

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2020  
WILMETTE, IL  
REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Board of Education was held on Monday, September 21, 2020 at the Mikaelian Education Center, 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, Illinois. President Lisa Schneider-Fabes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Lisa Schneider-Fabes, Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Mark Steen, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone

Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Kari Cremascoli, Corey Bultemeier, Heather Glowacki, Katie Lee, Kristin Swanson

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board members and administrators led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mr. Steen, to accept the minutes of the August 24, 2020 Budget Hearing and minutes of the August 24, 2020 Board of Education Regular and Executive Session Meetings. The minutes were approved as submitted by **General Consent**.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. DeMonte and Dr. Glowacki read the public comments submitted via email:

Cindy Levine & Wendy Zun, on behalf of League of Women Voters, submitted comments regarding local and national civil discourse and communicating with respect and empathy.

Kim Simon emailed to relay how happy her son was to be in school. She stated her son not engaged on the asynchronous days and thought the original plan was to livestream on remote days.

Dr. Rucha Patel, Jamie Weiner, Mary Fratini, Sara Kirmser, Nicky Hilbert, Drew Freistedt, Janet Cavanaugh, Stephanie Crocker, Alexa Burnell, Noah Rothschild, Christina Ballester and Debbie L. all wrote to support a sooner return to in person education.

Kevin Robinson emailed asking if a child who stays home due to illness can join virtual classes.

Victoria Shoemaker felt hybrid learning for 5-8 grades should be in-person on Mondays and synchronous instruction on the alternating remote days.

Christian Ballester, a sixth grader, emailed to report five hours of zoom instruction on Mondays is too much and requested full time in-person instruction.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Facility Development – Mrs. Sternweiler reported the committee met as part of Committee of the Whole on September 14<sup>th</sup>. The committee discussed Romona and McKenzie KEEP39 projects. McKenzie will net two additional classrooms and 5,000 square feet of renovation space. Romona will add one kindergarten classroom, a special education classroom, along with additional meeting space near the front entrance. The baseline budget for McKenzie was \$4,566,341 with an alternate of \$250K for a restroom. The baseline budget for Romona is \$2,941,552 with no bid alternates. Summer construction projects were reported to be finishing at Harper, Central and Highcrest. The Village stormwater project at Highcrest is also concluding. The Central Avenue water main project was scheduled to begin in August but was delayed. The Village navigated construction to accommodate in-person attendance during drop-off/pick-up times.

School Finance – Mr. Cesaretti reported the committee reviewed the cash flow spreadsheet provided by Mr. Bultemeier and the summary of ISBE criteria for obtaining an excellent financial profile score. The members also read the letter to the Board from Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP, District 39 auditing firm, explaining their methods and procedures. Mr. Bultemeier noted due to the change in ISBE budget procedures the Board would receive a monthly Student Activity account report as part of the Board of Education meeting packet.

Strategy – Mr. Steen reported the strategy committee did not have any Strategy updates per se, but provided an update on the Reopening Plan and the Metrics Reopening Advisory Team. The Metrics Reopening Advisory Team reviews a lot of information including recent COVID positivity rates, operational and supplies metrics, and staff and student absences in an effort to reopen schools sooner. A metrics dashboard was designed and posted on the District website that included a metric tracker developed by Northwestern University to aggregate data for school districts.

## **Liaison Reports**

Educational Foundation – Mrs. Poehling reported Ed Foundation held a virtual meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup>. The annual “Attire to Inspire” fashion show event was cancelled due to COVID. The Ed Foundation partnered with Plaza del Lago’s Fashion show held on September 17<sup>th</sup> and was a great success. The next meeting is October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) – Mrs. Sternweiler reported the North Cook Division fall virtual meeting will be held on October 28<sup>th</sup>. She noted the 2020 IASB Resolutions Report is available on line and includes all resolutions for proposal and reaffirmation. Voting will be held on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. She noted the eight new resolutions proposed. She reported IASB had also developed an equity statement.

## **Legislative Update**

Ms. Stone reported nothing new to report.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Written Communication**

Dr. Cremascoli reported the Board received written communications from Bill and Lindsay Baumann, Kathy Ryan, Sara Kennedy, Amanda and Rick Adams, Pam Berg, Angela O’Rourke-Walther, Lauren and Bill Pickrell, all supporting in-person education. Written communication from Alicia Brown, Michelle Coffey, Dr. Rucha Patel, Bekim Redzic, Diane Schanzenbach, Dr. Laura Hemmer, supported transitioning to in-person learning sooner. Communications from Alethea Peyrin and Diane Fornell, and Brandy Russell questioned remote learning class sizes. Jane Tomlinson wrote to support the

slower, responsible reopening of schools. Elizabeth Rosenfeld wrote to relay frustrations with delaying the start of school. Kristin Marvin wrote about her frustrations for remote instruction and technology issues. Kasia Pore and Yan Qui requested special education students be allowed back in school as soon as possible. Robin Cook wrote to request asynchronous learning days be more enhanced to engage students throughout the day and asked the District to consider live streaming.

