YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACADEMIC DISTRESS COMMISSION

Members:
Dr. John Richard
Selina Cotton
Dr. Maria Hoffmaster
Dr. Ben McGee
Anthony J. Farris, Office of the Attorney General

YADC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020 ~ 4 P.M.

ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING
https://youngstown.zoom.us/j/96340109117?pwd=STZ2eTc1RjlwNGxZeVR2ZVRwOTBYUT09
Meeting ID: 963 4010 9117 Passcode: 179994 Phone: 13126266799

I. The Youngstown Academic Distress Commission meeting was called to order by Dr. John Richard, YADC chairman at 4:01 p.m. via zoom video conference on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

II. Roll Call - Members present: Dr. John Richard, Dr. Maria Hoffmaster, Dr. Ben McGee

III. Dr. Richard opened the meeting and thanked former YADC member Jennifer Kluchar for her contributions to the commission. He also addressed recent statements from the Youngstown chapter of the NAACP which referred to the academic progress of African American students and closing the achievement gap. To clarify and address the matter, several Ohio Department of Education representatives will provide information during the Youngstown school board meeting at 6 p.m. following the YADC meeting. He shared that through the state of Ohio and Ohio Department of Education the ESSA plan (Every Student Succeeds Act) focus is about ALL students reaching proficiency. In looking at subgroup data, the goal is to reduce the achievement gap, regardless of what it is. Every subgroup is different, so if the proficiency baseline data is lower, the gap will be higher in reducing the achievement gap.

IV. Approval of November 24, 2020 meeting agenda

Roll Call Vote
Motion by: M. Hoffmaster, Seconded by: B. McGee
Ayes: J. Richard, M. Hoffmaster, B. McGee
Nays: None
Motion carried

V. Approval of August 21, 2020 meeting minutes

Roll Call Vote
Motion by: M. Hoffmaster, Seconded by: B. McGee
Ayes: J. Richard, M. Hoffmaster, B. McGee
Nays: None
Motion carried
VI. Oath of Office - Attorney Anthony Farris, of the State of Ohio Attorney General’s office administered the oath of office to Youngstown School Board of Education teacher representative appointee, Ms. Selina Cotton as a Youngtown Academic Distress Commission member. Dr. Richard officially welcomed Ms. Cotton to the YADC. Ms. Cotton briefly shared her background as a 11th and 12th grade teacher at East High School and a graduate of Youngstown City Schools. She has been an employee of the district since 2001. She thanked the school board members for the opportunity and expressed her gratefulness to represent the teachers of the district.

VII. The meeting continued with the announcement of a tentative agreement with the teachers’ union. Dr. Richard provided the purpose of YADC which is to 1.) To hire the school district Chief Executive Officer and 2.) Approve/Update the district improvement plan annually. The goal of today’s meeting is to discuss the district improvement plan that will be presented by CEO Jennings for possible adoption.

VIII. Discussion of the District Improvement Plan – CEO Justin Jennings, presented the YOUprint2030 plan, please refer to meeting artifact “YOUprint 2030 Strategic Plan.” YADC Members discussed SWOT (Strength Weaknesses, Outcomes, Threats) Analysis/feedback, ongoing teacher stakeholder check-ins, diversity, inclusion and equity within curriculum team/district leadership team, cultural competency, PBIS and fidelity, district textbook council, technology classes to prepare for the future such as computer programming and keyboarding, climate and culture, attendance plan, and student advocates.

Presentation highlights of the plan that were shared included the following:

- Page 12 – SWOT Analysis - Stakeholders meeting feedback from district teachers, staff and community stakeholders.

- Page 20 – Strategic Plan 4 focus areas over the next 5 years:
  1. Improve Academic Performance
  2. Create a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion and excellence
  3. Improve school-community relations, communication and partnerships
  4. Create a positive school environment that encourages responsibility

- Page 21 – Improve Academic Performance
  YCSD One Plan Snapshot was briefly shared, please refer to the document hyperlink located on page 21. The future goal is to combine the district improvement plan which is mandated by the Ohio Department of Education with the district strategic YOUprint 2030 plan. The district strategic plan is in alignment with the One Plan. The district’s goals within the one plan snapshot are literacy, math and science, climate and culture.

Page 26 - Create a Culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Excellence
The goal is to create a diversity, equity and inclusion plan. Joseph Meranto, District Superintendent shared information about the creation of the diversity committee and sub committees which included - academic performance, textbooks, history and cultural literature, to insure that ALL students are getting what they need, no matter what.
Climate and Culture within buildings, making sure building are welcoming to everyone.

Talent and leadership – recruiting and hiring diverse staff. Along with professional development such as the antiracism workshop presented by the Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past Students.

Accountability and engagement - Making sure we are accountable to our district stakeholders making sure things are equitable and fair.

Health and wellness – Providing health services and good nutrition to our scholars, and also learning good nutrition.

