

REGULAR MEETING Agenda | Electronic Meeting VIA Zoom; see "IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS MEETING" (Monday, September 27, 2021)

Generated by Julie Haines on Monday, October 4, 2021

Members present

Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

Members absent

Ellen Champagne

Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Celeste Hawkins, Board President

Action: A. Roll Call of Board of Education Members

2. IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS ELECTRONIC MEETING

Information: A. Electronic Meeting (via Zoom) In Accordance with DHHS Emergency Order and PA 254 of 2020; COVID-19

IMPORTANT MESSAGE: This meeting of the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education will proceed electronically in accordance with DHHS Emergency Order and PA 254 of 2020.

If participants do not have technology access, please contact our Director of Technology Nik Jackson for accommodation: techdirector@ycschools.us.

Public viewers please use the following link to watch the live stream: <https://www.facebook.com/ypsilantcommunityschools>

-or join directly on Zoom-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83401100127>

The public can register their attendance at the following link. If they would like to ask a question or make a public comment to the Board, there is a place for that, as well:

- Live form: http://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_Comments
- Call in to speak during public comments time: **734-221-1204**

As public comments come in, they will be collected in the order received in the following spreadsheet. Board and Cabinet are the only ones with access:

- Formatted Public Comments: https://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_FormattedComments
- Sheet Collecting Attendance and Comments: http://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_PublicCommentsCollected

Information: B. Electronic Meeting Guidelines

ELECTRONIC MEETING GUIDELINES: Because electronic meetings are new to the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education, it is appropriate to outline those procedures which may vary from typical meeting procedures.

#1: Board members will be asked to state their name when making motions and seconds for the benefit of the audience.

#2: All votes are urged to be taken by roll call for clarity.

#3: The Chair will strive to recognize Board members by name before they speak. In the event this does not happen, trustees are encouraged to announce their own name or may be reminded to do so.

#4: Audience members will be muted until recognized by the Chair during public comment(s).

#5: People who speak during public comment time will be asked to state their name and topic before speaking.

#6: If there is a closed session in a meeting, it will take place in a separate Zoom session. The regular meeting will remain open until the Board returns from closed session.

#7: Board members must avoid using email, texting, instant messaging and other electronic forms to communicate with each other or with members of the public during the meeting.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Dr. Celeste Hawkins, Board President

4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Action: A. Acceptance of Agenda

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept the agenda, as amended as presented.

Motion by Sharon Lee, second by Maria Goodrich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

5. PRESENTATION

Presentation: A. Grizzly Learning Camp Presentation

Director of State and Federal Programs, Dr. Mark Coscarella, and staff will provide the school board a summary overview of the 202-21 summer Grizzly Learning Camp.

Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS #1: Electronic Participation

Information: A. Guidelines for Public Comment

Public Comment Protocol*Pursuant to Board of Education Policy 0167.3*

*The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express their view.

*Please limit statements to three (3) minutes duration.

*Participants shall direct all comments to the Board and not to staff or other participants; no person may address or question Board members individually.

*Remarks shall be made in a respectful and professional manner.

Virtual Public Comment Information:

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Dr. Hawkins read the public comment.

Katherine Fisk - I was a first time Coordinator for Perry-GLC. I learned a lot and enjoyed leading staff, helping with transportation, organizing field trips and everything else. Students loved their experiences and activities. Teachers loved the freedom to provide engaging learning opportunities. I heard from several teachers who said they LOVED GLC. It was teaching like it should be, they miss the experience and the campers. Thank you for the opportunity to serve and learn.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Action (Consent), Minutes, Report: A. Consent Agenda

Resolution: ... MOVE THAT the Board of Education approve the: 1) September 13, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes 2) Personnel matters as per the presented list dated 9/21/21; New Hires and Resignations.

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education approve the:

- 1) September 13, 2021, [Regular Meeting Minutes](#)
- 2) [Personnel matters](#) as per the presented list dated 9/21/21; New Hires and Resignations.

Motion by Sharon Lee, second by Maria Goodrich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

8. ACTION ITEM: Human Resources

Action: A. Marketing and Communications Employee Contract: Sue McCarty, Director of Human Resources

Due to the vacancy left by the previous Marketing and Communications Coordinator, we are presenting Ms. Alexandra Cash to the board for approval. It is recommended that the Board approve the employment contract of Ms. Alexandra Cash.

Click [here](#) to view Alexandra Cash's resume.

