

MINUTES

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Virtual Meeting as Allowed by
Public Act 254 of 2020

February 9, 2021
9:30 a.m.

Present: Dr. Michael F. Rice, Chairperson
Dr. Casandra E. Ulbrich, President
Dr. Pamela Pugh, Vice President
Ms. Tiffany Tilley, Secretary
Mr. Tom McMillin, Treasurer
Dr. Judith Pritchett, NASBE Delegate, SBE Legislative Committee
Ms. Ellen Cogen Lipton, SBE Legislative Committee Chairperson
Ms. Nikki Snyder, SBE Legislative Committee
Mr. Jason Strayhorn, SBE Legislative Committee
Ms. Brandy Johnson, representing Governor Gretchen Whitmer, ex officio

Also Present: Mr. Owen Bondono, 2020-2021 Michigan Teacher of the Year

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Rice called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Dr. Rice said due to the COVID-19 national emergency and in accordance with Public Act 254 of 2020, the State Board of Education Regular and Committee of the Whole meeting is being convened with remote access technology.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND ORDER OF PRIORITY

Ms. Snyder moved, seconded by Mr. Strayhorn, that the discussion and resolution encouraging local school districts to notify parents of the return to school date and plan for their local school district be added to the agenda.

Discussion followed.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

**Lipton – Aye
McMillin – Aye
Pritchett – Aye
Pugh – Aye
Snyder – Aye
Strayhorn – Aye
Tilley – Aye
Ulbrich – Aye**

The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Snyder moved, seconded by Mr. Strayhorn, that the State Board of Education approve the agenda and order of priority, as amended.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

**Lipton – Aye
McMillin – Aye
Pritchett – Aye
Pugh – Aye
Snyder – Aye
Strayhorn – Aye
Tilley – Aye
Ulbrich – Aye**

The motion carried unanimously.

III. INTRODUCTION OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

Dr. Rice asked that the members of the State Board of Education be introduced. Mrs. Marilyn Schneider, State Board Executive, introduced the members of the State Board of Education.

IV. RECESS

The Board recessed the Regular Meeting at 9:41 a.m. and convened the Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

V. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Rice called the Committee of the Whole Meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

VI. EDUCATIONAL UPDATES RELATED TO COVID-19

Dr. Rice shared information on a variety of policy issues affecting prekindergarten through 12th grade public education during the pandemic. He provided statistics related to the pandemic.

Dr. Rice provided an update on in-person instruction offered as an option at local school districts, benchmark assessments and state summative assessments, pivoting to a new better normal, layering in more time that will vary by school district, and school funding.

Board member comments included the number of schools not fully in person broken down by race, the request for a waiver from standardizing testing, amount of time and money spent on assessments, and paying teachers for additional teaching time.

VII. PRESENTATION ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dr. Ollie Johnson, Chair and Professor, and Dr. Kefentse Chike, Professor, Department of African American Studies, Wayne State University, presented on Black History Month.

Dr. Rice welcomed the professors from Wayne State University to share a presentation on Black History Month. He said the informational presentation does not require board action.

Information was shared via [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Board member comments included African-centered schools in Detroit, helping teachers identify curricula and effective instruction for African American studies and Black History, the 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah-Jones as a framework, and self-imposed limitations and role modeling.

VIII. PRESENTATION BY SAFE WATER ENGINEERING AND MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Ms. Elin Betanzo, Founder of Safe Water Engineering; Ms. Holly Gohlke, School Drinking Water Coordinator, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, Ms. Ninah Sasy, Clean Water Public Advocate, and Ms. Regina Strong, Environmental Justice Public Advocate, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; presented on safe water and air in schools.

Dr. Rice welcomed the presenters who shared information on safe water and air quality in schools. He said the presentation is informational and does not require board action.

Ms. Betanzo share information via a [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Ms. Gohlke, Ms. Sasy, and Ms. Strong shared information via a [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Board member comments included fulfilling indoor air quality and water quality codes, contractor demand and availability of labor, funding for assessments of school buildings, lessons learned from Flint water crisis, maintenance of filters, board statement on lead and flushing systems, gap in maintenance in some schools due to lack of funding and staff, seal of certification that businesses are getting as it relates to the pandemic, systemic problem of Michigan as one of few states with no money for infrastructure, and appreciation for partnerships such as National Healthy Schools Network.

