



Committee Transcript

**Red Clay Community Financial Review Committee
September 8, 2020**

I. Minutes

The July 2020 Minutes and Transcript were reviewed. The CFRC did not meet in August. Ms. Thompson moved to accept the minutes and Mr. Schwartz seconded. The motion carried.

II. FACILITIES PRESENTATION

Dr. Ted Ammann, Assistant Superintendent of Red Clay School District discussed the updates made on Red Clay facilities and technology.

Dr. Ammann shared his screen on COVID 19 changes. Red Clay was in a strong position at the start of the school shut down in the area of remote devices. The last referendum had a technology line item that was approved giving one-to-one learning Chromebooks to our students in grades 3-12. Grades 6-12 took the devices home on a regular basis. Therefore 50% of our students had a device at home when we closed in March. Through the spring, we provided additional devices to families who reached out with a priority of one device per family.

We then planned our 2021 remote learning back in February. The factories overseas were closing down. Our technology director, Kristine Bewley, reached out to the CFO and procured Chromebooks that were in stock in preparation for next year. We were ahead of the game. Even in doing this, many of our orders were still being delivered in August 2020. This would provide a device for every child K-12. We had the goal of addressing internet access for families that do not have reliable connectivity. We wanted to take away as many hurdles as possible. Additional technology solutions to assist both remote and new in person challenges were devised.

Now, every student K-12 has a device. Dr. Ammann was at Baltz today while parents were in the lines to pick up meals for the students as well as school supplies and Chromebooks for the student who did not already have one. Chromebook insurance is offered/encouraged for all families. Schools work with families so that cost is not a factor. However, no student is refused a device for failure to pay for the insurance. For Pre-K students, iPads will be distributed based on need. iPads are more developmentally appropriate. Pre-K students also received supply bags with school supplies dedicated to their skill level.

This added approximately 4500 devices, which will be something to address in the future. We had a very thorough plan on the one-to-one devices when we put through the referendum. One thing you don't want to do with a referendum is request money for a program that is not sustainable. Yet our plan going into the referendum was asking the community for enough funding to be able to refurbish and replace the devices as they age or were broken. With the pandemic, we went from Grades 3-12 to K-12. In order to do



Committee Transcript

that, we used the refurbishment funding and we took funding that was to be used this 20-21 school year. We will have to look at the upkeep funding down the road, as these are new devices. Ms. Thompson asked if it would be two years. Dr. Ammann stated that depends on several factors, one being what will be the need in the next technology phase. We are often victims of vendors and when they force us to upgrade. We've been on a 3-4 year cycle with Chromebooks. The older the Chromebook, the more likely you have hardware problems spending more time fixing it than using it. The hope is the 3-4 year cycle holds. Ms. Thompson asked if we'd work it into our next referendum. Dr. Ammann stated that the last referendum covered the refurbishment and replacement of the one-on-one devices Grades 3-12. Now that we are K-12, with 4500 more Chromebooks are those home devices necessary to their education once every student is back in school. Do we expand the program, or only the older students take the devices home.

The Wi-Fi access is another issue. You may have seen the news reporting on Wi-Fi access in the State of DE. We are fortunate in New Castle County with high-speed internet. There are places in Sussex County where you cannot get high-speed internet even if you have the means. In our area, families may or may not have the means, but we have coverage and finding the right vendor. We have worked on it over the summer working with New Castle County, who had received a fair amount of CARES money, and they reached out wanting to help us meet the needs of the students and access. We partnered with NERDIT Now; the owner was on Shark Tank and is a Red Clay graduate. There are families who have never had Wi-Fi access for many reasons. There are a number of ways to get Wi-Fi access. Comcast has a low cost access program, however it comes with a great deal of paperwork and it's the paperwork that families don't feel comfortable providing information. It's not just getting the access, but connecting people who have never been on. We didn't want to have a service for families that didn't come with help. So we partnered with NERDIT Now. They just don't provide an access, but they will drive out to a family and work with them to achieve the connection using all COVID protections.

