

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION – March 7, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Archer
Mrs. DeForest
Mr. Gross
Mrs. James Murad
Mr. Leach
Ms. McKenney (Remote)
Mrs. Souser
Mr. Zoghby
Ms. Evans

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mrs. Austin

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Dr. Smith, Superintendent
Mr. Reyes, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Franz, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Timothy Decker

Mrs. DeForest called the meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the District Office.

In attendance were: Sandra Wiggins, Gwen Webber-McLeod, Pat Clayton, Eddie Williams, Shonette Harper, Karen Chisholm, Robin Jacobs-Yanthis, George Yanthis, Carol Charles, Marcella Jones, Linda Ervin, Evelyn Kinsey, Shirley Rowser, Stan Chen, Maureen Aliani, Joe Godley, Anna Morris, Delores Perry, Lydia Allen, Rev. Kathy Hodge Davids, Rev. Daniel Akins, Cora True Frost, and Rev. H. Bernard Alex.

Red Ram Recognition

Mrs. DeForest recognized and thanked Mrs. Sabrina Scott, UMOJA Club Advisor, for her work in presenting the black history assembly at the High School. She recognized the many students who contributed in their roles as masters of ceremony, reciting poems and sharing the history of the black national anthem. Mrs. DeForest also congratulated the nine students who were semi-finalists in the Syracuse Stage Young Playwrights contest, and wished them luck as they advance in the finals. In addition she congratulated junior, Anka Chiorini who won the Syracuse branch of the Shakespeare competition, and will advance to the national competition in NYC. Lastly Mrs. DeForest congratulated all student athletes including those who competed in sectional semi-finals and finals this past week: boys varsity basketball team, and girls varsity basketball team, as well as the following sectional champions: cheerleading, indoor track, boys varsity swimming, gymnastics and wrestling.

Community Comment Time #1

Mrs. DeForest read the current guidelines and rules for Community Comment Time and welcomed participation. She said the procedures are under review and have not yet been approved by the Board.

Mr. Gross moved and Mr. Leach seconded the motion to include public comments not pertaining to the Agenda in the first Community Comment Time.

Motion carried (8-0-0).

Mr. Decker stated he had six requests to speak for non-agenda items.

Gwendolyn Webber McCloud, President and CEO of a leadership development corporation whose expertise is DEI strategy development, commented on maintaining a diverse staff being a priority and asked what is the district willing to do about the issue of race.

Gwendolyn Muok, Education Committee Chair of the Syracuse/Onondaga NAACP, condemned the incident that took place on January 31st, and acknowledged support of Candace Johnson. She proposed quarterly meetings with principals and the Superintendent.

Rev. H. Bernard Alex commented that the climate in the buildings remains the same and that children need allies in the buildings that look like them and have similar experiences.

Sandra Wiggins, a community member and former teacher and principal commented on the incident that occurred on January 31st, asking what message was sent to students and parents when no action was taken to prevent verbal abuse. She asked what has been done to enforce mission values and what action has been taken.

Maureen Aliani commented in support of the representative from NAACP and asked the Board to take her up on her offer. She asked if JD would be doing anything for Special Olympics, specifically at the elementary school level.

Stan Chen commented on the elimination of the Mandarin Chinese language program and asked the Board to reconsider.

Cora True Frost commented about the PTG policy under review and asked that independent parent groups be allowed to use the district website, and if not, be allowed a link from the website.

Rachel Wagner commented that with regards to racism, justice has not been restored and that we need to create safe spaces for students and staff of color and to hire culturally competent help immediately.

Approve Consent Agenda

- a. [Approve Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations](#), and Substitute Appointments
- b. Approve Overnight Field Trip Request

Mrs. Souser moved and Mr. Zoghby seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried (8-0-0).

