

Mountain Home School District No. 193

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
 SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

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MHSD Regular Board Meeting – Public Input Request Form. All forms must be received by the Clerk of the Board no later than 12 noon the day of the board meeting either electronically or by mail.

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Chairperson/Vice-chairperson. Chairman Abrego convened the regular and livestream meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Chairman Abrego, Vice-Chair Binion, Trustee Donahue, Trustee Monasterio, Trustee Knox

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. GOOD NEWS – None

Each month, the school board encourages students, teachers, administrators, and board members to recognize the notable activities, events, celebrations, student achievements & awards, etc., that have occurred in the school district or in the community.

- II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA OR ADDENDUMS** – Chairman/Vice-chairman. Prior to the consent agenda items, Chairman Abrego asked if there was an addendum to the agenda, or if there was anything to add or remove. Chairman Abrego called for a motion to approve or amend the agenda. Trustee Binion moved to approve the agenda as published, with a second from Trustee Knox. Agenda approved.

- III. **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS** – Board of Trustees. Chairman Abrego called for a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Trustee Donahue moved to approve the consent agenda, with a second from Trustee Binion. Motion carried.

A. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF AUGUST 18, 2020.

B. FINANCIAL REPORTS

C. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

D. PERSONNEL

- IV. **DELEGATION** – None

Any group wishing to be a delegation must submit a letter to the Superintendent Administrative Assistant/Clerk of the Board no later than the Tuesday prior to the next regular board meeting; the letter must include the reason for asking to be a delegation.

- V. **PUBLIC INPUT** –

Those wishing to speak on any topic of their interest should complete and submit to the chairperson the [MHSD Regular Board Meeting – Public Input Request Form](#). All forms must be received by the Clerk of the Board no later than 12 noon the day of the board meeting either electronically or by mail. Individuals will be allowed a maximum of three minutes to present their views. The board will not hear complaints against school district employees by name or against students by name in open session. If you have a complaint against personnel or students by name, you need to schedule an appointment with the Superintendent. There will be no action taken at this time, but action on a problem area could be scheduled for a subsequent meeting of the board.

- A. Kathi Holland – MHJH Teacher – asked the board to open the schools for in building learning. She stated that kids aren't getting their work done and some of the kids aren't even coming to the two days of school we currently have. She said she needed to see the kids' faces to make sure that they were engaged and

because she missed seeing their faces. Mrs. Holland stated that kids learn better inside the classroom. Chairman Abrego asked if the reason for the lack of work was due to poor internet connections in Mountain Home. Mrs. Holland responded that it wasn't an internet issue, it was that students and parents weren't checking their agenda and parents were having trouble checking their kids progress, especially if there were multiple children at home. She added that it is hard for parents to manage their time and to also make their children do their school work. Trustee Monasterio mentioned that this is a new instructional format and asked her for her experience with adapting to the new format. Mrs. Holland said that she is learning everything, and she also makes videos for her students to view online and she makes interactive learning activities. Trustee Donahue said that this new normal is difficult for teachers in educating their students and she commended them for their work.

- B.** Cyndi Cook – MHHS Teacher – also asked the board to open the schools so that kids could attend in person all five days. She said her concerns are that the kids are not engaged, and the frustration levels are making it overwhelming for both teachers and students. She said that at the high school level, students are going to their jobs, they are exercising, etc., and other activities in place of signing into class and doing their school work. Mrs. Cook stated that by increasing the amount of days students could physically go to class would lessen their frustrations and then hopefully raise their engagement. She considers in-person human interaction very necessary to students, students' engagement, and students' emotional state.

Chairman Abrego asked both teachers how they thought the wearing of masks and social distancing with the students was going. Both teachers replied that the kids have been really decent and compliant with both.

Discussion continued on disinfecting after each class, the added burden to teachers to disinfect, the importance of students being able to both listen to and see teachers mouths, especially regarding languages and languages are difficult to teach if students can't see how the mouth is shaped to formulate the word(s); MHJH students help teachers disinfect the classroom; they both want their students back inside the classroom; etc. The board thanked them for their input.

VI. **REPORTS –**

- A. MOUNTAIN HOME AFB UPDATE – MHAFB Liaison.** Mr. Niksich had nothing to report and was appreciative of the board meeting being live-streamed. He said that military parents would prefer schools to be in the green, but they understand the reasons why we are in yellow. He added that the parents are really appreciative of the teachers and they sympathize with the teachers' complications and frustrations.
- B. COVID19 UPDATES/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – James Gilbert.** Superintendent Gilbert reported on the enrollment, the district is about 280 kids down from last year. This will cause issue come spring and funding. The SDE is calculating an additional 3% in funding cuts, and we will no longer be protected regarding enrollment.

