

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
OCTOBER 6, 2020  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE – ZOOM

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mountain Home School District No. 193 was convened at 7:40 p.m., October 6, 2020, via zoom, 470 North 3<sup>rd</sup> East, Mountain Home, Idaho, in said district, pursuant to authority provided by Title 74, Chapter 2, Section 74-202(4)(c)(6)(b) – Open Meeting (Special Meeting), Idaho Code, and pursuant to affirmation by the Clerk that notice of the special meeting had been given to each trustee and posted public notice as required by law. A copy of the Notice of a Special Meeting of School Trustees so posted follows:

**October 6, 2020**  
**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MOUNTAIN HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 193**  
**Mountain Home, Elmore County, Idaho**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

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<https://zoom.us/j/98380724200?pwd=K3FIZVB3MWdhdHIKcGliUHgrc2Z1UT09>

**Meeting ID: 983 8072 4200**

**Passcode: 498658**

<https://zoom.us/j/99939244509?pwd=MG9WdHVjZUNqS1QxV3o5VS9lZS8zZz09>

**Meeting ID: 999 3924 4509**

**Passcode: 919460**

**Dial by your location**

- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

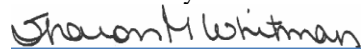
**Find your local number:** <https://zoom.us/u/adN4c7soz1>

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mountain Home School District No. 193, will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, at 7:30 p.m., via Zoom, Mountain Home, Idaho, in said District, during which the following business will be conducted:

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER (ACTION)** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman
- II. **DISCUSSION AND/OR DETERMINATION OF COVID19 SITUATION** – Chairman Abrego/James Gilbert
- III. **SCHEDULE NEXT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING** – Chairman Abrego
- IV. **ADJOURN**

This Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mountain Home School District No. 193 is called pursuant to Title 74, Chapter 2, Section 74-202(4)(c)(6)(b) – Open Meeting (Special Meeting), Idaho Code.

Dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2020.



Sharon M. Whitman

Clerk, School District No. 193

Mountain Home, Elmore, Idaho

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Chairperson/Vice-chairperson. Chairman Abrego convened the special meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:30 p.m., and explained that due to an erroneous zoom meeting link, the meeting wouldn't start until 7:40 p.m., to give everyone a chance to log into the meeting. He then informed everyone that with the COVID situation constantly changing, the Board felt it was important to have discussion meetings more often.

- II. **DISCUSSION AND/OR DETERMINATION OF COVID19 SITUATION** – Chairman Abrego/James Gilbert. Chairman Abrego explained that this meeting is nothing more than a discussion between the district office and the board to update the public on the status of COVID. He added that there seems to be a lot of rumors regarding this meeting because of an announcement of a special meeting. This is nothing more than a discussion to see where we are as a district. Chairman Abrego stated that as long as we're in this [COVID] situation, we plan to meet opposite of the regular board meeting to keep everyone informed. Chairman Abrego asked Superintendent to give an update of the COVID status.

Superintendent Gilbert began by saying that having extra meetings is a good way of keeping everyone informed on the status of COVID. He said that one of the things the media is focusing on is school data as it pertains to current COVID cases. We are being very cautious with the information reported because our students are protected by FERPA laws and our staff are also protected. Currently MHSD has had 13 positive COVID cases both students and staff and in several different buildings. MHHS has had about 120 students and staff that have been quarantined, with only six of the infections are active. Due to the tireless contact tracing that the administrators have done, we learned that none of the transmissions have occurred at school. What we are seeing are cases coming into the schools and not being transferred from the schools, so that should help make people feel more comfortable with the safety measures the school district has put into place. Superintendent Gilbert explained that high-risk exposures are when a person is within 6'ft of an infected person or exposed person and for more than 15 minutes. Those people receive a direct phone call from the principals letting them know that their child has been exposed to a potential COVID exposure and are asked to quarantine their child for the required 14-days. If a person is not within the high-risk exposure, but is in the classroom with the exposed person, those persons are sent a letter to let the persons know that they were exposed, but not at high risk of exposure, and to please keep monitoring for COVID systems. The district's process has worked efficiently with the social distancing and the requirement of wearing masks with the limiting of potential exposure from high-risk to low-risk exposure. He added that there has been an uptick in cases coming into schools in the last week, which is mirrored in our community.