The devices that the students have do have technical issues from time to time. We now have a tech bus filled with spare parts and technicians. The bus goes into the community each day. Sometimes it's a school parking lot, or a food delivery spot in the community, the family can bring their hardware issue to the tech bus. We can fix the device, or give them a loaner until we can get it fixed. Our technicians are also available by phone on the help desk. Just today, the bus was at Forest Oak Elementary. It was 3:05 PM and there was still a line, so parents were asking the bus to stay longer, which they did.

The largest piece of the puzzle is the educators ready to teach using this technology. Some teachers embraced it years ago and some are just using it now. Many of us looked at Zoom as online learning, but it is so much more than that. Our teachers have done a great job stepping up to the challenge taking the classes and engaging their students. We streamlined, working with students and parents using the tools, utilizing Schoology. We had teachers and administrators using other programs. We have had it all streamlined to Schoology. Some teachers feel it has limited them to the tools they have to use, but we



Committee Transcript

are improving the use of the tools with the training in place. We have stepped up our expectations of remote learning. Last spring we had to pivot on a dime. Everyone had an opinion on being back by now. We've ratcheted up the expectations and all of the students are now in line with one another. Mr. Schwartz stated he feels that elementary teachers have had the harder time in maintaining the class on a daily basis vs. the district packets. Things are being managed better now. Learning to use the tools and maintaining the classroom attention is a continuous work in progress. Dr. Ammann was at Heritage earlier where there is the YMCA care. The students were raising their hands. The staff was going to them thinking they needed something, while they were interacting on their laptops with their teacher. It's a learning curve and it isn't ideal, but we're getting better.

One thing we struggled with was the support side. We support teachers via phone and email as well as onsite support. Now, we've grown to support for students, parents, day care providers as well without an increase in staff. We have worked on training our teachers to help parents and students. We've trained some of our librarians to be an online support. And our school secretaries have the information of Zoom user names and passwords. We also have the email support for the parents.

Another piece of technology for COVID is working with our Data Service Center. We now have online school registration. We created it and it went live in early August. We also made it available to any charter school or school district in the State. Once they use it, they won't want to give it up and will purchase it from DSC next year. Plus, we wanted to do what we could to be helpful.

We've been thinking of when students come back and touchless technology. In the cafeteria, for instance, students touch a keypad to get their lunch. We have a number of new things, as like our "where's the bus" app for the phone which takes attendance from a student ID, now our libraries and nutrition departments are working from the same student ID barcode. As students come back into the buildings, students will all have a student ID. They can wave the ID on the bus, in the cafeteria, etc. Lunches will look different when students return. When we have prepackaged meals, students are going to have to tell us what they want to eat for lunch. Therefore, when students do come back into the building, we have an online system that children will order their lunch that morning so that the packaged lunch will be ready when they come to the cafeteria or delivered to their classroom, whichever those protocols may be at the time. One of the teachers who has been teaching for some time said it was like the old days when they would take a lunch count in the morning. What is old is new again, but now they can do it from their phone or Chromebook. This will streamline them to return to school.

Ms. Floore added that we have hired over 100 employees over the summer. Our Human Resources department utilized the new online onboarding program. There are frustrations the first day, as some teachers do not have access. That is not the HR department, but the transfer from other districts to our payroll. It is hung up when the sending district releases the records. It was seamless hiring those people. Our staff was working remotely, but were able to hire all of the staff. Dr. Ammann added that there were



Committee Transcript

teachers who couldn't log on, and this year we've had fewer calls like that than ever before. Everyone knew the timeline and we were ready. You don't want to say there were good things about a pandemic, however, there are processes that we have not in place that are better and we won't go back to the former process. When the kids are back in school, the parents will still be able to have a child registered from their home.

Ms. Thompson asked if the tech bus is driven by a bus driver and are the tech pieces parked in the bus parking lot overnight. Dr. Ammann answered it is driven by a bus driver. The equipment are in totes. We take the items out of the bus and we also have a garage that we can house a bus with equipment of value to lock overnight. Our bus drivers have been coming up with ideas to help out delivering meals and offering to drive in other ways. We have bus paraprofessionals as well who are working at a day care site working with students' online learning.

