopes that administration will bring in more groups.
- **Mr. Abbate** noted that everything has been said. He thanked administration for bringing groups to celebrate. He addressed comments that were made about restraint in the School Code. It has nothing to do with masks. We do follow that law because it has something to do with physical restraint of students. It is the piece of the law that tells them how to appropriately manage students who are in distress or in a situation where they lost control etc. It is the law that tells them not to put their hands on children inappropriately. Our board follows that. They have to wait for an official analysis of what is expected of them from the people they pay professionally to do this. Their role is to help minimize risk to this organization. Our district cannot ignore an order unless they want to subject all of their employees to liability. He emphasized you cannot sue the Board for following a law. Community members can if the Board does not follow law. The community coming in over and over again asking the Board to defy the law is disheartening. He feels everyone's frustration with masks. He doesn't enjoy them himself. It is his understanding that Governor Whitmer's office is not planning to enforce the loss of funds to local health associations for enforcing these mask mandates. If they are not going to do that, the mandate will stay in effect. As long as the mandate is in effect, the school district is legally bound to follow. If there is a legal remedy to be had, it is with the county.
- **Ms. Urtel** offered her congratulations to the golf team. The boys' soccer team has their last conference game tomorrow night. Districts and regionals start next week. She wished them good luck. The SLHS football team won again. Their homecoming game is this weekend. There are all sorts of smiling kids dressed up on Facebook. There were high praises for last year's outdoor proms. She is happy EHS had a homecoming and is looking forward to SLHS having a homecoming and having a great time getting back to doing something fun. Everyone should enjoy, put smiles on their faces, take pictures and have a great time. She wished good luck to all the fall sports going into regionals and districts.
- **Mr. Kennedy** stated that things are not yet back to normal. He agrees with his colleagues that we are doing amazing things. Our students and staff are doing more than stepping up to the plate. Hats off to our friends, family, staff, teachers, peers, administrators and everybody who is going above and beyond to try to do the things we did before.
- **Mr. Dashner** noted that October is National Principals Month. He thanked all the principals in our buildings this year. He also thanked the maintenance staff for the amazing job that they do. It is coming to the end of the fall season sports. The language from legislation that was put in the budget bill caused more issues and confusion regarding the mask mandate. He felt the language the legislators put in the bill was unconstitutional, but because it is in there and signed, it is legal until it is challenged in court. School districts are not breaking the law. The public health officer might be, but that is up to the courts to decide. The COVID legislation that was passed requires school districts to follow all laws. The Board understands how the parents feel. They can't wait for this to be over. He emphasized that the Board does listen, but they have to continue to follow the law and protect the school district.

ADJOURN

Moved by Mr. Abbate, supported by Mr. Kennedy to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Ayes – 7, Nays – 0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jennifer Urtel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Jennifer Urtel, Secretary
Board of Education