Superintendent Meranto shared that within four months, the committee has accomplished a lot. The district is learning what we can do to make things better, addressing the whole child should be the model for this area. The focus for the diversity committee is for the district at this time and then expand in the future to the community. Superintendent Meranto, shared that K-12 surveys regarding equity will be shared to learn how to move forward in response to Dr. Richards’ requested for committee to continue to work with and involve stakeholders. Scholars maybe able to participate with the committee once COVID19 is under control and the possibility of YADC members.

3. **Improve School – Community Relations, Communication and Partnerships**

CEO Jennings expressed that the district is learning the best methods of communication to stakeholders such as district parents and members of the faith community. The district is continuing to work with the various district partners and the city of Youngstown Mayor. CEO public update monthly meetings are still occurring to provide information to district stakeholders.

CEO Jennings ended the presentation and stated that the plan is created, but we must implement. We have to move this work forward, it is what is best for the scholars and not so much for the adults. CEO Jennings and YADC members discussed that going forward the meeting agenda will focus on specific areas of the district strategic plan. YADC members, CEO Jennings and Chief Academic Officer, Christine Sawicki continued to discuss climate and culture, attendance plans, student advocates responsibilities, determining the in-service needs of the district staff, student development, and infrastructure and scheduling. In the future, joint meetings maybe established to share district updates so that everyone is working together.

IX. **Commission Action:** Motion for the Youngstown Academic Distress Commission to adopt the “YOUprint2030” district improvement plan.

**Roll Call Vote:**
Motion by: M. Hoffmaster, Seconded by: B. McGee
Ayes: J. Richard, S. Cotton, M. Hoffmaster, B. McGee
Nays: None
Motion carried
X. **District financial update**
Dr. Richard clarified the purpose of the Financial Advisory committee which is a subgroup of the YADC. Dr. McGee and Dr. Richard thanked the committee members and shared that their agenda and meetings are comprehensive.

Arthur Ginnetti, III District Treasurer/Chief Executive Officer shared the district Five (5) year forecast fiscal years ending 2021 through 2025. He provided a detailed snapshot in time of the general fund forecast with focus on tax renewal levy. He highlighted detailed breakdown revenues, expenditures and changes in Fund Balances for fiscal years ended 2018, 2019, and 2020 actual. YADC members continued the meeting with questions about assumptions, federal funding, purchased services and implementation of plan with finances. Dr. McGee commended Mr. Ginnetti and CEO Jennings for their detailed information, time and attention made to the purchased services line item.

XI. **Chief Executive Officer Report**
CEO Jennings thanked the Youngstown community for passing the tax levy and the support from the school board. He announced that an individual has been hired to build the district Arts program and that the district is developing partnerships with organizations to support the Arts. He shared that the YOUCare clinics at this time are for scholars, staff and employees. At the time of the meeting, due to several COVID-19 positive tests within the district’s athletic programs, CEO Jennings suspended all athletics for the safety of all. Hopefully athletic activities can restart in January. Also, as a precautionary measure, the district food service department and weekly food distribution has been suspended because of an increase of positive COVID-19 test within food service department.

CEO Jennings provided an update on the teacher contract negotiations. He announced that there is a tentative agreement of the contract and that district leadership was able to negotiate and reach an agreement without the use of attorneys. He thanked Mr. Ginnetti, Mrs. Sawicki, Mr. Batchelor and Mrs. Yosay for their work on the contract agreement. The agreement will insure that district teaching staff will be taken care of as best as possible for their tremendous work with our scholars. Larry Ellis, Youngstown Education Association provided brief remarks that he was glad to come to an agreement that would move the district forward on both side. CEO Jennings extended a thank you to Ava Yeager, Chief of School Improvement, Tiffany Sedlacko, Director of Assessment and Accountability and Linda Yosay, Chief of Human Services for their ongoing work. Dr. Richard thanked the school board and everyone for their work and teachers in particularly for their dedication and sacrifice.

XII. **Acknowledgement of public participation comments submitted prior to meeting via email or written form.** Public Comments were received from:

Tammy Shingleton, District Parent: Expressed concerns regarding district high school athletic programs at East and Chaney, student support and overall communication to parents.

Angelo Perruzzi, Jr., district employee and concerned citizen: Expressed questions regarding the repayment to the U.S. Department of Education for 2016/17 special education program funding, annual payment to GeoStar Professionals, the district remitting bank confirmation to financial institutions by only reflecting district federal tax identification number, his suggestion of utilizing students’ grandparents as community stakeholders, the function of the YADC financial advisory committee and Kirwan Institute Study of race and ethnicity/NAACP comparison of Steubenville City School District and Youngstown City School district and the question of racism and racial disparity within the Youngstown City School District.
Jennifer Kluchar, district teacher and former YADC member: Expressed her views regarding the support of all district scholars’ caregivers and families, she addressed misleading information from the local chapter of the NAACP regarding student achievement, poverty and racism, she also provided an in-depth analysis, research data, and information on student achievement and data comparisons of scholar achievement and data in Youngstown, Steubenville and Canfield.

XIII. The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

*Roll Call Vote*
Motion by: M. Hoffmaster, Seconded by: B. McGee
Ayes: J. Richard, S. Cotton, M. Hoffmaster, B. McGee
Nays: None
Motion carried