IX. RECESS

The Board recessed the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 11:49 a.m. and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 12:50 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

1. Mr. James Boyd, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments on in-person instruction for students and a sports testing pilot.
2. Ms. Rita Simpson-Vlach, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments on her children with special needs and virtual instruction.
3. Ms. Constance Heskia, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments on her children's instructional needs and virtual instruction.
4. Ms. Lena Kauffman, Ann Arbor, Michigan, representing Ann Arbor Reasonable Return parents group, shared comments on an option for in-person learning in Ann Arbor Public Schools.
5. Mr. Yuriy Goykhman, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments on his desire for in-person learning.
6. Dr. Kim Monroe, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments and a letter signed by physicians and psychologists supporting an in-person option for instruction.
7. Mr. Nathan Mahn, Okemos, Michigan, provided comments on his child with special needs receiving virtual instruction.
8. Ms. Gina Luster, Flint, Michigan, provided comments on her daughter learning at home.
9. Mr. Eli Ruben, Pittsfield Township, Michigan, provided comments on an option for in-person learning in Ann Arbor Public Schools.
10. Ms. Niki Green, Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided comments on an option for in-person learning in Ann Arbor Public Schools.

XI. RECESS

The Board recessed the Regular meeting at 11:49 a.m. and reconvened the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 12:50 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

XII. PRESENTATION BY THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Senior Public Health Physician, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, presented to the State Board of Education.

Dr. Rice said Dr. Bagdasarian will share information regarding mitigation strategies to keep children safe in schools. He said it is an informational presentation and board action is not required.

Information was shared via [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Board member comments included statements on the Center for Disease Control website, the timeline for vaccination of educators, testing and contact tracing, sports pilot testing demographics, schools offering in-person instruction participating in testing, predominantly Black districts are not in session and people of color are disproportionately affected, and mitigation strategies of masks, social distancing, density of gatherings, and ventilation.

XIII. PRESENTATION ON DIVERSITY IN LITERATURE AND AFRICAN AMERICAN AUTHORS

Ms. Sheila Alles, Chief Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Paula Daniels, Director, Office of Educational Supports; and Dr. Brandy Bugni, Manager, Literacy Unit, Office of Educational Supports; presented on Diversity in Literature and African American Authors.

Dr. Rice said the presentation celebrates African American History Month with literature. He said the informational presentation does not require board action.

Information was shared via [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Board member comments included modeling use of books, and a suggestion for future events to include poetry.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 2:17 p.m. and reconvened the Regular Meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

XV. APPROVAL OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of Regular and Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 12, 2021

Dr. Pritchett moved, seconded by Dr. Ulbrich, that the State Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular and Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 12, 2021.

Dr. Ulbrich said a statement should be added to the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes to accurately reflect her comments during the Report of the President, "Dr. Ulbrich unequivocally condemned the violence at the United States Capitol."

There was board consensus to include the statement in the meeting minutes of January 12, 2021.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion, as amended by discussion.

Lipton – Aye
McMillin – Aye
Pritchett – Aye
Pugh – Aye
Snyder – Aye
Strayhorn – Aye
Tilley – Aye
Ulbrich – Aye

The motion carried unanimously.

XVI. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Ulbrich thanked the state superintendent and department staff for submitting the state summative assessment waiver request to the United States Department of Education. She said the tests will provide little valid and reliable information for parents and educators. She said schools are already doing pre- and post-tests this year that will provide information that will help with instruction, which is the most important part of doing assessments. Dr. Ulbrich said she is fully supportive of the waiver.

Dr. Ulbrich said during the meeting last month, the board discussed updating the by-laws. She said Ms. Snyder had a request to amend the by-laws to include online access for board members, presenters, or for the general public.

Dr. Ulbrich said Public Act 254 of 2020 that pertains to the Open Meetings Act states that anyone can participate virtually before March 31, 2021. She said this would include board members, the public, and staff. She said on or after March 31, 2021 through December 31, 2021 virtual participation is allowed for active military duty, a medical condition, or statewide or local state of emergency or state of disaster. She said after December 31, 2021 virtual participation is allowed for active military duty, and all others must be physically present at the meeting.

Dr. Ulbrich said the laws are subject to change, and the State Board of Education will closely monitor the laws to make sure it is adhering to the Open Meetings Act.

Dr. Ulbrich said the board's by-laws do not contain a mandate for providing public comments in person, and it is her opinion that no by-laws change is needed. She said if there is a desire to codify, then a board member can propose a change at one meeting and a vote to codify at the next meeting.

XVII. REPORT OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Reports

- G. Human Resources Report
- H. Report on the Approved Changes to the Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
- I. Report on the Approved Changes to the Barry Intermediate School District Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services
- J. Report on Cosponsorship
- K. Report on Property Transfer Decision
- L. Report on Teacher Certification Revocation Decisions