Superintendent Gilbert reported that our primary grades K-5 is the area where some students have not reported in anywhere, so we have to assume that parents are home schooling or enrolling in some other online school. He informed the board that this same information is also being reported in other school districts such Boise and Nampa. Boise school district is down about 1,000 kids and West Ada is down about 700 kids. Superintendent Gilbert mentioned that we will have to watch enrollment numbers throughout the school year as it could affect our budget.

Superintendent Gilbert reported on some COVID updates. He said things have gone relatively well these first few weeks of school. The Hybrid model has allowed us to do some things that other school districts haven't. How and when kids come back to school will depend on the science. When Twin Falls went back to school last week, they ended up with about 300 students and staff in quarantine due to COVID, and they had a mask mandate in place, but their kids were all on campus. Again, we need to follow the science, wear masks, and social distance. CDH recommended that we remain in the yellow category, and right now we can safely spread kids out in classrooms; if we go green, we cannot social distance. A very lengthy discussion began on the science; on masks vs shields; since teachers are already 6'ft from the students give teachers the option of wearing a mask or a shield; the possibility of increasing enrollment by not having the mask mandate; the importance of students seeing and hearing teachers; how the CDH keeps changing their matrix to determine the color category; the conflicting, contradictory,

and ever-changing data coming from the CDH and CDC; inferred struggling students and teachers; what information or guidance is the district passing out to teachers regarding students; are teachers teaching to their full potential; giving this school year platform a chance since it is so new; for every parent and teacher who want the kids on campus there is an equal number that want the hybrid instruction; we cannot make decisions outside of science; the supposed politics influencing decisions and data; the constantly adapting science; the lack of parental support and engagement for many students; the possibility of the board amending the plan; adding number of days for students to be on campus and the burdens that creates for teachers and the conflicts of social distancing; etc.

Superintendent Gilbert reminded the board that they can change the plan, but they needed to remember that the board directed the plan be drafted with staff input, so it would need additional staff input to change it. He added that district, building administrators, and teachers are worried about student emotional and mental health as well.

Discussion continued including the numerous education options for parents to decide on how to best educate their kids; the overwhelming attitude of not adding one more campus day because teachers do not have the time and they need those Fridays to create their assignments, agendas, videos, contact their students, be available to students, and we do not have the building capacities to house all the kids on campus social distancing wise; the amazing job our teachers are doing; give the current educational platform time; parent accountability; revisit the plan soon and get staff input how to best tweak the plan; etc.; the possible liability to school districts of making decisions that aren't in line with the state and CDH requirements; etc.

Additional discussion continued on COVID; the Governor; the State of Idaho; teachers; legislative decisions and special sessions; sending out employee surveys; legal interpretations on liability, negligence, State and CDH requirements, and state and CDH recommendations; etc.

Chairman Abrego said he's been told that what is working for administrators is not working for teachers and changes would cause administrators tons of work. He added that at some point the board might have to take things into our own hands and make decisions outside of the recommendations. Discussion on liability and negligence definitions began.

Chairman Abrego stated that kids, not all, are suffering, and teachers, not all, are suffering and we need to move fast and get the kids back into the buildings, so what do we need to do next to get this going and make the adjustments; if there is a way to get the kids back in school, let's do it; if not, then we won't.

Superintendent Gilbert asked do we make a decision based on the survey or based on the science. Chairman Abrego responded that the CDH has changed the matrix twice already and they are considering a third change, so I don't put much faith in a science that will probably change in two weeks.

Trustee Donahue mentioned that she wanted to know that the staff is being heard, so that those individuals with concerns make that decision to talk to someone, I want to know that they did talk to someone about their concerns and that someone was listening.

Superintendent Gilbert said he would have a discussion with his administrators to discuss with their staff on what works best in each building, what needs to be tweaked in each building, etc. I believe you are going to get a split on staying in the yellow hybrid or going green. He added that we have only been in school for a few weeks, we need to give the plan time for everyone to get used to it. We are still working out the bugs, but that being said, if we make changes, we need to make them slowly as to not disrupt the entire system. We need to pick a date, stick to that date, and let parents know that date so that they can adjust their work schedule. We also need to be thoughtful on how this will affect staff and their families. We have teachers who are in fear for their lives and we have teachers who have no concerns at all about COVID. Discussion continued on how to make changes; how the changes affect different staff, students, and parents; IDLA education; getting students back in school.