Superintendent's Personnel Recommendations:

INSTRUCTIONAL

Name and position	Location	<u>Appointments</u> Annual Salary	Cert	Effective
Lindsay Amidon Teaching Assistant Probationary Appt. (4 years) Replacing S. Holmes Rickman	Middle School	\$28,723(B + AA) Prorated on start date	TA I	3/8/22

Extra duty assignments/extended teaching 2021-2022

Coaching – Spring Season

Name	Assignment	Stipend
Joseph Bulone	Varsity Softball Coach (Volunteer)	\$0
Kevin Hagan	JV Head Baseball Coach	\$3,577
Carly Stone	Varsity Girls Assistant Lacrosse Coach	\$4,510

NONINSTRUCTIONAL

Name and position	Location	<u>Appointments</u>		Effective
			Salary	
Jessica Evarts Full-Time Teacher Aide Probationary Appt. (52 wk) Replacing E. Prindle	JES		\$13.68/hr.	3/8/22
Lindsay Infantino Full-Time Typist II (11 months) Provisional Appt. Replacing A. Vieau	PPS		\$16.45/hr.	3/8/22

Request for Retirement

Name and position	Location	Effective
John Baxter Custodian II	Middle School	3/12/22

Resignation

Name and position	Location	Effective
Lindsay Amidon Teacher Aide	Middle School	3/7/22

Approve Minutes of February 14, 2022 Meeting

Mrs. Souser moved and Mr. Gross seconded the approval of the Minutes of the February 14, 2022 Board of Education meeting.

Motion carried. (7-0-1) Mr. Zoghby abstained.

Motion carried. (8-0-0).

Board Policies – Second Reading

- 3240 [Parent Teacher Groups](#)

Mrs. James Murad stated that the Policy Committee met to review this policy as there were concerns raised from community members. She said the prior policy allowed the Superintendent and/or designee to develop the regulations for PTG groups. She said these groups are now separate from the District and our policy needs to reflect that. Dr. Smith added that the policy allows for links on our website for different organizations.

Mr. Gross moved and Mrs. Souser seconded the approval of Policy # 3240.

Motion carried. (8-0-0)

Board of Education Governance Handbook Community Comment Time

Mrs. DeForest shared a first draft of “Community Comment Time - Ground Rules at Board Meetings” and Google form for requesting to speak (See Supplemental Minutes). She reviewed the history of community comment time during the virtual and in-person meetings and merged the ground rules into one document. Mrs. DeForest reviewed the draft and there was Board discussion on this topic. Some items discussed included: bulleting items on the agenda, the latest date to post agenda according to Open Meetings Law, the importance of sticking to the board’s rules, language identifying established groups speaking, ie: student council vs. outside groups, only taking comments for the next meeting, adhering to three minutes for all speakers, documenting the order of comments in person and virtual. This draft will come back at the next meeting for a second reading.

Potential Consideration for Future Meetings

Mrs. DeForest has added Mandarin Chinese and Special Olympics to the list. She said she will provide an update on the list at the next meeting. Ms. McKenney asked about how other students support students participating in Special Olympics and/or Unified Sports. Grace Evans shared her experience of supporting the Special Olympics as part of a club when she was a student at the Middle School.

Budget Discussion – Central Office

Dr. Smith reviewed the budgeting process to date and presented the Athletics and Central Office segments of the budget. Dr. Smith said the Athletic portion of the budget has a nominal increase due to contractual obligations in personnel and increasing both the equipment and uniform lines. He said the Central Office budget includes many departments including, the Supt. Office, Business Office, the Board of Education and other operational expenses. Dr. Smith said there is a 9% increase in this budget over last year. The increase is primarily due to Board of Education costs, which include participating in conferences, workshops and the SuperEval product to evaluate the Board and the Superintendent and the Superintendent’s Office due to contractual obligations and professional development. Dr. Smith said the Business Office has no substantial increases. Additional factors impacting the budget include the legal services line, Workers Compensation and Health Insurance and additional usage of communications services. Dr. Smith also explained the district’s cost in participating in BOCES and said we will be asked to approve the Administrative portion of the BOCES budget in April. The Instructional portion of the budget will be discussed at the next meeting. Dr. Smith shared important upcoming dates for the budgeting process (See Supplemental Minutes for Budget Presentation).

