

paign, marketing and branding, and partnerships with the community and D38.

Updated calendar

McClelland reported that a survey of teachers showed a preference to stay with the current calendar and stay close to the D38 calendar. For the 2023-24 proposed calendar, some of the professional development days were moved along with the April teacher appreciation day off. She discussed using a new calculator to ensure MA complies with state contact hour requirements. She noted that extra snow days are built into the calendar but that if they were not needed, MA could adjust the last day of school. She also wants to create a draft calendar for the following year to allow people to plan.

The board unanimously approved the 2023-24 calendar for grades K-6 and 6-12 as presented.

Middle School uniform policy amended

President Ryan Graham noted that this was a formality based on the previous month's decision to allow middle schoolers to wear team athletic wear. Board member Joe Buczkowski said he did his best to draft changes to the policy that were approved but not codified at the last meeting.

Buczkowski added athletic apparel in its own section, saying that athletic polo shirts and fleece jackets may be part of the daily uniform and polos must be tucked in. He also took the opportunity to fix some small typos and font issues.

The board voted 5 to 1 to approve the policy as amended, with board member Emily Belisle voting no after requesting a discussion of some oversight for the potential duplication with fundraising groups in the school.

Public comment on reasons for withdrawing

After the board returned from a nearly two-hour executive session discussing security arrangements, a contract for school administration, and the evaluation of the interim school leader and finance team, it adjourned after taking no action.

The next agenda item allowed for citizen comments not pertaining to an agenda item, and Tanya Santiago explained why she had withdrawn her children to home-school them. She said she originally selected MA due to its stance against critical race theory and gender and identity confusion.

However, she became concerned when the middle school principal explained at an assembly why Capturing Kids Hearts was an amazing social-emotional learning (SEL) program. She said she shouldn't have to explain to a truly conservative school board why SEL poses such a huge threat. She quoted from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) organization that SEL is anchored in the notion of justice-oriented citizenship and discusses issues of culture, identity, agency, belonging, and engagement. She said that to her, that is socialism.

She also noted that a high school substitute teacher had their class debate the COVID-19 vaccine by physically segregating kids based on their opinion. She felt that no child should be easily identifiable as having been vaccinated or not and felt it was a horrible idea to have a debate class cover such a hot-button issue. When she spoke with Principal David Kennington, he asked her if she understood the classical education model that MA offered.

Finally, she noted that a suicide prevention program like Sources of Strength required student participation, raising the concern that if one student failed to recognize that another was planning to commit suicide, the damage would be irreversible. She also said the program was so secret that parents were required to go to the D38 administration building and leave their cell phone off so they could not photograph it.

She had a lot of hope for MA, she said, but it didn't work out so her kids would now be home-schooled.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- The board updated its list of authorized signers for its Integrity Bank CDs to replace those no longer at the school.
- Board member Craig Carle spotlighted three staff members: Loura Polen, Krista Pelley, and Lena Gross who dropped everything to help gather bond information that was needed.
- Graham reported for the Highway 105 committee that he would call a special meeting for the MA Building Corp. and the MA Foundation to execute documents with Wilson & Co. to allow the "recirculation project" to get started. The project is designed to have traffic go around the school and stay off Highway 105.
- Carle reported that the Lynx Fund Annual Campaign had raised 15% or \$75,000 of its \$500,000 goal. He met with a videographer to discuss creating a commercial about the fundraising goal.
- Board member Michael Geers

- said the West Campus School Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) was working on its end-of-year survey, and the parent-teacher organization was recruiting.
- Belisle reported that the East Campus SAAC had reviewed its survey results, posted them on the website under the school board, and written a letter to the board with its recommendations. The letter noted a high level of satisfaction with academic progress and room to streamline communications between parents and teachers.
- The board set March 21 at 9 a.m. as the time for a 90-minute budget work session. The location is to be determined.

Correction

In the Feb. 4 edition of OCN, the MA article misstated that Graham was term-limited. In March 2022, the board amended its bylaws to clarify term limits and Graham can run for a second term. OCN regrets the error.



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