Chairman Abrego voiced his opinion that kids need to be back in school and that the district messed up a lot of people's lives in the fact that the district didn't even try to start in the green category, the district went straight into the yellow category; we didn't give parents a choice, we told them that they could sign up for IDLA only to find out that there were a limited amount of openings per district; etc.

Superintendent Gilbert responded that we can't make decisions based on personal preferences because if that were the case, we would all be back in school, and that by starting in the hybrid category has prevented our district from having a COVID outbreak. He mentioned that parents were in fact given options, they could go hybrid with us; they could sign up for IDLA, but many of them waited too long and IDLA was full, and of the parents who did enroll their children were angry because IDLA required a parent or guardian to be home during IDLA sessions; parents had multiple other online options for education that they could have looked into to enroll their kids, and some parents opted to home school, so they did have options. We know that the hybrid is inconvenient for parents, especially those who work and now the burden of daycare is on the parents; we know that currently the hybrid isn't quite complimentary to student's education yet. He added that as we progress in the school year, there will be plenty of opportunities to make changes to the plan. We will always have the "what if" moments and we will never satisfy every parent.

Trustee Monasterio said that this has been good dialog and we need to keep it up to help us get direction to make the best possible decisions for our district's students and staff.

To hear the entire board meeting and COVID discussion, please visit www.mtnhomesd.org/meeting-agenda-and-minutes.html.

VII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – None

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS** –

A. OUT-OF-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT APPLICATIONS – 2020-2021 – James Gilbert. Superintendent Gilbert requested approval of the open enrollment application for the 2020-2021 school year. The parents will provide transportation to and from school.

1. Sophia Williams for her elementary student, SES
2. Gisela Martinez for her two elementary students, West Elementary
3. Kristin Flack for her high school student, MHHS

Trustee Donahue motioned to approve the Out-of-District Open Enrollment Application as presented by Superintendent Gilbert, with a second from Trustee Binion. Motion passed.

B. DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION OF ACTIVITIES ATTENDANCE (ACTION) – Chairman Abrego/James Gilbert. Superintendent Gilbert asked the board to consider making exceptions to the allowable audience attendance numbers for senior nights. He felt it gave the seniors at least one opportunity to celebrate their being seniors.

Chairman Abrego began the discussion on the numbers currently allowed for audience attendance. He informed the board that there were two issues during the recent football games. He said the first issue was a parent, an adult man, at the gate who refused to wear a mask, he was constantly swearing, he cursed at the lady taking the tickets, and he was all around quarrelsome. There happened to be a cop at the game who calmed the parent down and the parent remained outside of the stadium. Chairman Abrego said that he too had a conversation with the parent and explained to him that his actions could jeopardize the audience attendance at future activities. He then explained the other issue and again it was an adult male, another dad refusing to wear the mask properly and when a staff member asked the dad to please wear the mask correctly, the dad became belligerent. He was asked to leave and escorted out by law enforcement.

Trustee Knox asked since we the board made the rules and have the rules posted, is there anything legally we can do to those who refuse to follow the rules. Why should we have to police the audience? Superintendent Gilbert responded that the board does have the legal authority to deny entry to anyone who doesn't follow the rules. He added that on the other side to this why should a person who follows the safety rules have to put up with those who refuse to follow the rules. Attendance at games and events is voluntary and if one cannot follow the rules then he/she will be asked to leave, and they could possibly be barred from attending any future events. He added that there are some places of business that are enforcing their mask mandates, but unfortunately here in Mountain Home businesses and city officials won't make the wearing of masks and social distancing mandatory. Schools are a public place, but that doesn't entitle the public to be in them. Superintendent Gilbert stated that the board governs the school

district and depending on the severity of the issue, a no trespass order may be given, and the person may not come onto school district property. He added that he thought only having two incidents wasn't bad at all.

Trustee Knox then asked why we don't just allow the stage four, 250 people allowed to attend, and put "Xs" on the seats to keep the 6'ft distance. Trustee Binion clarified that the stage four rule of 250 attendees was for outdoor events only.

A very long and extensive discussion began about the numbers of attendees that should be allowed; no set standards among school districts; no set standards due to the sizes of school districts and the sizes of the venues such as football stadiums and gymnasiums; some districts aren't allowing any attendees; there are no right answers; the rights of seniors to celebrate historically; etc.

Chairman Abrego stated that this pandemic from a student's perspective is this really stinks. Prom and graduation were cancelled for last year's seniors and now this year's seniors are being affected. He went on to give his thoughts on how the pandemic was affecting seniors and other students and how the board was making decisions that affects this year's seniors. We are ruining the senior's whole life.

