

**St. Johns Public Schools  
St. Johns, Michigan  
Minutes of Regular Virtual Meeting of the Board of Education  
Held on December 14, 2020**

The St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education met in regular session virtually on Monday, December 14, 2020. President Darragh called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84712903877?pwd=d3pFcDBSZEdnTWxRb3VRNk9ZQ0Mwdz09>

Members Present: Darragh, Drabek, Hallead , Jackson, Nelson, Watson, and Student Representative Kiel

**ATTENDANCE**

Members Absent: Dedyne

President Scott Darragh appointed Member Nelson as acting secretary for the meeting, as Secretary Dedyne was not in attendance.

**ACTING SECRETARY  
APPOINTED**

Motion by Member Hallead, with support by Vice President Drabek, to approve the agenda. Agenda approved as presented, via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**AGENDA APPROVED**

Motion by Member Nelson, with support by Member Jackson, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from the meeting held on November 23, 2020, and the Executive Session minutes from November 23, 2020. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES**

Superintendent Palmer reviewed the latest Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan. He explained that the goal is to be back to in-person learning by January 11, 2021. He shared that there is a perception, particularly with the secondary level teachers, that they are starting to lose students when going back and forth between changes in instruction modes. A consistency in learning modes shows and increase in attendance. Weekly attendance remains good, but daily attendance is down slightly. Teachers are having a more difficult time getting students to turn in their work, especially at the elementary level. Member Jackson stated that he is astounded and impressed with the attendance. Superintendent Palmer has talked with other area superintendents, and they are considering a move to live Zoom sessions between students and teachers like St. Johns is doing. They have heard good things about our students engaging with their teachers, and it is good to hear.

**REPORTS AND  
INFORMATION  
EXTENDED COVID-19  
LEARNING PLAN AND RE-  
CERTIFICATION**

St. Johns High School freshman student, Ella Koenigsknecht, shared her concerns regarding the cognitive load on students with online instruction. She believes students need more asynchronous instruction days.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Anna Hagerman, another freshman at the high school, shared her concerns over student stress, particularly with the work assigned on asynchronous instruction days. Students are losing sleep over the amount of work assigned and the differences in the due dates of the work. She also shared that she has an increased number of headaches from being on the computer too much.

DJ Logan, Gateway North kindergarten teacher, thanked the district administration for the async days as it gives her more time to catch up with her students. She also shared that she tries to give her students work to keep them moving forward, but realizes this is a burden on parents.

Rich Lund, St. Johns High School science teacher, said that he would like nothing more than to be teaching his classes. Before returning to class he has some informal questions to ask the administration and teacher's union. He also has concerns about students that tried to start a student group a few years ago.

President Darragh believes we need to be moving the elementary students back to in-person learning. Even if we cannot comfortably move the secondary student level back, we need to consider moving the elementary back, even if it is for a fewer amount of days. Superintendent Palmer shared that a large group of pediatricians sent a letter to Ann Arbor Public Schools. In short, they believe elementary students especially need to be learning in-person.

Member Jackson thinks the plan to delay face-to-face instruction until mid January is a good move, and well thought-out.

President Darragh stated that he sent the superintendent's evaluation out to the Board of Education members, and following, had a brief discussion with Treasurer Watson about it. He has not heard from any other members about the evaluation.

Member Hallead thanked President Darragh for sending it out, and believes it captured the narrative of what was discussed.

President Darragh added that with a rating of highly effective or effective, it is standard to extend the contract another year. He discussed with Superintendent Palmer that the compensation be set at a later date. He believes this is a good idea, given the state's budget, and thinks we should continue to leave it open to see what the next fiscal year brings. Vice President Drabek agrees with President Darragh, and stated that the Board appreciates Superintendent's Palmer work and will compensate him fairly.

Member Hallead disagrees and believes compensation should follow closely with the extension of the contract. The district is financially stable and believes he should be compensated accordingly. There was further discussion on this topic. The Board will hold off on this so that more effort is put into researching a fair compensation.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**  
**EXTENDED COVID-19**  
**LEARNING PLAN AND RE-**  
**CERTIFICATION**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S**  
**EVALUATION AND CONTRACT**  
**EXTENSION**

Superintendent Palmer stated that the district would like to keep the administrator and non-union staff compensation in line with what was approved for the other groups. Director of Business and Finance Kelly Corbett added that administrator and non-union support staff contracts were frozen for the year, and would've started July 1, but if approved will just move forward.

**ADMINISTRATOR, AND NON-  
UNION SUPPORT STAFF  
CONTRACTS**

Motion by Member Jackson, with support by Member Hallead, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approve the consent grouping Number VII, A1, B1, B2, B3, C1, and D1. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**APPROVAL OF  
CONSENT  
GROUPING  
ITEMS**

Approved expenditures for the payment of bills for November 2020:

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| General Fund              | \$1,217,461.88        |
| Food Service Fund         | \$49.37               |
| Activity Fund             | \$26,984.65           |
| Energy Bond Construction  | \$37,500.00           |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b> | <b>\$1,281,995.90</b> |

Approved the hiring of the following St. Johns Public Schools employees: Toree Rewerts – Childcare Provider, Madisyn Kotowicz – High School Custodian, and Aleksandra Litwiller – Childcare Provider.

