

**Benton Harbor Area Schools
Community Engagement Advisory Committee
Agenda**

**Monday, March 2, 2020
5:00 pm**

Benton Harbor High School
Library
870 Colfax Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call
- B. Approval of Agenda
- C. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. January 6, 2020 (Attachment #1)

II. OLD BUSINESS

None.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Overview of January 23, 2020 Work Session (Attachment #2)
- B. Assessment and Proposed Operating Plan Update (Attachment #3)
- C. March 17, 2020 Presentation to School Board (Attachment #4a and 4b)

IV. BOARD COMMENT/OTHER

V. COMMUNICATIONS – Information Only

None.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

VII. ADJOURNMENT

**Benton Harbor Area Schools
Community Engagement Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, January 6, 2020
5:00 pm**

Benton Harbor High School
Library
870 Colfax Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Members Present

Joyce Parker
Lisa Cripps-Downey
William Pearson
Patricia Robinson
Brenda Terrell
Wayne Watson
Denise Whatley-Seats
Dannetta Moore

Members Absent

Rob Cleveland
Tray'von Gentry
Maurice McAfee

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 5:09 pm. Let the record show a quorum is present.
- B. Introduction of the parent representative, Dannetta Moore.
- C. Approval of Minutes

Motion made (Cripps-Downey) and supported (Pearson), the Committee unanimously voted to approve the December 2, 2019 as presented.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. None

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Subcommittee reports
 1. Budget and Finance
 - Budget and finance report reviewed. No questions or comments.

2. Community Engagement
 - Community engagement report reviewed.
 - Overview of past events. Discussed the upcoming events.
 - Overview of the public survey.
3. Academics and Programs
 - Academic report reviewed. No questions or comments.
4. Building Facility Technology
 - Building and Facility report reviewed.
 - Paul Wills from Plante Moran presented their service plan.
 - Discussion held on the Plante Moran service plan, the facilities addressed, cost and budget, the needs assessment and what will be covered.

B. Survey Discussion

1. Reviewed the public survey and website, reiterated the importance of taking the survey.

IV. BOARD COMMENT/OTHER

- A. Discussion of subcommittee reports and a planning/work session to bring the committee together, utilizing a facilitator, January 23, 2020.
- B. Discussion of the new superintendent and involvement moving forward.

V. COMMUNICATIONS – Information only

- A. Review of the Benton Harbor Racial Equity Committee 2020 Day of Action Invitation. No questions or comments.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Mr. Triplett - Importance of consistency of the committee and the importance to the community.
- B. Ms. Nelson - Teachers concerns regarding longevity and salary.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn (Pearson) and second (Thomas), the meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.

**BENTON HARBOR AREA SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT
Facilitated Discussion
January 23, 2020 at 10am**

Facilitated Discussion - Format Overview

This was a facilitated discussion, conducted by representatives of Treasury's Continuous Improvement and Engagement Division.

Each subcommittee group was given up to 15 minutes to present on their draft report of findings. Once the subcommittee completed their presentation, the floor was open for an additional 15 minutes to allow for feedback from the other subcommittees, and key focus questions from the facilitators.

Key Focus Questions

- GAPS: What is missing?
- IMPACT: Are there any unexpected effects on other subcommittees?
- CROSSOVER: Are there similarities or redundancies with other subcommittees?

Facilitated Discussion Feedback

I. Subcommittee Presentation: Community Engagement

Facilitator Notes:

- Special education/students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
 - Berrien RESA collaboration
- What part do businesses play?
- What part do parents play?
- Having students volunteer in the schools and the community so that they are vested and have a sense of pride and ownership when responsible for taking care of the district they reside in. (Crossover)
- Safety is a common theme and are bigger than the school. What support services are available?
 - Safety issues topics include:
 - Behavioral issues
 - Violence
 - Disruptions

II. Subcommittee Presentation: Academics and Programs

Facilitator Notes:

- There is no comparison data to peer districts.
- Difference with curriculum and approach.
- Comparing academic results - BHAS compared to like schools and surroundings, including charters.
- Collaboration with ISD.
- Information on teaching staff – comps with other districts like Benton Harbor.
- Teacher effectiveness rating is unclear.
- Discrepancies in attendance practices and data.
 - Data on students who leave and then return.
 - How are absences/tardies decided/documentated?
 - Count day

- Should consider the following as priority when it comes to student safety:
 - Behavioral health issues
 - Incorporate it into programming side
- Graduation rates, dropout rates and comparisons.
- Staff vs. contractual staff
 - Not just teachers
 - All staff are educators.
 - Superintendent has no control over contractual staff.
- Culture and learning environment – Is fundamental, the foundation? What happens without it?
- Teacher salaries should not always be comparable with surrounding communities. (For example, hazard pay duty)
- There is pressure to have more students attending the schools rather than focusing on the quality of education the students are receiving (Quality vs. Quantity).
- Teacher 90% effectiveness vs academic scores (at this point in the discussion, it was brought up that the data points don't correlate, the high-level of teacher ratings vs the low-level academic scores or the level of competencies of the students).
- After school programs – Data numbers. Are they all-inclusive?

