

**REGULAR MEETING Agenda | Electronic Meeting VIA Zoom; see "IMPORTANT MESSAGE(S) REGARDING THIS MEETING" (Monday, November 8, 2021)**

Generated by Julie Haines on Monday, November 15, 2021

**Members present**

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

**Meeting called to order at 6:30 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 Solomon Zheng for accommodation: [techdirector@ycschools.us](mailto: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](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](https://bit.ly/YCS_BOE_FormattedComments)
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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. ACHIEVEMENT, AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Recognition: A. 2021 Safe Kids Award from the Washtenaw Area Council for Children Recipient - Debra Stevens

Ms. Stevens is not new to the Ypsilanti community. She is entering her 40th year working for Ypsilanti Community Schools. She has developed relationships with thousands of children and colleagues over the years. Ms. Stevens is a champion of inclusion and sets high expectations of the students she works with. As a mentor and leader to so many, her dedication shines as she has been with the district through all its ups and downs. She shared with us that students see her in the store, have been student teachers, or have visited the school and share with her how impactful she was in their lives. Ms. Stevens has a dynamic teaching style, the most warm and caring attitude to these special kids and their families and has worked endlessly to ensure their safety while providing support to families. She is one of our wonderful Early Childhood Special Education teachers at Perry Early Learning Center.

Ms. Stevens was surprised to hear she was receiving this award as she receives so many rewards from working with the students and the families. "Everything about kids is really important to me," Stevens says in her acceptance speech. She shared about how she loves to do things with her community and was so excited to hear about all the things the Washtenaw Area Council for Children does to protect children and help families. Ms. Stevens welcomes WACC staff into her classrooms each year to teach students about keeping their bodies safe.

We at Washtenaw Area Council for Children thank Ms. Debrah Stevens for her committed work and dedication and are honored to have her as the 2021 Safe Kids Award Recipient.

The YCS Board of Education would like to extend our congratulations to Debra for this wonderful achievement.

Recognition: B. 2021 Education Support Staff Professional of the Year Michigan Department of Education Recipient - Carla Whitsett  
YCS would like to give a huge CONGRATULATIONS to Carla Whitsett for being awarded the 2021 Education Support Staff Professional of the Year by the Michigan Department of Education!

In an interview from the MDOE, Carla was asked what has been the most gratifying and challenging part of students returning to in-person classes?

"One of the biggest challenges is getting the students to trust you again because many the students in our community do not trust anyone" Ms. Whitsett explained. "By building relationships, you are able to build trust. While they were online, they were not able to feel the empathy I had for their situation. In person, you can show them. They can look in your eyes and see that you care about them."

Ms. Whitsett is constantly going above and beyond for her students. Minutes before the surprise award ceremony, we caught her in action, making a call about a student who had not been in attendance the last few days. This is not her responsibility, but she cares, loves, and has so much empathy for her students and those around her. She is always willing to take that extra step.

Her students love her and the community loves her. She has impacted so many lives with her grace, kindness, and unwillingness to give up. YCS is so thankful and proud of all her hard work and dedication to her students at ACCE and across the district.

The YCS Board of Education wishes to extend a warm congratulations to Carla on this well deserved award.

#### 5. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Action: A. Acceptance of Agenda

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept the agenda, 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, Jeanice Townsend

#### 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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No comments.

#### 7. CONSENT AGENDA

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

Resolution: ... MOVE THAT the Board of Education approve the: 1) October 25, 2021, Regular Board Meeting Minutes 2) Personnel matters as per the presented list dated 11/3/21; New Hires, Resignations, and Retirements.

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

- 1) October 25, 2021, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- 2) Personnel matters as per the presented list dated 11/3/21; New Hires, Resignations, and Retirements.

Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Jeanice Townsend.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

#### 8. ACTION ITEMS: Business and Finance

Action, Recognition: A. Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Contract for 2021-2022

This grant was awarded to support the operation of Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP) serving eligible four-year old children with high-quality preschool services within the Washtenaw Intermediate School District.

Click [here](#) to review the contract.

...MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept the Great Start Readiness Program contract for 2021-2022.

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, Jeanice Townsend

Action, Recognition: B. Donation - \$25,000 to the Ypsilanti Community High School Athletics and Arts Program  
Ypsilanti Community Schools has received a grant for \$25,000.00 from the Ypsilanti City Council to promote athletics and arts at the high school level. Thank you Councilman Anthony Morgan and the rest of the city council members for supporting our scholars.