## **B. Administrative Announcements**

### *Parent Webinar in Partnership with PASS39 Ice Cream Social*

Dr. Cremascoli stated a parent webinar was held to welcome families back to the school year and answer questions about special education services in these unique learning environments. About 45 families attended and the District continues to collaborate with PASS39 and families throughout the school year.

### *Curriculum Nights*

Dr. Cremascoli stated District 39 schools hosted curriculum nights virtually this school year. While teachers and administrators missed the opportunity to share students' classrooms, the connections between teachers and parents were still fostered in meaningful ways. Each event was well attended and many commended teachers and staff for their incredibly hard work and dedication to supporting students.

### *Reopening Planning*

Dr. Cremascoli stated the District had continued success during the first few weeks of school. The enhanced fully remote program began with teachers and students connecting regularly through synchronous zooms and daily instruction. Routines have been established and support learning and engagement with and among students. The slower progressive start provided the opportunity for teachers and students to build connections, establish routines, and launch learning. It also allowed the successful implementation of health and safety protocols and procedures with fewer students on campus. Reminders were sent to families asking for assistance with mask wearing, social distancing, self-certification, and healthy habits outside of school.

Dr. Cremascoli reported the District continued to make improvements to procedures as IDPH updates its guidelines. Quarantine guidance is regularly updated as well as school response to COVID symptoms. The District also made improvements to cleaning and disinfecting procedures, PPE supplies, and to operational procedures within schools. Guidance provided by IDPH and county departments of public health continue to offer frameworks useful to schools in interpreting COVID metrics.

### *Metrics Reopening Advisory Team Update*

Dr. Cremascoli stated the Metrics Reopening Advisory Team was formed to study metrics and progress related to COVID-19 transmission and the District's Reopening Plan to guide improvements and adjustments to health/safety protocols and in-person reopening efforts. They also suggest improvements to operational procedures and health/safety protocols to mitigate spread of the virus when staff and students are in schools.

The Metrics Reopening Advisory Team met three times and established and reviewed metrics to evaluate and make recommendations regarding adjustments to learning models and implementation of guidance. The team finalized its metrics dashboard and published three weekly updates. Live links to regularly updated data are available on the dashboard along with the full metrics report. The team continues to evaluate metrics and consider additional data that may be relevant. They supported hosting a Q&A webinar for staff with medical experts scheduled for September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Per Board direction, the team was asked to consider accelerating elementary in-person instruction for the week of September 28<sup>th</sup> for PreK-4th grade students. The team discussed a variety of options for doing so and, unfortunately, could not reach consensus. While the COVID transmission and positivity rate data is very good, concerns remain regarding the ability to implement health and safety protocol with integrity once all students return.

Other perspectives were shared advocating for a return to full in-person instruction the week of September 28. The metrics are favorable and point in the direction of probable success. While challenges do arise, the District has been able to quickly problem-solve in manageable ways to address issues. Challenges will continue to improve as students and teachers develop routines and gain confidence and comfort in these new approaches for attending school. Thus, several team members advocated strongly for returning our K-1 or K-2 students to full in-person earlier.

Various perspectives were shared during the meeting and with no perfect solution that would adequately address all needs Dr. Cremascoli had to make a decision. Though she preferred a full return to in-person instruction for grades PreK-4th grade the week of the 28th, she considered teachers readiness and ability to support the transition to full student attendance as well as the resources available to offer additional support and attention where challenges might arise. She weighed the benefits of safe in-person instruction routines, and supporting young learners with additional resources, and recognized the ongoing benefits of providing targeted support for students and staff with smaller student cohorts. She recommended an early return to in-person instruction for PreK-1st grade students for the week of September 28<sup>th</sup>. The early return allows students in PreK-1st grade two additional days of in-person instruction to practice routines and problem-solve challenges with additional in-person staff before all elementary students return to in-person instruction the week of October 5<sup>th</sup>. Although the Metrics Team could not reach consensus on this recommendation, both the health and operational metrics support this adjustment.