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education approve the Marketing and Communications Contract of Alexandra Cash with the commencement date of September 28, 2021

Motion by Sharon Lee, second by Yvonne Fields.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

9. ACTION ITEM: Other

Action: A. MASB Delegate Election

The Board of Education will vote on it's delegate and alternate to MASB's 2021 Delegate Assembly which will begin Thursday, Nov. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids. Delegates selected by boards of education across the state will decide MASB's positions on a wide variety of issues affecting education. Trustee Fields was named delegate and Trustee Gainsley was named alternate.

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education approve the MASB Delegate Election.

Motion by Meredith Schindler, second by Maria Goodrich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

10. ACTION ITEM: Business and Finance

Action, Recognition: A. Donation - \$1000 Donation from Jill Cohen for Backpacks

Jill Cohen donated \$1000 to Ypsilanti Community Schools for backpacks for the 2021-2022 school year. Thank you so much, Ms. Cohen! Your donation impacts the students of Ypsilanti.

.... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept a donation of \$1000 made by Jill Cohen for backpacks.

Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Yvonne Fields.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

Action, Recognition: B. Donation - \$400 Donation from Bad Credit is Childish for Backpacks

Lynwood Powell, an Ypsilanti social worker and graduate and Willie Johnson, owners of Bad Credit is Childish graciously donated \$400 to Ypsilanti Community Schools for backpacks for the 2021-2022 school year. Thank you so much, Mr. Powell and Mr. Johnson! Your donation impacts the students of Ypsilanti.

.... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept a donation of \$400 made by Back Credit is Childish for backpacks.

Motion by Gillian Ream Gainsley, second by Maria Goodrich.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Dr Celeste Hawkins, Gillian Ream Gainsley, Sharon Lee, Meredith Schindler, Yvonne Fields, Maria Goodrich

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS #2: Electronic Participation

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No public comments.

12. DISCUSSION

Discussion: A. Subcommittee Reports, Events, Other Items

The Ypsilanti Board of Education will discuss subcommittee reports, events, and other items.

Trustee Gainsley: We did have a meeting of the finance and operations committee and received an overview from Ms. Nayak of the audit which is in progress and appears to be going quite smoothly, which is always a positive thing. And then also, the ESSR one two and three allocations. We did successfully fully utilize the title grants as well as I believe the ESSR one grant and the ESSR three grant which is the biggest one of the bunch has just opened applications and so that has come down through MDE and is now available for the district to start to make allocations and decisions. All the guidance is in place in terms of how exactly we can spend their money. Dr. Hawkins, Trustee Champagne, and I all attended that meeting and we appreciated the information from Ms. Nayak.

Trustee Goodrich: This morning Vice President Lee, Trustee Fields, and I attended the WAC legislative coffee. There was a lot of great stuff covered this morning and I want to highlight just the things that seemed most relevant to our district as briefly as I can. One item of interest was state Bill 644, which is seeking to give us more flexibility for virtual instruction, and there was a lot of discussion around this. Senator Irwin thought that it might be useful if members of the educational community reached out to Senator Theis to express support for this bill. This bill was introduced by Republicans in the legislature. This kind of flexibility we've needed in the wake of the pandemic and there's a lot of support for continuing to have flexibility in terms of seat time and instructional modalities. There was a lot of talk about the critical shortages that all of the districts in our area and nationally are facing regarding especially transportation and staff and teachers in all different roles throughout our districts. There are a lot of creative solutions proposed among the educators in the room around ways to increase the pipeline and get us to a point where we're not all fighting over the same pool of amazing individuals who are stretching too thin. Regarding pandemic and health department requirements, Senate Bill 82 includes boilerplate that would prevent regulation of masks and it was made very clear today that that is unenforceable so even though that language is there, we still retain the ability to have local control over that. There was concern that there'll be the possibility of latching onto that language but it was made very clear today and other legislative updates that that boilerplate language is unenforceable. OMA flexibility, which is allowing us to meet virtually and many other districts, but not all. Senator Irwin indicated he doesn't anticipate this will be extended beyond possibly December, so that's just something that might be on the horizon for us. Also Senator Irwin talked a little bit about his dyslexia bills which he is reintroducing and that they're making sure that this does not add another assessment on top of the burden the district's already faced and also they are working on putting in some financial support for the professional development that would be necessary to actually support the content of these bills.

13. OTHER

Dr Hawkins: One of our board members, Trustee Champagne, has decided to resign from the Board of Education, and I want to read a letter that she requested be read.