Ms. Floore stated there were questions that came out in the news that there were some human rights violations with computer companies. Dr. Ammann answered that it hit home in Delaware as there was a district that were expecting their Chromebooks in August and they received a message that one of the assembly lines was shut down for violating fair trade regulations. Therefore, there was 15-week delay. Some people asked if our computers were made in the USA. The last company that made large-scale computers in the USA was Gateway. There has been some talk of Apple starting in Wisconsin later on. There isn't a company that tells us they are violating human rights. Short of our Board flying a team over to an assembly line, we have no way of knowing. In Red Clay, we buy only name brand computers, Dell and Acer. And we expect their plants are inspected properly. Ms. Thompson asked if we buy from the State Contract. Dr. Ammann explained that we buy from the multistate consortium that we have opted to use. The volume of Delaware is nothing compared to California. This is a consortium of several smaller states that together have a greater buying power. There is some insurance in that, but it is the Federal government that has to enforce our trade policies, and in this case, it worked. They found a violation and shut it down. Ms. Thompson asked if the people who put the contracts together do some sourcing work. Dr. Ammann stated he's sure they do, however, he's willing to bet that the plant that was shut down would attest to following all of the guidelines. Ms. Thompson added that the multistate agreement should have someone going out and looking at these issues. Dr. Ammann explained that he didn't know if it was the procurement officers or the attesting of the companies that they follow the rules. We do count on the Federal government to do that work. There are fair trade policies and notations on companies we buy from. Ms. Thompson stated that child labor has been a problem for years. DuPont had someone who looked over that. Mr. Schwartz stated that at DuPont is still concerned with the issue and looks into every claim.

Dr. Ammann spoke to the facilities upgrades due to COVID. The first is buses. Buses are facilities and very important in getting the students back in school. Over the summer, our bus drivers are usually driving for summer school. Since there were no in school programs, we brought our bus drivers in for training on cleaning procedures. Each bus is wiped down after every run. We have a 3-tier system. After the high school run, the



Committee Transcript

driver and/or aides will wipe down every seat and after the next two. In looking to make sure each bus does not have too many students on them, we are accounting for the time it takes to clean in between. Ms. Shahan, our Transportation Supervisor, reminded Dr. Ammann when looking at the transportation budget, to include cleaning of the buses. It takes 10 minutes to clean a bus, but with a 100 buses, it takes a fair amount of time. The State did include additional transportation funding for cleaning and PPE needed. We don't know if it's enough as we're not through the pandemic yet, but it's a start.

Another piece we have added is a hand sanitizing station on each of our buses as well as each of our contractor buses. We do work with Odyssey Charter buses, and they are equipped as well. Mr. Schwartz added that the type of sanitizers and cleaning solutions may not be compatible with the seating materials, so that should be considered. In his line of work at DuPont, that comes up on a daily basis. Dr. Ammann explained that they are not only making sure the sanitizers are recommended and safe for students, but that they also work. We don't want a false sense of safety. The higher alcohol level is not the better product. We have also added stickers on all of the seats to direct students where to sit to have social distancing. The stickers need to not peel off from regular seating use, but will also come off when the pandemic is over without hurting the seating materials. We worked with a printer to measure the right amount of adhesives. They were able to send some to test before ordering.

In reference to our buildings, we worked with our supplier making sure the cleaners that we used were on the list of approved solutions from the CDC. We also needed to verify our supply chain availability. A couple of years ago we moved to a company named Buckeye for our supply and we were able to verify they would have the growing amounts we needed. We also worked right away to change over the elementary schools bathrooms to foaming hand soap. There was concern that the former soap would not be used long enough with the younger children in washing their hands for longer periods of time. The supply we have of the other soap will be used in the secondary schools and then we will transfer over to the foaming soap there as well. We also have a hand-sanitizing dispenser in every classroom as well as mobile stations in every school. We don't want the bottleneck as students arrive at school and the stations can be moved to facilitate a sports event in or outside of the building.