.... MOVE THAT the Board of Education accept a donation of \$25,000.00 from the Ypsilanti City Council to support high school athletics and arts.

Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Gillian Ream Gainsley.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

## 9. PUBLIC COMMENTS #2: Electronic Participation

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No comments.

## 10. DISCUSSION

Discussion: Deep Cleaning Schedule/Schedule Adjustment

The Ypsilanti Community Schools' Board of Education will discuss the superintendent's decision to address the physical and mental health of our students and staff with deep cleaning and school closures that will result in a calendar adjustment.

### **Dr. Zachery-Ross:**

Dear YCS Families,

Here at YCS, we consider the health, safety, and wellbeing of our students and staff our top priorities. As we have been in communication with our staff about the importance of Compassion Resilience this year, two central themes have been at the top of everyone's mind, physical and mental wellness.

We all know that we are in a continuous learning process regarding the mitigation of COVID-19, and as we enter the fall flu season, we are being careful to ensure that we are all using the recommended steps to keep everyone safe. Our outstanding custodial and maintenance staff have been going above and beyond to ensure our buildings are in the best condition possible.

In addition, we realize that staff have been stepping up to fill in the gaps due to staffing shortages in all areas in the district and we are incredibly grateful for their collaboration. This has resulted in our amazing YCS staff experiencing an unprecedented level of fatigue. We are holding Compassion Resilience Circles in every building. We are utilizing the book *Onward* by Elena Aguilar with our administrators to intentionally address our staff and students' social, emotional needs.

As a result of careful review and consideration of the physical and mental health needs, the District Administration has chosen to address this situation by taking the following proactive measures. On Monday, November 22, and Tuesday, November 23, 2021, all YCS School buildings will be closed for DEEP CLEANING in a phased approach that will continue through Winter Break. Staff who are not working for this special project and not providing services to our partner districts will not be required to work. We chose these days as we were previously scheduled to be closed from November 24th to 26th and hope that this will be less intrusive to our families. We acknowledge that this change in the calendar may cause some families inconvenience and we apologize in advance. Yet, as we consider the physical and mental health and safety of all of our students and staff, we believe this pause is necessary at this critical time, which will allow us to come back from Thanksgiving break strong.

As you know, we at YCS take great pride in being responsive to the needs of our students, families, and staff. As a result, we believe in the "both/and" approach to responding when working "with" our students, staff, families, and the community. As a district, we work hard to provide our students with as many learning opportunities, additional learning time, and educational experiences that we can support.

Because each student has a technology device and most students have access to the internet, we will provide our students with the tools they need to do independent work during these two days, if so desired. Our staff will work with our students to ensure that they have what they need to be successful during these two days.

In addition, our students will receive a (2 day) food parcel provided to them on Friday, November 19, 2021, at the end of the school day. Please know that we take the honor and responsibility of educating your students very seriously. It takes all of us working together to ensure healthy learning environments.

Thank you for your continuous support.

Sincerely, Dr. Alena Zachery-Ross Superintendent of Schools

**Trustee Goodrich:** Thank you, Dr. Zachery-Ross for your thoughtfulness. I agree with your position.

**Vice President Lee:** Thank you, Dr. Zachery-Ross. Are there any facilities to help with child care on 11/22 and 11/23?

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** Not yet but usually the Community steps up at this point.

**Trustee Schindler:** It is the right choice. I really appreciate the thoughtfulness because both are important.

**Trustee Gainsley:** It is a difficult decision. Neighboring districts have shut down due to illness. It is good to be proactive. Thank you for letting parents know early and for the good communication. Maybe we could host a vaccination clinic on one of those days.

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** Thank you for the clinic idea.

**Trustee Townsend:** I would like to express my gratitude because it wasn't an easy decision to make and think it is necessary. This may be the new normal and it is good to be proactive. It is a good opportunity for the village to step up and help so if there are any leased day cares, maybe they can reach out to YCS and let us know of availability. Maybe we as a district can let them know how to reach out because there are a lot of smaller day cares out there that many not be aware of the technology so they can partner with the district. Our educators have been working hard and it is necessary for them to get a break.