Board members discussed maximizing instruction and the alternate synchronous remote learning days. All members felt the goal was to maximize in-person instruction and recognized the need to work out logistical issues with remote hybrid days. Members agreed everyone wants students in school sooner and were excited to get Pre-K through 1st graders in school a week earlier.

#### *Student Academic Assessment Plan*

Dr. Cremascoli stated the District will return to traditional assessment practices to assess student readiness and performance. Both in-person and full remote models will incorporate assessment practices that were in place prior to the shift to remote learning last March. Teachers may use formative and summative assessment in both formal and informal ways to assess and report on student progress. She noted regarding standardized assessments, the student academic assessment plan is on the District website under “District 39 Assessment Overview”. The District will implement these assessments (such as MAP, aimswebPlus, DESSA, MESH) and state mandated assessments (like IAR, ISA, Fitness) during this school year. Unlike last school year’s spring assessments that were canceled, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has shared that these assessments will be required this year. No waivers are allowed at this point in the year. Department of Curriculum & Instruction will continue to monitor ISBE announcements throughout the year and adjust, if needed.

#### *Parent Event in Partnership with Family Service Center*

D39 has lined up monthly parent events on topics ranging from social emotional health to technology. “Parenting During COVID-19: Supporting Adjustment at Home and at School” event will be held September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The clinical staff from the Family Service Center of Wilmette will lead the event. Registration links for parent events are posted on the District website.

### *Right At School*

Dr. Cremascoli stated District 39 is partnering with Right At School to provide staff a child care option for their school age children who are not able to attend in person school. The program will be located at Regina Dominican, who offered to share two of their classrooms for this program.

### *Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)*

The Board received the following FOIA requests:

- From Joe John, dated August 30, 2020, 8:58 p.m., requesting all confirmed COVID cases for all D39 staff and students from January 1, 2020 to August 28, 2020;
- From Jeff Axelrod, the Board received a FOIA dated August 26, 2020, 12:36 p.m. requesting any documentation about suspected or confirmed COVID-19 exposure, suspected or confirmed cases for District 39 staff from January 1, 2020 to present;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated August 20, 2020 at 11:26 a.m. requesting documents containing information about building ventilation;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 3, 2020, 2:46 p.m., requesting any/all information about building ventilation for the past 30 days;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 3, 2020, 2:47 p.m., requesting any/all information about building ventilation for the past 90 days;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 3, 2020, 2:47 pm., requesting any/all information about building ventilation from February 1, 2020 to present;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 3, 2020, 2:48 p.m., requesting any/all information about building ventilation within the past year;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 3, 2020, 2:50 p.m., requesting any/all information about building ventilation for the past five years;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 4, 2020, 8:36 a.m., requesting spreadsheet data of current or past employees from May, 2019 through the present providing job titles, hourly/annual salary, gender, race/ethnicity;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated August 25, 2020, 8:10 pm., requesting a list of staff resignations along with resignation dates, correspondence from resigning staff and any other documents explaining resignation from May 1st to the present;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 4, 2020, 9:06 a.m., requesting list of staff resigned for any reasons, copies of resignation letters or other documents explaining their resignation from August 25, 2020 to present;
- From Jeff Axelrod, a FOIA dated September 11, 2020, 4:41 p.m., requesting a list of staff who have resigned for any reason along with resignation dates and copies of resignation letters from September 4, 2020 to present.

Board members discussed the amount of time administrators are spending on gathering data for the numerous amounts of FOIA requested and suggested hiring professional assistance to process the responses to allow administration to focus on schools, children, and education. Dr. Cremascoli noted administration is responsible for collecting the information requested in order to maintain privacy of students and staff. She added the District utilizes legal counsel to assist with redacting documents. Members felt during the pandemic the administration's focus should be on running schools and agreed outside help should be considered. Dr. Cremascoli thanked the Board for their support and keeping the focus on children and allowing the District to open schools. She stated the District would be fiscally responsible in all actions.

## C. Strategic Plan Updates

### 1. Response to the Community Review Committee (CRC) Report

Dr. Cremascoli stated this report is the Superintendent's response to the CRC Report, "Strengthening Parent Partnerships," that was presented to the Board of Education in June 2020. The report details the 2019-2020 Community Review Committee's recommendations, which were presented and accepted as part of the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan. The following CRC recommendations were accepted:

- District 39 should ensure parent input is utilized in the development of parent educational event topics and timing.
- District 39 should conduct a review of district-wide communication practices and methods.
- District 39 should evaluate and look to improve and increase two-way dialogue between parents, teachers, and administrators.