We are fortunate that we already had in place procedures for cleaning that met the standardized cleaning protocols. The big thing about cleaning is that a quick rub doesn't kill the germs. We had to remind everyone of the manual procedures and not get complacent. We are training and retraining to make sure our 130 custodians are all working the same way.

We are working on absences. We want people to be at work, but not if they are sick. Then the question becomes if Mr. Smith cleans the red wing of a school and he is out, we need to make sure that wing is cleaned. Staffing is critical. The Governor put out a press release regarding high touch surfaces need to be cleaned 3 times a day in a building. We have implemented that now and the staff are cleaning handrails, doors, etc. 3 times a day even though students aren't in the building so that we are already in the practice.



Committee Transcript

In the beginning of the pandemic, there was talk about cleaning, Dr. Ammann was in an airport and the tram was very clean. Now, we know that it isn't surfaces that require the cleaning as much as the air droplets that are going place to place. Therefore, it is very important to know our HVAC systems and how they work. We want to make sure people aren't getting sick from our air filtration system. Every one of our unit ventilators, each classroom and room has a separate unit ventilator, has been cleaned over the summer. There was talk about upgraded filters. Dr. Ammann explained that we do have the upgraded filters. There is a MERV rate for the filter system. Many are told we need MERV15 filters. However, if you have too strong of a filter, the air does not circulate through them. Yet, too low and the air comes through without being well filtered. We worked with our HVAC contractors to go through each of our buildings to test and decide on the MERV rated filter that will be appropriate. We have reinforced that the filters need to be checked every 30 days. Our filters are now dated to make sure that they are checked.

We have put in many practices in place in the past to decrease our energy uses. However, now that has to be put aside. For instance, we are putting the buildings in occupied mode for 2 hours prior to students arriving. That way the air is flushed out and fresh air piped in 2 hours prior to occupancy as well as run 2 hours after they leave. We have deactivated our occupancy sensors in the classrooms. Therefore, the airflow will be consistent and not turn off if the room is unoccupied for periods of time during the day. Another thing we have done is changed the number of times air is changed into a classroom is 4 times in an hour. 750 square feet by 20 feet high, will be completely changed out with fresh air from outside. When we have excessively warm or cold air outside, we will have hotter or cooler temperatures inside as well. It is not ideal, but necessary. In speaking with staff and other districts, they are skeptical on how we know the air is changed that often. Dr. Ammann explained that we contracted with an outside company to come in and go to random schools to measure outside and inside air through the vents. All the work we've done, will have verification from an outside source.

Nurses have their own area that needs to be addressed. Looking at symptoms for COVID, there aren't many illnesses that don't share those same symptoms. Students come to the Nurse, and until they go home, we won't know if it's COVID. Each one of our schools now have an isolation room where students can wait for their parent/guardian to pick them up. It's simply a room with extra air exchange with HEPA filters. They also have negative pressure where the air goes out and not into another room. Buildings are tight for space, but we were able to find those spaces in every room. Shout out to Rob Johnson, a parent on our Facilities Committee. He is an industrial hygienist working for the Veteran's Hospital in Maryland. He has been working with us and been a great resource. He spoke with the Nurses regarding their space and explaining lower temperatures won't help with the spread of illness.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he has spent a lot of time in this arena from airplanes to hospitals and hotels. It sounds like the district has done everything in the right direction. Dr. Ammann added this is always changing and upgrading. Mr. Schwartz questioned if



Committee Transcript

we were adding UVC lamps in the classrooms to disinfect. Dr. Ammann explained that our economy is good at selling us stuff. It's all things we can do with our cleaners and manpower.