The letter from trust the champagne is as follows:

Dear President Hawkins, Superintendent Zachery-Ross, and Board of Education, I regret to one form you I am unable to finish the remainder of my term, which is in 2024. Due to the pandemic and other life circumstances, I will be moving from the district in the near future, and will therefore be ineligible to serve. It has been my honor to serve this district over the last 11 years. I am proud of all that we have achieved in that time. I believe with the highly effective board and excellent superintendent, the district is in the best position, it has been in for many years, and our students are already benefitting. I am grateful to all the staff of the district for all their hard work and to my fellow trustees for their guidance. I appreciate being given the opportunity to serve this community that I love and hope that my efforts have contributed to the improvement of our district. I look forward to hearing great things about all of our students' accomplishment in the future. At this time, please accept my resignation effective immediately. Best wishes to you all. Sincerely, Ellen Champagne.

Dr. Zachery-Ross and I will share a process and timeline in order to fill the vacancy that now exists on the board of education. Once a board member resigned and her resignation is effective immediately that means we have 30 days from today's date to fill that vacancy. Dr. Zachery-Ross and I will walk the board through the timeline and process to fill that vacancy. Because of the resignation of Ellen Champagne, we've outlined a timeline that we've adopted from MASB and other entities. It's not typical that we have resignations in the middle of terms but it happens often enough where there is a formal process in place for us to follow in order to fill that vacancy. We will announce publicly that there is a vacancy existing for the YCS Board of Education. We will get that out tomorrow. We will have a deadline to submit letters of interest and resumes, which will be on October eighth. And those letters will be reviewed at a public meeting on October 11th. So we wanted to make sure we got the board's input and had a discussion around this timeline that was put together. And we can kind of go from there. We'll hold the interviews on October 18th after that meeting, we will send emails to all the candidates with a decision. And then on October the 25th we will invite the selected candidates to the meeting, and the board will vote on the approval of the candidate. After that time, we will send a letter to the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Association of School Boards announcing who the new board member is and on the 26, the YCS Board will announce who the new board member is through a press release. We'll have an oath of office that will be given at the YCS administration building on October 27th and then on that same day, we will send that off to the Washtenaw County Board of electors.

Dr. Zachery-Ross: We had a lot of dialogue about the possibility ensuring we went and looked at her term to see if this was within that timeline or did it need to be posted for longer through the Washtenaw County Board of Electors. They gave us the green light to move forward as is written. We know that tomorrow, Julie will send a notice to the MASB and MDE. The MASB doesn't require that we send something to them immediately but MDE does. There's nothing that we need to do, even with the board of electors. Yet we do have to send a letter tomorrow. That will happen, as well as we will send out this announcement and description of board responsibilities through all of our social outlets and Julie will work on the date for the newspaper. The newspaper isn't every day that the posting goes out, but it will go out within that timeline. The eighth was written as the submission day, so that the board would have an opportunity to gather those. In your MASB package, it did state that they recommended the selection of the top three candidates to interview. I just wanted to note that. So depending on how many applicants are received at that meeting on the 11th. That would be an added special board meeting, if through this dialogue you all come to consensus that you'd like to add that meeting on the 11th at 5:30 p.m., to look at the letters of interest, and then to narrow the selection down to three. At that point that's when Miss Haines would send the information to prep for the 18th.

Trustee Schindler: At that October 18 meeting, where we talk about the candidates and narrow it down to three. Does that happen in closed session and then is it like rank choice?

Dr. Hawkins: The short answer is everything has to be done at a public meeting. So we will deliberate, we'll discuss in public, and then to your other specific questions we'll send emails out to the board just detailing some of the things that you are asking about. We have it, we just haven't sent it out yet. We wanted to get the timeline out first and to get the board's feedback about the dates, the timeline, the process in general, and then we'll send more specific information out to the board definitely quickly. We'll send it out this week.

Dr. Zachery-Ross: The information about how to apply, where to send the letter of interest to the board to President Hawkins and it will come to the administration building and go to the board secretary no later than 5pm on the eighth, and it says if they have questions they could contact myself for additional questions, if they needed some clarity.

Dr. Hawkins: I look forward to the letters of interest that we'll receive and the candidates that we will subsequently interview and then we'll make a decision. We'll stay really really close to this timeline because we are obligated to make sure we have the vacancy filled within 30 days. If we don't have that vacancy filled within 30 days then the Washtenaw Intermediate School District is required to appoint a board member to the Board of Education where a vacancy exists.

14. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Zachery-Ross: I would like to ask Dr. Lopez, if he could give a brief sharing of the experience he had at "Love is the Answer Day." The Ypsilanti Council of Elders had a presentation last Friday and Dr. Lopez went in our stead and presented and spoke on behalf of YCS and the partnership that we have with the Ypsilanti Council of Elders and Mayor Richardson.

Dr. Lopez: On September 17, our mayor had a charge of call, and it was about Love is the Answer Movement Day. And so Sue McCarty and myself had the privilege of attending this event. And of course I had to share some comments on behalf of our district and our superintendent. Mayor Lois Richardson spoke. This was very important. Filmmaker, AJ Lee, his "Love is the Answer" call to action was as a form of action and relationship of bringing people together in four common areas. Number one was learning together and getting to know each other well is critical. Opening our hearts to new ideas and opportunities is non negotiable. Volunteering and becoming part of the change of the solution in our community is more needed today than ever before coming out of a pandemic. And also, the importance of empowering self and others to do the same so that we could collaborate. And what I love is that the city has committed to the four core areas that is wraps the arms around our children and our community to create safe communities for us. This work was brought forth by the Ypsilanti Council of Elders, along with our mayor, Dr. Lois Richardson. The focus and the thrust of this vision was to roll out a real commitment from the city council in relationship of police community relations, including an anti bias training, corporate diversity and inclusion and also community reconciliation as a priority. I really love the vision, because today, there's a lot of challenges for a young people. And so in essence we got to do everything and step up and be able to support and when you have a mayor of this magnitude that's really putting herself out there and helping people

saving lives of our children matters significantly. Our art department participated. Our team was able to paint this beautiful mural, and be part of the Love is the answer mural. And it was very highly appreciated. The mayor, and everyone else was there was very excited. We had the opportunity to thank our staff, our art department, and work together to really put a focus on our children and being able to be responsive.

Dr. Zachery-Ross: That day was really successful and we just really appreciate being partners with Mayor Richardson. She has a few other initiatives that we've had persons participate. There is a Violence Intervention Team, that has been meeting at Park Ridge. There's also a team that is looking at how we are implementing an equity across our city and principal Greg Anglin is attending that. I also wanted to thank the board for allowing me to participate in the Education Policy Fellowship Program. We are already working on ways to write policy to support our local districts. Michigan Department of Education has quite a few fellows there. So I'm just excited that this is the time while there's funds in the state of Michigan. Our advocacy is to reduce our debt, any way we can. I was able to actually talk to Peter Spatafor for last week while we presented at the MASA conference and he asked us to put a request in writing. So I want you to know that the request is already moving in that direction. And even if we don't get everything right away, we're there, we're giving that message about the importance of supporting Ypsilanti Community Schools at a legislative level. And last but not least, I want to thank board members, community partners, families, especially staff for participating in our Boots on the Ground campaign. I wanted to just share that the Boots on the Ground campaign has been nominated for the Washtenaw Health Initiatives Collaborative Health Impact Award. And so the winners will be announced at the 10th anniversary celebration virtual event on October 18. However, I know that this is just an example of our community appreciating the work that each and every one of you, our community members, our staff members are doing. I just want to encourage it and to say your labor is not in vain. People are appreciating the work. And so, we will keep you posted on this nomination. I'd like to talk about homecoming. It's just the fact that we're in person and students are celebrating the things that they're normally participate in. We know that we're still dealing with contact tracing and this pandemic. Yet there's still some normalcy. And I want to lift that up and thank the staff who pulled that off, the students who acted responsibly, and were able to have that opportunity and the families for their support. We certainly didn't think we'd still be dealing with the pandemic. Yet, when we see positive events, when we see students demonstrating the responsibility, the staff stepping in it gives me hope that we can make it through this year in person. We can have a prom and a graduation and all of those other things that are so important for our students lives and experiences. And so I just wanted to give kudos to the whole high school administration, and those students and I just wanted to say thank you to our amazing scholars and their families and the high school administration.

Dr. Hawkins: We did nominate Dr. Zachery-Ross for the honor of superintendent of the year award. I wanted to make sure we made that public and share that with everyone that we nominated her as a board of education and Trustee Goodrich was instrumental in taking the lead on crafting that nomination so I want to make sure I give her all the credit. We did it as a collaborative effort but it was from the Board of Education. We couldn't be more pleased and more honored to nominate you for the Michigan superintendent of the Year award. I'll just read some of that letter for everyone. Dr. Zachery-Ross' strengths have never been more evident than in the work of her and her team in guiding our district through the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic with an unwavering focus on equity, excellence, and safety.

