

Jackson County School District

Update – July 14, 2020

Superintendent: Dr. John D. Strycker



School Will Open as Scheduled August 6th

Board Moves Forward with In-depth Facility and Demographic Study and Reviews Budget

The Jackson County School District Board of Education held their regularly scheduled board meeting last evening in the district board room. Highlighting the meeting was a review of the district’s return-to-school plan and the approval to proceed with an in-depth facility and demographic study.

“We feel strongly that our students need to return to school in as normal an environment as possible,” said Superintendent Dr. John Strycker. “We will make accommodations for students who have compromised health issues or their family members. We are also supplementing our building nursing staff and requiring daily monitoring of student temperatures,” added Dr. Strycker.

During the board meeting, Strycker referenced the district COVID-19 Q & A which is typically sent out to the community on a weekly basis. “I encourage our community to reference the document as we make our final plans to return to school,” Dr. Strycker said. The document can be found on the district website at www.jcsd.ms and on the District Facebook page. Dr. Penny Westfaul, Director of Curriculum and Central Office Administration, also briefed the board on the district’s return-to-school plan and policy decisions that will need to be made during the month of July. “School and district leaders are working diligently to develop a back-to-school plan that is both practical and safe,” stated Dr. Westfaul.

Adding to the discussion, Dr. Strycker noted, “Our 25 to 30-member administrative team, who cares deeply for our students, has deliberated the past four months on a weekly basis on most every issue related to COVID-19 and feels that our students need a sense of normalcy in their lives; returning to school is a big part of that. We hope our community trusts that we are doing our best during these unprecedented times.”

The board also approved the contracts to proceed with both an in-depth facility study and demographic analysis. As part of a district-wide facility/bond project, the board approved to proceed with Jacobs for the Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) and Frontier Gulf Coast for a comprehensive socioeconomic profile and data analysis study. “Our potential facility bond plan will be data-driven and needs-based. While we understand that spending money on facilities can be emotional, we are doing our best to make solid data-driven decisions. Therefore, we want as much reliable data as possible as we craft our plan working with our community,” said Board of Education President, Troy Frisbie.

The board was also presented a Budget Hearing for FY21. Dr. Strycker and the board were pleased with the financial numbers presented to them by District Business Manager, Ryan Earley. The district is looking to end FY20 with a fund balance (money in the bank) of 18% to 20% (\$13 -\$15 million) which is financially healthy by school business standards. However, Mr. Earley did point out that even though the district is financially strong at the present time, there is a “budget deficit” moving forward. Looking ahead, the district is conservatively projecting a FY21 ending fund balance of 13%. “FY21 projected revenues are less than projected expenditures, and the district cannot maintain a budget deficit using fund balance over the long term,” stated Mr. Earley.

If anyone has questions or concerns, please call Superintendent John Strycker at 228-283-3000.