Ms. Floore added huge compliments to Dr. Ammann and his staff. In addition to all of this, it has been a huge task for coordinating child care centers in our buildings for folks who are working and are desperate for their children to be in a learning environment for remote instruction. 7 schools are running. All of our elementary schools had after school care with a vendor; YMCA, Boys & Girls Club or LACC. Instead of making it more complicated, we used the same vendors for the same schools. Based on need, the vendors have opted to provide care at centers. The YMCA is having care at their Kirkwood Highway location rather than Forest Elementary and they are having care at Heritage Elementary. Marbrook does not have any care on site, but they can get to Richardson Park Elementary. All of the schools have a partner. These vendors are running a business; therefore, they need enough participants at a location to make it worth the program. At Heritage today, they had 2 students from Christina School District. We told other districts that our first priority would be Red Clay students, but if there was room in the program, the vendor would accept others. So there were 13 students at Heritage. They are sitting at a distanced desk with partitions and headphones. It's not what we look for, but it's the first time we've had students at the buildings since March. It will also help guide us for reopening. Dr. Ammann stated that all of the children wore their colorful masks with no issue.

Ms. Rattenni thanked Dr. Ammann for his report with special kudos to his team. Due to time length, Dr. Ammann would like to come back at the next meeting and discuss nutrition. The Committee agreed that would be something they want to learn more about. He will also speak to their pop-up classroom effort. That is a bus that drives around for a drop in lesson.

III. EXPENDITURE REPORT

Ms. Floore presented the August 30th Expenditure report. In August, we are in the early stages of the fiscal year. The unknown is how much we will see in the tax receipts in October with the larger share coming in November. We spoke at length in the preliminary budget of expecting a 2% delinquency. The bills are due September 30th; however, we won't see it right away.

The State has loaded much of their appropriations. Revenues were up 57%, last year we were at 55%. The lines that are deceptive list at 170% or 123% are due to the State "give back" of \$3 million, we get to choose where the funding comes from. It is not a complaint. We wish the cut wasn't there but we at least have the flexibility of where it comes from. Therefore, the areas where you see the larger percentages, it means those are areas where we see the giveback. Also the State receipts are at 4.8% but you wouldn't expect to see that so early in the year. It is too early. State Salaries, the State has loaded \$10 million in payroll.



Committee Transcript

Expenditures are down slightly. Shout out to all of our schools. Not only did they have the Chromebook distribution, but they purchased student supplies to distribute as well. The supplies were provided as well some textbooks. Some textbooks are provided online. We are slightly down at 16.1% rather than 17% last year. Not much to speak to, as we are still early.

The tuition side is lower than the 50% as they are carry forward balances, not new revenue. We will see September taxes at the end of October. Ms. Floore is on the County Finance Committee and has a flow of communication, but we will not know our numbers until the end of October.

IV. Financial Position Report

Ms. Floore presented the Financial Position Report for October 15, 2020. Some taxes are paid early, but the larger share is much later. This is a narrow tax flow. This is where historically districts got in trouble. If a district has trouble with this balance, the State allows us to float payroll without having cash in the bank. We are in no position or close to needing that. We will have \$5.8 million on hand on October 15, 2020. One month of local payroll is \$4.3 million. We are fully staffed.

The following page lists what is funding encumbered, what is income, etc. At the end of October, we will receive September's taxes. There are also State funds we can use towards our obligation. All eyes are on the tax receipts. All indications we are receiving from the State side of budget, are gloomy looking at FY 2020.

This year's September 30th enrollment count has been moved to November 13th. Obviously, there is much more fluctuation right now. There are more parents applying for home school. Taking attendance is difficult, but needed to who is showing up online. The good news that the State law unit count in the Spring, we are guaranteed 98% of that. Even if we are down 100 units, which we are not, we are down about 20; we are not on the hook for the 20 as we are receiving 98%. We would be responsible for the rest.

Mr. Schwartz asked if the fluctuation is due to graduation and students moving out of district. Ms. Floore explained that right now, she believes the conversion in the system is making it difficult to retrieve the unit count information. Based on the reports today, however, she believes that parents with 5 year olds are delaying the start of their education; home schooling is playing into that as well. Our preschool and kindergarten numbers are down.