Superintendent Gilbert stated that we are still in the yellow category. Elmore county would need 40 cases of COVID per week to go into the red category and the county was at 33 cases. We aren't seeing those exposures or transmissions at our schools. Even if the county were to go red, the guidance from CDH would vary on the transmissions we see from the schools. An example would be if Elmore went red yesterday, there would not be a change in our protocol because the transmission didn't occur in the school.

Superintendent Gilbert said that staff and administrators have done an amazing job with this pandemic. It's been a very stressful and tiresome time for staff and our staff have been unbelievable through all of this.

Chairman Abrego asked if the CDC has ever explained why they report confirmed and probable cases. Superintendent Gilbert responded that if there is an active case in a household and members are in close contact in that household, those members are considered probable; if they aren't infected, the CDC adjusts their numbers. Not every time is COVID transmitted, so the CDC assumes that if one household member is infected the rest of the household will become infected. He added that when a family member tests positive is typically the reason why we end up with a student or staff member being infected.

Trustee Monasterio asked if he investigations of the positive cases are satisfactorily deduced as affective. Superintendent Gilbert replied that administrators have done an amazing job with this. If they get a positive case on a student, they truly contact classroom teachers and students to help identify who those close contacts are. He added that he is very happy on how they are handling this. It goes back to our administrators are now in the roll of healthcare professionals and quite honestly, it's quite overwhelming at times for staff. In the 13 cases we have, we haven't had a single case that can be traced back to schools, so that tells us that they are doing an excellent job.

Trustee Knox asked what the protocols are for students that have been contacted that they have been exposed as well as what are the responsibilities of the teachers who have been contacted and are in quarantine. Superintendent Gilbert answered that anyone who is a high-risk exposure are asked to quarantine for 14-days (CDH requirements), and our parents have been awesome with following that protocol, as have our teachers who have been impacted. Trustee Knox asked if the quarantined students are able to participate in education online and could the quarantined teachers still provide instruction

online. Superintendent Gilbert responded yes, that is part of reason why we have that online component. Staff have bent over backwards to make this work.

Chairman Abrego asked if a student tests again in day 10 of quarantine and it's negative, could the student come back. Superintendent Gilbert said that currently the CDC guidance states the full 14-days.

Trustee Binion asked about the new testing kits being deployed to schools and whether administrators are expected to carry out the tests, and if so, would they receive training. Superintendent Gilbert said we haven't received any guidance on that, but it sounded as if the SDE expects administrators to do the tests. Discussion on testing and testing results in the schools continued.

Chairman Abrego mentioned the numerous emails received by the board and it was very heavy by staff and teachers to stay hybrid or go online and heavy on parents and grandparents to go live; there were some on both sides. He said that kids and parents are still struggling, and teachers are somewhat struggling. He also asked what if parents would sign waivers [not to sue the school district] thus more kids would come back to school and could schools open. Those parents who aren't comfortable with attending schools in person could go online and for those teachers who are uncomfortable with having more kids in the classrooms could have a plexiglass barrier and could live or stream the lessons; these are some ideas being tossed out by parents and grandparents. Superintendent Gilbert replied that we have had all sorts of ideas presented and be it right or wrong, everyone is going to have a different view on this, but at the end of the day, safety is the biggest priority. Safety is very different under the age of 15 versus over the age of let's say 50. Statistically, 51% of educators in America are considered high-risk and the demographics in our district mirror that and it takes on a very different meaning with safety from the staff level. It's different for kids regarding the chances of them being infected and the board needs to weigh the risks of infection for their staff, and that is really what should drive this. He said that he has had some of the nastiest emails and conversations with people that he has ever had in his entire career as an educator. It has truly brought out venom from people and we aren't going to all agree, but we as a community need to agree to be supportive of what we are doing. Discussion continued.