Superintendent Gilbert said he agreed and as adults we know there is life after high school, but as adults, the board has to make decisions from the adult level that won't be popular with the kids.

The Board of Trustees continued their discussion on changing the allowable amount of attendees with the assumption that the kids are not social distancing anyway; they discussed their assumptions, beliefs, and opinions; discussed the difference between outdoor events and indoor events; they referenced pro sports and no fans; referenced college sports and no fans; how to best determine the number of attendees; how an increase in attendees could affect staff and other volunteers at the games; how to manage an increase in attendees; how adults should be able to follow the rules and those who don't will be asked to leave; masks mandatory or not and quit moving the target requirement on mask; the board governs school property and they require masks and 6'ft social distancing and those that won't follow the rules will be directed to leave; etc.

The Board of Trustees began another discussion regarding the numbers of attendees; how to determine the number of participant tickets and who gets a ticket to get into an event; how to manage unused tickets; discussed max capacity; etc. Chairman Abrego asked if there was any other discussion. Trustee Binion moved to allow 10% of the venue capacity of attendees with a second from Trustee Monasterio. Chairman Abrego asked if the board was even ready to make a motion yet. Discussion continued. Chairman Abrego stated that there was a motion on the table and asked for of vote of all those in favor of 10% of the venue capacity of attendees at all sporting events. Trustee Binion and Trustee Monasterio voted aye. Trustee Donahue, Trustee Knox, and Chairman Abrego voted nay. Clerk Whitman stated with the majority of the board voting not in favor of the motion, the motion did not pass.

Chairman Abrego then moved to allow 20% of the venue capacity of attendees at all sporting events. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. The Chairman opened it up for discussion. Trustee Knox wanted the percentage raised to 30%. Trustee Binion reminded the board about the logistics and to consider the impact on the staff and volunteers who work the events. Chairman Abrego amended his motion to allow 20% of the venue capacity of attendees at all sporting events, and each event participant would be allowed four tickets to give to whomever they choose. Superintendent Gilbert asked that the board include a statement that the percentage of attendees would be revisited and possibly adjusted as needed. Clarifying discussion began about the participant tickets and how to dispense any extra tickets; perhaps students would be offered tickets first and then the general public; discussed whether there were any liability issues; discussed social distancing and mask requirement, etc. Chairman Abrego again amended his motion, he moved to allow 20% of the venue capacity of attendees at all sporting events, and approve that each event participant would be allowed four tickets to give to whomever they choose, and any remaining tickets would be offered first to students and then to the general public, and keep in effect the mandatory wearing of face masks and the mandatory 6'ft distancing with the exception of family units, and the board would revisit the activities attendance venue percentage as needed. Trustee Knox seconded the motion. Trustee Donahue, Trustee Knox, and Chairman Abrego voted aye. Trustee Binion and Trustee Monasterio voted nay. With the majority of the board voting in favor of the motion, the motion passed.

To hear the entire board meeting and COVID discussion, please visit www.mtnhomesd.org/meeting-agenda-and-minutes.html.

- IX. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – None
- X. **ADJOURNMENT** – All business of the Board having been completed, Chairman Abrego called for a motion to adjourn. A motion from Trustee Binion to adjourn was seconded by Trustee Donahue. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

ATTACHMENT

APPOINTMENTS

Barden, Nina; Special Education Paraeducator, MHHS
 Blankenship, Holly; Title I Paraeducator, East Elementary
 Davis, Sedra; Media Lab Facilitator, West Elementary
 Hopson, Teresa; 7th Grade Assistant Football Coach, MHJH
 Meksch, Nicole; Special Education Paraeducator, North Elementary
 Murphy, Jennifer; Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant, West Elementary
 Teruya, Teri; Title I Paraeducator, West Elementary
 Zamora, Richard; Assist 8th Grade Football Coach, MHJH

RESIGNATIONS

Davis, Sedra; Media Lab Facilitator, West Elementary; effective: August 29, 2020
 Riley, Candace; Title I Paraeducator, East Elementary; effective: September 4, 2020
 Tibbitts, Jeffrey; Special Education Paraeducator, MHHS; effective: September 11, 2020

STUDENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS 2019-2020 SY

San Juana Martinez – Boise State University – August 25, 2020 – December 20, 2020 –
 East Elementary, Co-operating Teacher – Shana Hennessey, 2nd Grade
 West Elementary, Co-operating Teacher – Katherine Hudson, Pre-K

Chairman Abrego

Clerk Whitman