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Smith provided an update to the Board regarding the investigation into the incident on January 31st and said he has received information from the Town of DeWitt Police. He said one of the search warrants that was issued was traced to Ontario, Canada. The police are still waiting for the others to be returned. He said he does not have more information at this time, but feels this investigation will help identify the person responsible. Dr. Smith said he has had conversations with Vera House regarding bystander and upstander training, as well as professors at Syracuse University who have done training

with DEI and upstander and bystander training at the university and local schools. In addition, he said we have heard the continued need to diversify staff and Mr. Reyes is working on this for open positions. The district is working with the County to expand the Promise Zone specialists to all schools. Dr. Smith said we are working on an incident response protocol for any DASA or hate based incident. Also, Dr. Smith said we are working on locating a mental health clinic at the High School. Dr. Smith updated the Board on the end of universal masking, the continuing of surveillance testing, daily reporting and in-home testing for students. Dr. Smith touched on the Strategic Plan and administering the School Climate Survey and said Mr. Reyes will report on this at the next meeting. Dr. Smith said the District is seeing some success out of the partnership with the Baldanza Fellowship and will provide details in the future. Dr. Smith said the Middle School students and staff have moved back into the newly renovated House 2. He reported on the partnership with Interfaith Works and the dialogue circles at the Middle School and High School. Dr. Smith gave an update on the High School Principal search and the thought exchange that was launched for information from students, families and staff. Lastly, Dr. Smith shared upcoming events.

Assistant Superintendent's Report, Mr. Franz

Mr. Franz shared with the Board, a 20-Week Impact Report as part of a commitment to share data as a regular reporting cycle. He started by recognizing the community speakers in the comment session and said he hopes their words will stay with us as we look through the data. His report included our Equity Policy, crosswalk with data points, measurement of work, academics, attendance rates, chronic absenteeism, BIMAS, discipline, overall risk analysis and response to interim data. (See Supplemental Minutes).

Student Board Member Report

Ms. Evans provided the Board with her report which included responses to questions posed to students, compliments, and concerns. In conclusion, Ms. Evans said, "the general consensus among students is that the district is headed down a good path. That being said, listening to the student voice when compliments and concerns arise and adjusting policies and practices as necessary is one of the best ways to ensure our journey as we travel this path over these next few months." (See Supplemental Minutes).

President's Report

Mrs. DeForest reminded the Board the next session for the book study is March 10. Mrs. DeForest also reminded the Board that the next retreat is March 28. She said that, along with Mr. Gross and Dr. Smith, she met with Interfaith Works and they will be focusing on the identity of race and will receive a survey of topics to talk about. She said the District Equity Council is an advisory council and that there are currently no Board members on that council. She asked for one or two volunteers to serve as members of the council to email her. Mrs. DeForest said she will send out a Board survey and topics for future meetings. She reminded the community of resources on the website, including *District News* which has information on the petitions for Board election, the *Whom To Call Page*, which is on the side menu of each school's page and the *Board of Education* page which has the minutes and recordings of meetings, policies and the documents, such as the Strategic Plan. Mrs. DeForest encouraged families and staff to take the time and complete the School Climate Survey as it will be excellent data for the District. Lastly, she thanked the teachers and students for being flexible in pivoting in the Middle School move and families and students for pivoting with the shift from masks to no masks and the community to welcoming choices.

**Facilities Committee Report,
Mr. Leach**

Mr. Leach reported on the Committee's tour of the Middle School last week. He said it appeared as though approximately 95% of the work was done. He said the design of the area and workmanship is impressive and he hopes the students and staff appreciate it. He talked about the delays due to materials being unavailable and said it sounds like it will have less of an impact on the project going forward but it is out of our control.

Community Comment Time #2

Gwendolyn Muok requested to speak but was not able to be located virtually.

Christiana Semabia commented that she was disappointed that the Board passed the PTG policy and failed to make it a requirement that the groups practice equity and thanked the community members that came to the meeting today to support families of color.

Stan Chen commented about the portion of the 20-Week Impact Report relating to discipline and referrals and wanted to know why are we separating students out by race, they should all be treated the same.

Unfinished and Continuing Business

Mr. Gross stated the Audit Committee has not yet met this year, but will meet in April and provide a report at that time.

At 10:08 p.m., Mrs. Souser moved and Mrs. James Murad seconded the adjournment of the meeting. .

Motion carried. (8-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Decker
Clerk of the Board

BOARD APPROVED: 3/21/22