

**ARMADA AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 15, 2020**

20-68 Motion by J. Tobey, supported by E. Cooper, that the Board of Education approve the Monthly "Extended Continuity of Learning Plan" for the Armada Area School District as presented.

Voice Vote:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

MOTION PASSED : 5-0

20-69 Vice President, Jordan Ackerman, adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m. with the motion to adjourn from C. Murray and supported by J. Tobey.

Hearing of the Public:

A student called in to comment upon the virtual learning platform, Empower, and how he believes Google Classroom works better.

Communications: None

Superintendent's Report:

- Mr. Musary reported that we have approximately 80% of our students here face-to-face and doing well. Masks are not a problem. Some families are wanting to switch from virtual to face-to-face, but we are not allowing it until the second trimester.
- The internet connection is challenging as we do not have the bandwidth, but we are improving each week and now have ten hot spots in the Armada area, and six of them are working seamlessly.
- Mr. Musary presented a Gate Revenue Loss Analysis for gate fees based on the lower spectator numbers. The Board all agreed that if the BWAC as a whole waives the gate fees, Armada will comply. Otherwise, Armada will charge gate fees in order to recoup some revenue.

Curriculum Update: Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Curriculum, Mr. Phil Jankowski, provided a presentation on the monthly "Return to Learn Update". He noted the following:

- **Master Scheduling:** Normal process takes approximately two months. The COVID-19 scheduling process took six months and included rescheduling for six periods and rescheduling for online students.
- **Virtual Learning – Using Empower Platform:** The preparation included three mandatory training sessions, six voluntary training sessions and an available sandbox (a practice site). The launch consisted of testing the build levels in mid-August, rolling the rosters and going live at the end of August.
- **Extended Learning Plan – Required by New Legislation:** The requirements are that the Board must reaffirm the extended learning plan on a monthly basis. It must provide comment time during the board meeting for parents to address the plan. Participation levels of students both

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virtual and face to face must be reported. The plan and weekly participation results must be posted on the district website.

- **COVID -19 Learning Plan:** The goals are that we will try to maintain education both face-to-face and virtual as an option for families. We will strive to achieve student growth that exceeds the national average on the NWEA Reading, Math and Language Usage benchmark systems. The Empower Learning Management System will be used to track student progress to the standards set by the State of Michigan.
- **Instructional Option: Face-to-Face:** In person instruction will maintain the traditional offering as in previous years. The schedule at each level will be adjusted to accommodate safety guidelines recommended by the Macomb County Health Department and the State of Michigan. At the elementary level, students will remain in their classrooms during the day as a cohort. At the secondary level, the students will work in three class period sessions that will alternate every two weeks. Session A will contain hours 1-3 and Session B will contain hours 4-6. Students will have an hour each day to work virtually on coursework from the out of session classes in order to maintain their studies and to learn the Empower Learning Management System in case the district has to move to Phase 3 (all virtual instruction).
- **Instructional Option: Virtual:** Virtual instruction will also be held on the Empower Learning Management System. Students at the elementary level will receive a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction from a designated classroom teacher. Approximately two hours of instruction in the morning and the afternoon will be provided in a synchronous manner and additional work will be provided asynchronously. At the secondary level, virtual instruction will be provided asynchronously. This is due to state restrictions on teacher certification. Students will follow along with recorded lessons and activities under the guidance of a certified teacher serving as a virtual mentor. Virtual students will be provided with a Chromebook upon request in order to maintain an equitable learning environment. Due to our rural setting, the district understands that internet access can be a challenge. Approximately one-third of the district is located in an area beyond the reach of viable high-speed internet. We are currently piloting options for cellular hotspots in hopes that they might be able to provide internet to families who need it. This would be provided at a discounted rate for families based on need. Students who are using the virtual model will be required to communicate directly with teacher mentors at least twice weekly using email, telephone, instant messaging, or face-to-face conversation.
- **Health & Safety Guidelines: Decision Benchmarks:** The district is committed to working with the state and local health departments to prioritize face-to-face instruction and activities, especially for grades K-5, using recommended precautions. The district will use the following metrics to determine whether face-to-face instruction can be maintained safely:
 - The trend of COVID-19 cases or positive COVID-19 tests, hospitalizations due to COVID-19, and the number of deaths resulting from COVID-19 over a 14-day period.
 - COVID-19 cases for each day for every million individuals.

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- The percentage of positive COVID-19 tests over a 4-week period.
 - Health care capacity strength.
 - Testing, tracing, and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID-19.
- **Other Considerations: Special Education:** The district is committed to maintaining services for special-education students in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Teachers will hold virtual sessions as required to maintain IEP's and other services.

Board Reports:

Treasurer S. Nieman reported that The Armada Education Foundation is selling raffle tickets for a vacation loft for one week in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The tickets are \$25.00 each. They are selling these tickets in place of the cancelled golf outing fundraiser. The AEF has recently received some generous donations and is building its endowment fund.

New Business:

- Member C. Murray asked if the Board could continue to receive updates from teachers and their progress with the Empower platform and it was confirmed that the Board will receive that information with their monthly "Extended Continuity of Learning Plan" update.
- Member S. Nieman asked about the size of our substitute teacher pool and Mr. Musary responded that it is not deep but working so far and that at some point, they may look at having a more permanent substitute in the buildings on Mondays and Fridays.

Points of Pride:

J. Tobey:

- Proud of the student who called in this evening during public comment with his concerns and how eloquently he expressed himself.

C. Murray:

- Proud of the Administrators, especially after observing her own administrator at her school.
- Proud that the Administrators are remaining professional while working their tails off.

J. Ackerman:

- Proud of all the stakeholders in the district from the top down. He is impressed with everything they are doing. Speaking as a parent in the district, he couldn't be happier with his decision to be part of this school and community.

S. Nieman:

- Proud of our Technology Director, Nancy Couto, for overseeing the installation of all new computers in the district and dealing with a multitude of issues. She thinks Nancy is an amazing woman doing an amazing job in a one- person department.

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E. Cooper:

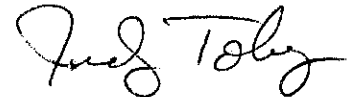
- Proud to hear that students are keeping their masks on and sticking to the rules.

P. Jankowski:

- Proud of everyone, especially teachers and custodians who have worked so hard to get to this point. Things are changing every week but we have gotten to the third week of school which is good.

M. Musary:

- Proud of the teachers for everything they have done and are doing.
- Proud of the students for complying with the face mask rule.
- Proud of the coaches and athletes for their cooperation and participation (some of the students have said that they would rather wear a mask than not play at all)
- We are going to continue to do the "best we can."



Judy Tobey, Secretary
Armada Board of Education