Grants

- M. Report on Grant Awards
 - 1. 2020-2021 Section 99x-Teach for America Grant – Initial; \$1,000,000 (Educator Excellence – Leah Breen)
 - 2. 2020-2021 Section 35a(4) – Intermediate School District Early Literacy Coaches – Initial; \$31,500,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 3. 2020-2021 Section 35a(7) – Literacy Essentials Professional Learning Grant – Initial; \$4,000,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 4. 2020-2021 Section 35b – Multi-Sensory Structured Language Program Pilot – Initial; \$250,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 5. 2020-2021 Section 35d Dyslexia Orton Gillingham Program Grant – Initial; \$250,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 6. 2020-2021 Section 35d Dyslexia Orton Gillingham Program Grant – Initial; \$250,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 7. 2020-2021 Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program Identification and Recruitment Centers – Initial; \$503,000 (Educational Supports – Paula Daniels)
 - 8. 2020-2021 Project AWARE-SEA – Initial; \$1,250,750 (Health and Nutrition Services – Diane Golzynski)
 - 9. 2020-2021 Team Nutrition 19 – Initial; \$289,408 (Health and Nutrition Services – Diane Golzynski)

10. 2020-2021 Unified Champion Schools – Initial; \$500,000 (Health and Nutrition Services – Diane Golzynski)
11. 2019-2020 Section 32p Grants – Amendment; \$10,900,000 (Early Childhood Development & Family Education – Noel Kelty)
12. 2020-2021 Great Start Parent Coalitions Trusted Advisors Grant – Continuation; \$1,374,969 (Early Childhood Development & Family Education – Noel Kelty)
13. 2020-2021 Section 35e – Early Literacy & Academic Support for Youth – Boys and Girls Club – Initial; \$1,000,000 (Preschool & Out-Of-School Time Learning – Richard Lower)
14. 2020-2021 Section 104(4) – Kindergarten Early Observation Tool – Initial; \$1,500,000 (GS/POSTL) (Preschool & Out-Of-School Time Learning – Richard Lower)
15. 2019-2020 Secondary CTE Perkins Grant Program – Initial; \$77,600 (Career and Technical Education – Brian Pyles)
16. 2019-2020 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) – Amendment; \$350,817,295 (Financial Management – Ann Richmond)
17. 2020-2021 Section 351 Statewide Development Tool for the Measurement and Effectiveness of Remote Learning Environments for Students with Disabilities – Initial; \$1,500,000 (Special Education – Teri Rink)

XVIII. REPORT OF THE MICHIGAN TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mr. Owen Bondono, the 2020-2021 Michigan Teacher of the Year, presented his report. Mr. Bondono, an English language arts teacher at the Oak Park Freshman Institute in Oak Park, shared a PowerPoint presentation. He shared information on his love for providing professional development, Love Teaching Month, learning during a pandemic, and using data in his district.

Ms. Chelsee Schram, Region 6 Teacher of the Year, a second grade teacher at Laingsburg Elementary School. Ms. Schram said she is an outdoorsperson. She said her goals are to improve math instruction, create community partners to help pay for educational needs, and teacher retention. She said she has been hosting math panel discussions across the state and finding existing content for teachers to use in classrooms. She said the online professional development sessions are held in the evening and are impactful and low stress. She said she is also helping parents see how math is being taught.

XIX. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Martin Ackley, Director, Public and Governmental Affairs; Ms. Ellen Cogen Lipton, Chairperson, State Board of Education Legislative Committee; and Dr. Judith Pritchett, Delegate, National Association of State Boards of Education; provided the State and Federal Legislative Update.

Mr. Ackley said the House of Representatives and Senate are in session, and the House and Senate education committees are meeting jointly. He said Dr. Rice testified on returning to the classroom last week. He said the governor's executive budget was released on February 11, 2021, and joint House and Senate appropriations committees are meeting regarding the budget. He said there is much discussion on supplemental COVID relief funding.

Ms. Lipton said, as the new chairperson of the board's legislative committee, she is interested in hearing from board members on what would be most helpful. She said the committee has not yet met, and the meeting schedule is being finalized.

Ms. Lipton shared names of chairpersons and schedules for standing committees. She encouraged board members to review the committee membership and establish relationships. Ms. Lipton provided an update on pending legislation.

Dr. Pritchett, Delegate to the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), said Dr. Robert Hull, President and Chief Executive Officer of NASBE, will be retiring at the end of the year. She said the virtual NASBE Legislative conference will be on March 22-23, 2021, and she will share registration information when it is available. Dr. Pritchett said she listened to the NASBE office hours update on February 3, which occurs the first Wednesday of each month.

Dr. Pugh said she has attended open hours with the Centers for Disease Control as well as the Council of Foreign Affairs, and they have been good sessions with great presenters.

Discussion and Resolution to Encourage Local Districts to Return to School

This item was added to the agenda.

Ms. Snyder read aloud and projected onto the screen the [draft Resolution to Encourage Local Districts to Return to School](#).

Ms. Snyder moved, seconded by Mr. McMillin that the State Board of Education adopt the Resolution to Encourage Local Districts to Return to School.