III. Subcommittee Presentation: Budget and Finance

Facilitator Notes:

- There needs to be more clarity in terms of the sinking fund balance.
 - What is the balance?
 - How is the balance put together?
 - What is the fund being spent on?
 - How much is it?
 - What improvements is it being applied to?
 - Is it only \$5 million?
- Debt/deficit perceptions are not accurate.
- Grant Report Stats
- The student decline in enrollment is not the cause of issues. It is more of a symptom due to other factors such as:
 - economics
 - community factors
 - poverty
 - taxable value.
 - these systemic issues date back to the 1940s
- Need to get to the root cause of the issues.
- Need to make data driven decisions based off what the data is telling us.
- Utilization Grants
 - How does it impact with district finances?
 - Grants are specific.
 - Why do grant funds lapse?
- What are the population trends such as: birth rate, infant mortality, etc., for Benton Harbor, Berrien, surrounding areas, and in other states?
- What school activities are being provided?
- What is the transportation process to and from schools, and how do we make it more accessible/accommodating?
- How do we address safety in the financing?

IV. Subcommittee Presentation: Building and Facilities

Facilitator Notes:

- Need to collaborate with financing and other with public and private businesses. Everyone should be at the table/involved.
- Addressing the quality of life for students and the future of properties that they will be or are currently located in. What/Where is it currently being applied?
- Is there opportunity for unloading non-building land?
 - Vacant or inactive buildings?
 - Non-school buildings owned by the district?
- Discussed possible options to develop a financing plan regarding the buildings and facilities for the district, as needed.
- Requested list of all district-owned properties
- Have facility (capitol improvement plans) needs been prioritized?
 - What are the most critical?
 - \$33 million dollars?
- What is the marketing strategy if we move to sell buildings? (Plante Moran)
- Crossover between programming and buildings?
- How are buildings designed for safety?
- What is the new superintendent's vision?
- Provide plain language when explaining the building/land inventory's and listings. This includes expounding upon the locations, appraised values, and how they were determined.
 - What does it all mean?
 - Why does it matter?
- Why are some buildings very close together?
- Where are the decreasing population trends?
- What are the enrollment projections?
- Where is funding coming from? This is a big lift, with limited funding.

Additional Questions/Comments/Feedback from Subcommittees and Public

From Subcommittees:

- Budget analysis of peer districts to get to the why of the history of budget deficit.
- There was talk of what is owed to the district. This needs to be clarified.
- Can the state create “forgiveness” for some of the debt owed by BHAS?
- After school activities – programs such as the 21st Century Grant – What happened with this?
- Incorporate African American Studies.
- Come up with what we want to include in the operating plan.
 - Recommendations – less than ten. Have three to five with prioritization
 - Full advisory

From the Public:

- More books
- Diverse staff
- Improve facilities
- Religious opportunities

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Benton Harbor Area Schools

Proposed Timeline

(as of March 2, 2020)

March 2, 2020	CEAC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Planning Session Update- Proposed Timeline- Approval to move to next steps related to the Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan
March 17, 2020	Meet with BHAS Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Submission of Assessment and Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan
March 19, 2020	Meet with MDE and Treasury <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Submission of Assessment and Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan to MDE and Department of Treasury
March 24, 2020	Town Hall Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan
April 6, 2020	CEAC Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CEAC Final approval (by Resolution) of Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan
April 7-May 7, 2020	Final approval of Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan by BHAS Board, MDE, and Department of Treasury (Will require a Resolution from School Board and a letter of approval from State Treasurer and State Superintendent.)
May 7-Sept. 7, 2020	Begin Implementation

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Benton Harbor Area Schools

DATE

Superintendent Andrae Townsel
Benton Harbor Area School Board
870 Colfax Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Dear Superintendent Townsel and Members of the Benton Harbor Area School Board:

As you know the Benton Harbor Area Schools Community Engagement Advisory Committee was formed in October 2019 to address the financial and academic challenges of the District. In order to meet the goals of the Community Engagement Advisory Committee, four subcommittees were established, Community Engagement; Academics and Programs; Building and Facilities; and Finance and Budget. Each of the subcommittees were given specific areas to address as part of the assessment process.

The CEAC has completed its assessment and will present the assessment and the proposed academic and financial operating plan to you on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 5:30 pm in the Benton Harbor High School Library.

We envision this as a catalyst to restore the quality of life in the District and the continuation of pursuing a long-term vision for financial stability and a sustainable platform for growth in the District. We look forward to discussing the proposed academic and financial operating plan with you.

Sincerely,

Joyce Parker, Deputy State Treasurer
Community Engagement Advisory Committee Chair

Benton Harbor Area Schools Board

Assessment & Proposed Academic and Financial Operating Plan Presentation

Agenda

March 17, 2020

- I. Introductions
- II. Video
- III. Purpose of Meeting
- IV. Review Proposed Timeline
- V. PowerPoint Presentation
- VI. Questions/Comments