Superintendent Gilbert informed the board that they would need to be flexible and wary on if they pick an opening date, they would need to include something along the lines of opening is dependent on the infection rate within the community. He added that the board should leave it to the expertise of our staff. Discussion continued.

Trustee Donahue said she agreed with a lot of what Superintendent Gilbert said and she added that we aren't at a point to make educational decisions over the safety of students and staff, especially without staff input. She added that with the amount of input received has been great and there are ideas to discuss, but we are not at the point to set absolute deadlines when this pandemic is too fluid. We haven't had enough input or the knowledge of what could happen on decisions the board makes. Mountain Home School District has done an awesome job as far as getting school started on time, getting kids in [educational setting] to a certain degree with their teachers. Trustee Donahue mentioned that a lot of input given from parents and staff was regarding MHHS and adding another day of inbuilding instruction so students and teachers could have more contact with each other. We should definitely get input on improving our hybrid model, but we aren't ready for defined dates. The staff and most parents were awesome with their input on all sides of the argument. Trustee Donahue said that unfortunately, just as Superintendent Gilbert received, we all received those emails and conversations from certain folks that didn't follow the social guidelines of communication 101.

Trustee Knox agreed with much of what Trustee Donahue said. She added there are many parents who are concerned about MHHS schedule and only seeing teachers once a week. How do we make the MHHS hybrid schedule better? Superintendent Gilbert said the best path is to let the high school staff develop that schedule. He said the obvious way would be just have an A day and B day, but that fully impacts the CTE classes and students because they need a block type of schedule. Trustee Knox agreed that A and B days work for most classes, but it doesn't work for CTE classes; possibly have modified schedules for those CTE students. Superintendent Gilbert stated that he would have that discussion with Mr. Gunderson. Discussion continued.

Chairman Abrego asked if it's safe to assume that MHHS hasn't looked at changing their schedule. Superintendent Gilbert disagreed and said he would bet that it has been considered, and Mr. Gunderson could give a presentation at the next regular board meeting.

Trustee Monasterio stated that he was incredibly impressed of the work of our staff and teachers. He added that he is concerned about the safety issues for schools and community. He stated that he felt that the board needed to be cautious about making drastic changes too soon. Trustee Monasterio agreed with Trustee Donahue that we need to take time to develop plans and time to observe the situation as it develops in the community.

Trustee Binion echoed the safety concerns for both the students and staff by Trustee Monasterio and Trustee Donahue. He added we need to be methodical on how we go forward. Discussion on adding more time for students having more time with their teachers.

Trustee Knox wanted to clarify that she is not proposing any changes from the hybrid schedule at all, but MHHS is doing something different than the other schools by only seeing students once a week and there are different ways to help the kids out and it's hard on the kids to not see their teacher more than one day per week. She asked for MHHS to make changes to ensure students get to see their teachers at least twice per week. Discussion continued.

Chairman Abrego commended Superintendent Gilbert and staff on them having all this chaotic stuff going on with the pandemic and then to have the number of kids in the schools that we have with zero transmissions is positive. What we are doing in the schools is working and is encouraging. Superintendent Gilbert informed everyone that no matter the decision of the board, someone is going to be dissatisfied. Trustee Monasterio agreed that Superintendent Gilbert and staff have done a great job with all involved.

Chairman Abrego said with there being no other board input, the discussion is ended.

- III. **SCHEDULE NEXT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING** – Chairman Abrego. The clerk asked what date the board would like to schedule for the next board meeting. Trustee Binion suggested the first and third Tuesdays of each month with the first Tuesday being a special board meeting and the third Tuesday being the regularly scheduled board meeting. The board concurred with the first Tuesday of each month being a special board meeting and the third Tuesday of each month being the regularly scheduled board meeting.
- IV. **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 granted. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Chairman Abrego

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Clerk Whitman