### 2. 2020-2021 District 39 Strategic Plan

Dr. Cremascoli stated this report is District 39's Strategic Plan for 2020-2021. The administration presented this detailed report outlining new and continuing initiatives as well as annual business for Board of Education approval. Each initiative has been categorized by year and phase of implementation.

Ms. Katie Lee provided a detailed report outlining new and continuing initiatives as well as annual business. Each initiative has been categorized by year and phase of implementation.

Ms. Lee reported on New Strategic Initiatives: Year 1: Implementing. The primary focus for this school year has been the 2020-2021 District 39 Reopening Plan. The goal has been to open schools while keeping staff and students safe by abiding by state health and safety guidelines and to build in-person student learning and connections as much as possible. The plan was refined in collaboration with a multi-stakeholder committee to implement a modified in-person education model for K-4 students, a hybrid model for 5-8 students, and a fully remote model for students in all grades. The models were developed with the ability to pivot between them based on direction from health officials. Other action steps included were to provide ongoing targeted professional development and training, build community among in-person and remote learners and staff, create and update a spot for parents/families to access information, and provide parent events throughout the year.

Ms. Lee reported on Continuing Strategic Initiatives:

- Delivering a Kindergarten Enrichment Program Year 3: Developing/Implementing. The Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program (KEEP39) at Central and Harper Elementary Schools will be implemented by June 2021. Administration will review construction plans with STR Architects and make recommendations to the Facilities Development Committee with plans to go out to bid in January/February 2021 pending Board approval.
- Student Growth through Differentiation & Personalization Year 3: Implementing. District 39 will evaluate the impact instruction measure by percentage of students' performance on MAP Reading and Mathematics Assessments and analyze benchmarking assessments in various other assessments utilized.
- Creating Flexible Learning Environments Year 3: Implementing – Highcrest Middle School Courtyard, Outdoor Classroom, and Garden. District 39 plans to finalize and implement Phase III by spring of 2021. Phase III considers enhancements to the mini-farm, rain garden, and adding an additional garden to compensate for lost space due to construction.

Ms. Lee reported the Annual Business Section included Building School Culture and Community; School Safety; a K-8 grade Science Curriculum Review (currently in year 3 of review); and Sustainability Planning, Practices and Education.

Board members discussed the focus on connections and building community with concerns for students in this pandemic environment; implementation of differentiation in remote/hybrid environments; utilizing other social emotional learning programs beyond Second Step.

#### **D. Annual Business**

##### **1. Summer Enrichment Program 2020**

Dr. Cremascoli reported District 39 has historically offered a very robust summer enrichment program, with enrichment classes such as cooking and rocketry, and academic classes that include basic skills and specialties such as a poetry. This year, due to COVID-19, summer offerings were decreased. The bulk of planning for the summer program usually occurs during late spring, when school districts were under a stay-at-home order. The isolation order delayed the start of summer school by two weeks to allow additional planning time, and reduced all summer programming to academically focused classes. The Summer Enrichment Program was held from July 6 - August 7, and all classes were held remotely. The Extended School Year (ESY) program, which provides goal-oriented instruction for eligible students with IEPs, was offered as either a fully remote program or as an optional hybrid program. A new class, JumpStart, was added as a short, two-week class to give students a head start on a return to school. District 39's Summer Enrichment Program is designed to be cost neutral, and despite the unusual circumstances, was close to achieving this goal.

Mr. Panzica noted the Jump Start class was imaginative and helpful for participants. He asked if the District might survey students who joined to assess the benefits of the program.

##### **2. Enrollment Update**

Dr. Glowacki stated the annual report looks a bit different this year. The point was to share information that reflects where staffing would be if it were a typical school year as well as what staffing/enrollment looks like currently for in-person and remote learning. There was a net increase of 13 staff members for homeroom/classroom teachers and there was a net increase of 5.33 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for Learning Behavior Specialists (LBSs). These increases were slightly higher than expected due to the logistics of scheduling. When developing the exact schedule for in-person and remote learners, it was realized additional staff was needed to thoroughly address student needs.

The class size for remote classes were all within the guidelines for all grade levels except first grade. Grade 1 remote classes are at 25 students in a class and guidance has 24 at the upper limits. In a typical year, it is not uncommon for a grade level at a school to go above the guidelines when there are fluctuations in enrollment. When this occurs, administration seeks additional supports for the students in those grade levels, usually during reading and math instructional blocks. This will occur this year as well. All other grade levels for in-person and remote classes are at or below typical class size guidelines. The administration planned for in-person numbers to be extremely low in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Finally, it was noted that families made a choice for the first semester. As the end of the semester approaches, there will be a need to plan for any changes related to enrollment and staffing for the second semester.