Ms. Thompson asked how home schooling counts affect our count. Ms. Floore explained that when a child is home schooled, they are no longer registered in our schools to be taught. Ms. Thompson asked if we are getting many withdrawals such as this. Ms. Floore stated that we have 50 withdrawals to home school right now, but that is evolving.

Kristine Bewley who is our Technology Supervisor is also in charge of the Choice program. Choice plays a large part in our count and how we are funded based on that



Committee Transcript

unit count. The issue is what is the data saying and what are the families doing as we transition. November 13th could be when the children return. Some in person and some remotely based on preferences and family situations. The unit count is how our system funds us. If we're down 100 or 1,000 students, we're still funded the 98%.

Ms. Thompson asked what are the gloomy projections for next year. Ms. Floore explained that based on unemployment and the closure of small businesses, the State is seeing a contraction of tax receipts. Whether you're speaking of gross receipts or all of their revenue. The housing market is still moving, so transfer fees are still coming in. However, income and unemployment contribute to a decline in tax revenue. There is currently a lawsuit stating that the CARES money should be going to public school, as there is a provision in the CARES act for a significant amount of the money to go to private schools based on enrollment, not based on poverty. It has always been based on poverty. The courts have a recent ruling that this is not how Congress had intended the funding and it is an overreach by the US Dept. of Education. In any case, those global issues will trickle down. Will there be a contraction of federal money such as Title I, will there be another stimulus package or is that frozen. We're ok this year to receive the 98% but what happens next year if we lose those units and result in RIFs.

Ms. Rattenni asked about the PPE being purchased by the CARES act as many of the supplies that are needed will not go away. This will become the new normal of cleaning and air filtration. That will have to be built into the FY 2022 budget.

Ms. Floore added that the CARES funding will help us for the PPE, the technology, remedial programs. We already have a remedial program built into our schedule for next summer based on anticipated needs. Will there be assistance available? We don't know. If the lawsuit stands, the \$1.2 million we were to give to private schools of our \$5 million CARES funding would come back to us. Red Clay has the most private schools of any district.

Ms. Rattenni asked for a vote of the Financial Position Report. Mr. Pappenhagen made a motion to accept the Financial Position Report for 1Q2021 and Mr. Schwartz seconded. The motion carried.

V. Public Comment

There was no outside public comment.

Mr. Andrzejewski had to drop off the meeting prior to ending. He had wanted to join the CFRC but was also interested in serving on the Cab Calloway Board. Ms. Floore asked Mr. Schwartz if that presented a conflict. Mr. Schwartz explained that the Cab Board meeting is at 7:00 PM on the same day as the CFRC. Ms. Floore stated he could do both, but he would be late for one or leave early from the other.



Committee Transcript

Ms. Floore did ask Taylor Green, our Communication Supervisor, to run an advertisement asking for those interested in becoming CFRC members, to submit an application. We had changed the by-laws to follow the State procedures.

Mr. Pappenhagen asked if we have any teachers who will quit if we decide to have in-school teaching. Ms. Floore stated that we always have teachers in August who decide not to return. Our numbers have been pretty stable. Yet, we have some people rescind their retirement because they cannot afford it at this time because their spouses are out of work. Plans have changed both ways at this time. Ms. Thompson asked if Mr. Pappenhagen noted any in Appoquinimink. He answered that there was one teacher that decided the technology was too much, but he'll know more when they go back into the classroom.

VI. Announcements

The next meeting is October 13, 2020 at 6:00 PM in the Baltz District Office Board Room. Dr. Ammann will return to present updates on Nutrition. The meeting will be in-person. The Baltz Board Room is large enough for social distancing. All members of the CFRC agreed to in-person meeting.

Mr. Chase asked if the Board was meeting in person. If there was a hybrid for the many people who were Zoom"ing" in to continue. Ms. Thompson said the Board is meeting in person but there would be livestreaming. Mr. Chase stated it would be sad to see remote participation go away as many people were engaging that could not show up.