Under Dr. Zachery-Ross' leadership our district adopted an innovative three-tiered educational model to help meet the needs of our students, families, and teachers during the 2020-21 school year. We were able to prioritize a return to the classroom immediately in September for those students who most needed and benefitted from in-person engagement, and the district was able to do so with careful layers of protection to maximize COVID safety. Other students were educated in a synchronous, remote format until COVID transmission and the scaling-up of our in-person protections allowed for their safe return in the spring. For those families with the greatest health vulnerabilities and concerns a fully online option was available for the entire year. All of this was accomplished with small class sizes and a stable classroom composition that allowed students and teachers to work together consistently throughout the school year without having to split into a hybrid format.

Much of our district's COVID response was made possible by technology and ventilation upgrades funded through a sinking fund that Dr. Zachery-Ross successfully passed early in her tenure with our district. Through the efforts of the superintendent and her team we were rapidly able to pivot to become a 1:1 technology district early in the pandemic and together with high-speed internet support partnerships we were able to resume instruction in the spring of 2020. We continue to reap the benefits of that mobile technology investment even as more of our students have returned to the classroom, as they now have access to these tools for exploration and differentiated instruction. Thanks to the building upgrades already in progress or completed by the start of the pandemic, as our students returned to classrooms that were already equipped to meet the ventilation requirements and recommendations needed to reduce the risk of COVID transmission.

As our district faced the academic challenges of the pandemic, Dr. Zachery-Ross and the district also stepped up to fill the other non-academic gaps created by the reduction in access to in-person instruction. Teachers and staff came out to help with food distribution and our district has remained committed to meeting the nutritional needs of not just our own students, but also those in neighboring districts, during periods of reduced in-person instruction. Transportation and custodial staff were kept on payroll and engaged in meaningful work that helped to meet needs throughout the district while ensuring that we had the critical staffing to return to in-person instruction when ready.

In all of the tumult of the pandemic Dr. Zachery-Ross and her team have continued to support the growth of our teachers and administrators as culturally-proficient educators and leaders through dynamic and sustained professional development opportunities with leading thinkers like Dr. Ghodly Mohammed, Dr. Yolanda Sealy-Ruiz, and Dr. Muhammad Khalifa. It is in no small part due to Dr. Zachery-Ross' leadership that the diverse stakeholders engaged in our strategic planning work identify our district as one that celebrates the strengths and contributions of our students, families, and community. We reaped many benefits from this work as Dr. Zachery-Ross led our district in an approach to summer learning that was not myopically focused on "learning loss," but instead celebrated the interests and passion of our students and teachers through a series of free "Grizzly Learning Camps." These were freely available to all students residing in our district, not just those with identified challenges. The focus on fun and exploration in these project-based in-person camps helped destigmatize summer camp participation and meet the needs of a broader swath of our families.

While meeting all the challenges of our district's pandemic response, Dr. Zachery-Ross and her team also successfully led the amicable negotiation of a three-year contract with our teachers and support staff. The benefits of respect this showed to our staff,

and the stability this signals to our families and employees – especially in this incredibly tumultuous time – cannot be overstated.

In all of this work Dr. Zachery-Ross has been not just a visionary leader, but a powerful advocate and spokesperson for our district throughout our community, our county, and at the state level. She has been proactive in engaging with community leaders, legislators, and (especially with respect to our COVID response) our country and state health officials. This engagement goes from the broadest to the most granular level, encompassing even walking the neighborhoods during bus drop-off to help identify issues and talk with parents and guardians. Her work on behalf of not just our district but all Michigan students is a source of pride for our district, but more importantly she has been a voice for the kinds of equitable policies that will improve learning opportunities for all students in our state. Beyond that work, Dr. Zachery-Ross is an educational scholar who completed her dissertation during the pandemic, and throughout her time with our district she has served as the pastor for her faith community.

For all of these reasons and countless others, we believe that Dr. Zachery-Ross is an exemplary candidate for this honor, and we are pleased to nominate her as the Michigan Superintendent of the Year.

Respectfully,
The Board of Education for Ypsilanti Community Schools

15. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING
Meeting adjourned at 8:22