



Mokena School District 159

Board Highlights for September 15, 2021

Communications

Public: Waldemar Sarat shared his opinion that children having to wear masks is unjust and he is concerned about their well-being and future. Joanna Sarat shared her opinion on wearing masks and feels the district should not comply with the mandate. Student, Antoni Sarat, asked the Board to “fix or create” a new wooden park. Joy Kokolus shared her continued concern over wearing masks in school and would like to see a plan in place for optional mask wearing. Student, Asher Kokolus, asked the Board to save the wooden playground because there isn’t another like it.

MTA: Katie Rodriguez highlighted the following teachers for jumping back into coaching sports teams and clubs for the 2021-22 school year: Mr. Shaughnessy, Ms. Isdonas, Mr. Balis, Ms. Gibson, Mrs. Pufahl, Ms. Blyth, Mrs. Baltzer, and Mrs. Novak. Ms. Rodriguez mentioned the 8th graders will have the 4th Annual T-Shirt Design Contest soon. She also shared that this year could be the largest group of 8th Graders signed up to attend the Washington DC trip in the Spring!

MCSA: None.

PTA/MEF: None.

BOE: None.

Audit Results Presentation

Jamie Wilkey from Lauterbach & Amen, shared key highlights from the annual audit. There were no findings; clean audit. Ms. Wilkey commended Dr. Shaw and her department for a job well done.

Discussion – MJHS Parking Lot

Dr. Shaw shared that on September 13, 2021, the Finance Committee along with the architects walked out to the MJHS parking lot to survey the options presented. Questions by the Board were asked and answered.

Information Reports

Superintendent – Dr. Cohen

- MES Playscape Update – Leathers & Associates released their assessment of the Playscape and estimates for replacement/renovation: Option 1: Minor renovation with community labor-\$75,000; Option 2: Major renovation with community labor-\$160,000; Option 3: Replace the playground with community labor-\$350,000; Option 4: Replace the playground using Leathers & Associates as the contractor-\$691,000. Dr. Cohen is in the process of engaging the PTA and MEF to discuss the possibility of gathering volunteers for this effort. It will be a matter of what resources the district can muster and what the district feels is an appropriate amount of money to spend.
- Dr. Cohen mentioned that Covid rates are higher in our community and expressed concern over the amount of student positive cases; 4-5 times higher than last year at this time.
- Outstanding District fees total over \$24,000; looking for direction from the Board for next steps.
- The District is looking at dates for 8th Graduation; more to come!

Director of Student Services – Ms. Cirone

- Current Enrollment – In-District IEPs: 133; Speech Only IEPs: 57; LWASE 843: 11; Out of District Placements: 5; St. Mary’s: 13.
- Young Athletes – Special Olympics is planning on being in full swing this school year. Mokena Elementary School is planning on hosting a Young Athletes culminating event for participating Mokena students on May 13, 2022. More information to come!
- Staffing needs for Student Services Department is adequately staffed; all vacancies are filled.

Chief School Business Official – Dr. Shaw

- Finance Committee met on September 13, 2021; topics included: MJHS parking lot, 2nd read of FY22 Budget, Auditors presented annual audit.
- Finance Report – Posted on website.
- The District is pleased with the transition to Alpha for custodian and maintenance services.

- Budget Highlights: EBF increase of \$36,125; ESSER 2 revenue \$300,343; Title 1 decrease to \$75,000; Local Revenue increase limited by PTELL; Fund 21 Goal to not have fund balance carryover; CPI for 3020 was 2.3%.
- Food Service reported 4,013 lunches were served in August. The District will be receiving \$17,486 from the government. The District is currently using the Summer Food Service Program which means every student is eligible for a FREE lunch. "Shout Out" to all the Food Service staff for doing an excellent job despite staff shortages!
- Transportation Department reported that the District is experiencing the impact of the national driver shortage. At the beginning of the school year, the District was down three drivers due to medical leaves with the highest ridership start in over a decade. Fortunately, the District acquired 3 new drivers and are on track to getting back to 9 routes with subs to assist with extracurricular activities.
- Maintenance Department reported the following completed projects: MES emergency generator removal; MJHS emergency light replacement; District-wide painting; MES concrete project; MJHS concrete and civil project; MES lighting project; MES/MIS parking lot lights; August district-wide mulching; central gym floor project; MJH parking lot patching.

Director of Technology – Mr. Smith

- Classroom Technology – The Tech Team has spent a large amount of time fixing classroom tech set-ups. The Team has been experiencing docking station port damage and teachers are having a difficult time understanding how to switch the way the external monitors/projectors are configured. The Tech Team is still looking for the best way to train or find a solution to help make the configuration more manageable.
- 2021-22 Projects – Replace switches; replace access points; ethernet upgrade; replacement of internal fiber; outfit 40 additional classrooms with second phase of flat panels.

Principals Reports – Dr. Rolinitis shared that Taylor Bush qualified for the Golf State Tournament and wished her good luck! He also mentioned Boy's Baseball won 1st round at regionals. Dr. Rolinitis shared that this will be a record year for students signed up for the Washington DC trip. **Mr. McAtee** shared how excited the 5th grade girls Basketball team was after they won their first game. He mentioned Band is up and running with over 50 students signed up and how wonderful it is to hear the sounds coming out of the band room again. **Mrs. Chorley** mentioned how difficult it has been with support staff coverage but acknowledged all those for stepping up and making sure those shifts were covered. A huge thank you to Mrs. Arduino, Mrs. Driver, Mrs. Neff, Mrs. Gurgone, Mrs. Essary and Mrs. Meehan!

Action Items that were approved include:

- Previous Month Minutes
- District Bills
- Personnel – Classified – Reassignment: Frank Lewandowski; Karin Hanson. Certified – Leave of Absence: Kim Truffa
- Consent Agenda: 1) Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes; 2) Verbatim Destruction of Closed Session Minutes; 3) Teacher and Administrator Salary and Compensation Reports for 2021-22; 4) Shared Services Report
- FY22 Budget Adoption
- MJH Parking Lot & Architect Fees for Summer 2022
- FY21 Audit
- Construction Manager at Risk

For the Good of Mokena

- Mr. Everett mentioned the Village and VFW organized a 9/11 event to remember those who lost their lives. It was an amazing event with a big crowd!

Respectfully,

Submitted on behalf of Dr. Mark A. Cohen, Superintendent