3. Letter of Agreement with Support Staff Union (SSU)

Dr. Cremascoli stated the Letter of Agreement with the SSU have been negotiated. The SSU Letter of Agreement reflects the needs of staff as a result of the health crisis and the fall return to school plan.

4. Fiscal Year 2020 Administrator and Teacher Salary and Benefits Report (ATSB)

Dr. Cremascoli noted this is a required annual report. Once presented, this information will be posted to the District 39 website and will remain there until updated next fall.

**E. Board Policy Review**

1. Second and Final Reading of Education Policies 2:220, 4:180 and 7:190

Dr. Cremascoli noted the Board reviewed policies and suggested revisions have been included.

Mrs. Poehling noted a typographical error in Policy 2:220.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sarah Squires-Doyle emailed to suggest creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at each elementary school.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mr. Steen, to approve the personnel report dated September 21, 2020 which included licensed full-time employment of **Chad Belfor**, effective August 24, 2020; **Caitlin Ciulla**, effective August 28, 2020; **Nicole Corrigan**, effective September 2, 2020; **Edyta Debkowska**, effective August 24, 2020; **Elizabeth Filley**, effective August 28, 2020; **Jonathan Frohn**, effective August 24, 2020; **Haley Gawenda**, effective August 24, 2020; **Candy Geweke**, effective September 9, 2020; **Stephanie Golden**, effective August 28, 2020; **Margaret Gray**, effective September 11, 2020; **Matthew Johnson**, effective August 28, 2020; **Monica LaRocco-McVay**, effective September 3, 2020; **Barbara Lillios**, effective August 24, 2020; **Elizabeth Simpson**, effective August 24, 2020; **Amanda Waugh**, effective September 16, 2020; **Jamie Wilkin**, effective August 24, 2020; educational support personnel full-time employment of **Laura Angel**, effective September 16, 2020; **Catherine Evans**, effective September 21, 2020; **Roberto Martinez Garcia**, effective September 14, 2020; **Joanne Perri-Nadler**, effective September 16, 2020; **Felix Ramos**, effective September 14, 2020; **Mark Tacderas**, effective September 8, 2020; licensed resignation of **Michelle Lawniczak**, effective September 11, 2020; **Erin Medsker**, effective September 25, 2020; **Kathleen Pollard**, effective August 28, 2020; **Anne Rodas**, effective September 2, 2020; **Catherine Rollings**, effective August 26, 2020; educational support personnel resignation of **Ellen Brown**, effective August 26, 2020; **Molly Petray**, effective August 4, 2020; **Seth Rosenbaum**, effective August 23, 2020; release for job abandonment of **Natalie Dolan**, effective August 21, 2020; educational support staff retirement of **Willie Edwards**, effective August 27, 2024: approve the 2020-2021 District 39 Strategic Plan: approve as second and final reading of Board of Education Policies 2:220 *Board of Education Meeting Procedures* as amended; 4:180 *Pandemic Preparedness; Management; and Recovery*; and 7:190 *Student Behavior*: approve the Support Staff Union (SSU) Letter of Agreement dated September 21, 2020: approve the contract with Right At School: approve the accounts payable for bills listed between August 25, 2020 – September 21, 2020 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$329,888.68; O&M Fund \$320,013.63;

Transportation Fund \$3,095.98; Capital Projects \$997,830.00; total all funds: \$1,650,828.29: approve the manual checks issued between August 25, 2020 and September 21, 2020 in the following amounts: Educational Fund \$616,573.99; O&M Fund \$35,362.00; Tort Fund \$3,327.00; total all funds: \$655,262.99.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Mark Steen, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – none; absent – none:

**Motions Carried.**

## **CONFERENCE ITEMS**

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Good and Welfare**

Mr. Panzica participated in the District 39 webinar hosted by Dr. Bolton on *Building Resilience During a Pandemic* and highly recommended viewing the recording.

Mr. Panzica moved, seconded by Mr. Steen, to adjourn to executive session to discuss special education, negotiations, and personnel.

On a roll call vote on the motion, voting “yea” – Jon Cesaretti, Frank Panzica, Amy Poehling, Mark Steen, Ellen Sternweiler, Erin Stone, Lisa Schneider-Fabes; voting “nay” – none; absent – none:

**Motion Carried.**

The meeting adjourned to executive session at 9:27 p.m. and returned to the regular meeting of the Board of Education at 10:40 p.m.

Being no further business, Mr. Steen moved, seconded by Mrs. Sternweiler, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education. It adjourned at 10:40 p.m. by **General Consent**.

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President

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Secretary