Dr. Ulbrich said the board's process is that proposed documents be shared before the meeting giving members an opportunity research and fact check and have a product that could be debated at the board table. She said getting a statement of this magnitude on the day of the board meeting does not allow enough time for review.

Dr. Ulbrich said she would be in favor of encouraging local school districts to identify in-person learning opportunities and communicate such to local constituencies, but the resolution goes beyond that including calling for teachers to be replaced.

Dr. Ulbrich said she proposes amending the resolution to include only the following statement: The State Board of Education encourages local districts to offer safe in-person learning opportunities consistent with state and federal guidelines and to communicate such widely with their local constituencies.

Dr. Ulbrich said she would vote no on the resolution as initially proposed.

Dr. Pugh said she has an issue with the process, the resolution, and telling school districts to be ready to return to school by a certain date. She said she takes into consideration the comments by one school district, Ann Arbor Public Schools, during the meeting. She said she does not want to down parents and educators who are ready to have children return to classrooms. She said the dynamics are unique throughout the state and she would be concerned with giving directions based upon a timeline versus making sure that we address the needs of school environments, vaccination of teachers, and studies addressing the diversity of students in districts.

Dr. Pritchett said she supports the statement proposed by Dr. Ulbrich. She said she has been a proponent of flexibility for local school districts and local control. She said, when asked, she encourages providing opportunities for in-person instruction, remote instruction, and hybrid instruction so that all children's needs can be met. She said she strongly supports the governor and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, as they have made some decisions where school districts have had to adjust, and the flexibility of formats helps students be able to adjust a little bit easier. She said it ultimately is parent choice on how they believe their child's needs are being met.

Ms. Lipton asked if Ms. Snyder was considering amending the resolution to focus in on the date certain. She said she supports the concept to help parents better understand what's going on in their unique district, which would be helpful. She said she would need more time to review the resolution.

Mr. McMillin said under Roberts Rules when someone makes a motion, you speak to that motion first so people can get an understanding of the motion.

Ms. Snyder said she appreciates process and flexibility, and she wants debate. She said she is trying to take in communication board members have received from people in the school districts across the state of Michigan. She said there are districts with multiple people who are struggling, and this has a sense of urgency and importance. She said for families who have students at home learning it is pretty dire at times. She said it is beyond one school district, and it is 400 medical and mental health experts supporting one of our many school districts. She said she feels strongly that it is her responsibility to honor the conversation in a timely way. She said that is why she introduced the motion.

Ms. Snyder said she was trying to eliminate barriers to returning to in-person learning, but she is willing to remove the statement regarding teachers. She said the legislature would need to debate what incentivizing returning to in-person learning would include, but it could be capital improvements for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

Ms. Snyder moved, and Mr. McMillin agreed, to amend the motion striking, "This is an imminent priority even if that means replacing, at least temporarily, teachers who do not feel comfortable returning to school."

Dr. Pugh said there is a rush to get back to normalcy at the expense of many populations that do not have what we are calling incentives that are the very things that will save their lives. She said all schools need to have these things at their disposal equally. She said we are in a pandemic and trying to keep people alive. She said experts are saying the next few months are some of the most critical months that we will experience.

Dr. Ulbrich said there needs to be time for due diligence.

Ms. Snyder said she prefers to release a statement today, but she will defer if it is not something that the board supports.

Mr. McMillin said he doesn't know if the statement can wait since the date is March 1st. He said the teacher statement has been stricken, and the legislature incentivizing is not a new concept. He said it would be good to have the legislature engaged.

Dr. Rice said the communication was from Ann Arbor, but the issue is broader than Ann Arbor.

Dr. Rice said there are three choices: vote today on the resolution proposed by Ms. Snyder, table the resolution and vote next month, vote on the resolution proposed by Ms. Ulbrich.

Ms. Snyder said her preference is to vote today.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

Lipton – Nay
McMillin – Aye
Pritchett – Nay
Pugh – Nay
Snyder – Aye
Strayhorn – Nay
Tilley – Nay
Ulbrich – Nay

The motion failed.

XX. COMMENTS BY STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

Dr. Pugh said she was on the Equity and Justice for Children panel, which was part of the National Summit: COVID, Climate, Children, and Schools on January 27-28, 2021. She said air quality is needed for all children and all schools in the state and country.

XXI. FUTURE MEETING DATES

- A. Tuesday March 9, 2021 Regular Meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Tuesday, April 13, 2021 Regular Meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- C. Tuesday May 11, 2021 Regular Meeting at 9:30 a.m.
- D. Tuesday May 18, 2021 Work Session at 9:30 a.m.

XXII. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Dr. Rice asked Board members if there were additional agenda topics they would like to be considered for future meeting agendas. He said they may contact Mrs. Schneider or himself to offer topics.

XXIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

The video archive of the meeting is available on Michigan’s State Board of Education website (www.michigan.gov/sbe).

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Tilley
Secretary