**NEW HIRE APPROVAL**

Approved the resignation of the following St. Johns Public Schools employee: Audrianna Wright – Childcare Provider

**RESIGNATION APPROVAL**

Approved the leave of absence for the following St. Johns Public Schools employee: Katherine Hirschman – Gateway North Elementary SSP.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE  
APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Jackson, with support by Treasurer Watson, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education re-certify the district's Extended-19 Learning Plan as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote. President Darragh asked that the comments from the visiting students at this evening's meeting be taken into consideration.

**ACTION ITEMS  
EXTENDED COVID-19  
LEARNING PLAN AND RE-  
CERTIFICATION APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Nelson, with support by Vice President Drabek, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education accepts the evaluation of Superintendent Mark Palmer as Effective. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION  
APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Jackson, with support by Vice President Drabek, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the extension of Superintendent Mark Palmer's contract with the St. Johns Public School District through June 30, 2024. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT  
EXTENSION APPROVAL**

**BOARD  
COMMUNICATIONS**

Superintendent Palmer thanked the Board of Education for the approval of his evaluation and the extension of his contract. He shared that there was a Google outage earlier today, that only lasted for a short time before it was resolved. Also, virtual board meetings are set to expire at the end of this month. The State Senate has passed to have this extended until March, but it has not yet passed the House. He encouraged the Board members to contact their congressman requesting that they pass this extension.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S  
REPORT**

The State Superintendent applied to the federal government to postpone state testing. We are on schedule with iReady to do our district assessments. Also, Jason Gnegy informed the Board on a literacy grant we received. Director of Business and Finance Kelly Corbett met with our auditors to see what would work best for our district with these funds. He commented he thought this was very pro-active on her part, and appreciated that she did this.

Student Representative Kiel shared that all activities have been suspended, with the exception of the comedy for the theatre competition, The Internet is Distract, Oh Look, There's a Cat. This will be in Zoom format, and there will be no interaction between the students. The public will be able to view it via Zoom too.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S  
REPORT**

Rich Lund, St. Johns High School science teacher, shared his past experiences with the Science Olympiad team, particularly the team's study of epidemiology. He also commented on the readiness of the district to return to school, and if the environment safety would be there when he returns to work.

**PUBLIC AND BOARD  
COMMENTS**

Several members of the Board of Education wished everyone happiness over the holidays. Member Hallead expressed her support for opening in-person instruction in January. Treasurer Watson thanked the staff and tech staff for getting the information out so quickly about the Google outage. Vice President Drabek congratulated Superintendent Palmer on another great evaluation. President Darragh reminded all that Board of Education elections will be held in January and the importance of the enrichment of members through serving on the Board in various positions. He personally would like to see the COVID-19 pandemic through.

Member Hallead motioned that the St. Johns Board of Education move into Executive Session for the purpose of receiving an update on negotiations, and was supported by Member Jackson.

**MOVE TO EXECUTIVE  
SESSION**

The motion passed unanimously by a 6-0 roll call vote at 8:10 p.m.

The Board of Education returned from Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.

**RETURN FROM  
EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion by Member Hallead, with support by Vice President Drabek, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the master agreement between the St. Johns Board of Education and the St. Johns Public Schools

**ACTION ITEMS  
ST. JOHNS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL**

Maintenance and Custodial Association, as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**ASSOCIATION CONTRACT  
APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Nelson, with support by Member Jackson, the that St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the master agreement between the St. Johns Board of Education and the St. Johns Education Secretary Association MEA/NEA, as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**ST. JOHNS EDUCATION  
SECRETARY ASSOCIATION  
CONTRACT APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Jackson, with support by Member Hallead, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the master agreement between the St. Johns Board of Education and the St. Johns Cafeteria Workers Association, as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**ST. JOHNS CAFETERIA WORKERS  
ASSOCIATION CONTRACT  
APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Nelson, with support by Vice President Drabek the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the proposed Administrator Contracts and Compensation Schedule, as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACT  
AND COMPENSATION SCHEDULE  
APPROVAL**

Motion by Member Jackson, with support by Vice President Drabek, that the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education approves the proposed Non Union Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Schedule, as presented. Motion unanimously approved via a 6-0 roll call vote.

**NON UNION SUPPORT STAFF  
CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION  
SCHEDULE APPROVAL**

President Darragh adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Nelson, Acting Secretary  
St. Johns Board of Education  
Minutes submitted by: Michelle Gorby, Recording Secretary