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** We will reachout to the community with Ms. Haines' number and email for people to be in touch. Thank you for that suggestion, Trustee Townsend. Just a reminder that is your child is sick, stay at home. If staff is sick, stay at home. Please don't push through.

**Trustee Fields:** We can let people know about Child care network if they need child care for those days. I ditto everything that has already been said. This is also a good time to take care of our mental health. We can use this time to get prepared for what is next.

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** We will make sure we have a list that we will communicate widely and work with businesses and parents with the cost of child care. There is still opportunity on the table because we have a little bit of time. We will get those resources as soon as possible starting as early as tomorrow gathering them.

**Dr. Hawkins:** Echo everything that has already been said. We started earlier this year in August so this recommendation is one that is much needed and welcomed. We know it may be an inconvenience to our families but the proactive measures are important. We need to attend to mental and physical health. Making sure there is food during this time. We all need a break. It is a good time to pause and use this time to recharge and reflect.

#### 11. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

**Vice President Lee:** The YCS Foundation is offering mini-grants again this year and they are open from 11/1 to 12/17. Anyone in the school system can apply.

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** Please reach out to Jerilyn Lynn and she will walk through the application process.

**Trustee Goodrich:** Thank you for the opportunity to attend the MASB Leadership Conference.

**Vice President Lee:** I'm sorry I will not be able to attend to the white coat ceremony.

**Trustee Townsend:** Thank you for all your support. I got my invitation to the white coat ceremony and felt official. I'm very happy to be in this role. I want to thank again the entire board and administration team for being so welcoming. I want to give a special thank you to Julie Haines. She has been awesome. I talk to her more than I talk to my husband right now. This position is a lot of work but I am honored to be in this seat.

**Dr. Hawkins:** It is a privilege and an honor to have a 7 member board again. It is Trustee Townsend's first official board meeting and we are thrilled to have her here with us. It has been a very busy thirty days but everyone jumped right in to help. We will all be refreshed the next time we see each other because we won't see each other until December.

**Trustee Fields:** I am excited for the conference and happy to represent YCS. I think it is a beautiful thing. I'm sorry I'm missing the white coat ceremony.

**Dr. Zachery-Ross:** Thank you for accept my proposal. It takes courage and vulnerability to lead right now so thank you for leading. Thank you for going to the conference and taking the time out of your busy lives to keep learning so we can serve better. We will have a special board meeting on Wednesday, November 10 to discuss the Cognia process just to prepare the board members for their sessions on Monday, November 15th. There was a training session earlier today and since there was going to be a quorum, we wanted to post it for transparency purposes. The White Coat Ceremony is part of the program that Rhonda Germany Ballintyn presented to the board awhile ago about a new pilot program this is starting with 20 4th graders. The students will be in the program all the way up through high school and she is providing all the funding including two teachers and two paraprofessionals who will be with these students throughout. They will meet once a month at YIES. The program is taking place at YIES because it is the last elementary school to let out. The White Coat Ceremony is Thursday and the number of people who can come is limited for social distancing. The students will get lab coats like you would get in medical school with their names embroidered on it. There was a parent orientation this past Thursday. We are working hand in hand with U of M to do the research on the program. We will send them your regards. Congratulations to Debra Stevens and Carla Whitsett. Great examples of the outstanding staff we have here at YCS. EMU home game award winner is Pedro Betancourt. Congratulations to all our fall athletes, parents, and supports for ending strong. Our fans are there for one thing and that is support our student athletes. The HRAs are here. They are taking over the contact tracing. They are doing antigen testing every day Monday - Friday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. They are working with the health department. Once they get their feet under them they will start going to schools and doing health education, safety education. There will also be someone covering the weekends to answer questions so Ms. McCarty doesn't have to spend the weekend answering those questions. They will be able to flex their time to cover that. They will be able to help with our communication and help parents with questions. It will give parents some peace of mind when they have questions.

#### 12. REQUEST FOR CLOSED SESSION

Action: A. Closed Session- Pursuant to Sections 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education go into closed session pursuant Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute.

Motion by Maria Goodrich, second by Sharon Lee.

Motion Carries

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

Entered closed session at 7:51 p.m.

13. REQUEST TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Action: A. Approval to return to Open Session

... MOVE THAT the Board of Education return to Open Session

Motion by Meredith Schindler, second by Gillian Ream Gainsley.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

Returned to open session at 9:31 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.