



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Mead School District Board of Directors**  
**Thursday, August 6, 2020**

---

The Board of Directors held a Special Board Meeting on Thursday, August 6, 2020. The meeting began at 4:00 pm. This was a Zoom Call-In Meeting. Directors Green, Burchard, Denholm, Olson and Cannon were present. Also attending were Superintendent Shawn Woodward and Assistant Superintendents Jared Hoadley and Heather Havens. This meeting was recorded. The recording is posted on the Mead School District website.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Director Denholm made a motion to approve the agenda, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Green, responding to questions the board has received regarding why board meetings are not held in person, shared that per amended Proclamation 20-05, Governor Inslee has prohibited conducting public meetings in person and that, instead, public entities should provide options for the public to attend proceedings through, “at minimum, telephone access, and may also include other electronic, internet or other means or remote access, and provides the ability for all persons attending the meeting to hear each other at the same time.” If not for the legal mandate set forth in this proclamation Director Green shared the board would be holding in-person public meetings. Director Cannon thanked Director Green for addressing this concern.

Superintendent Woodward shared that more than 400 individuals were listening to the board meeting. In the future it is hoped meetings will be available for real-time viewing on Facebook Live.

**II. Resolution 20-7**  
**District Reopening Plan**

For the benefit of those attending remotely, Superintendent Woodward shared that at the July 20<sup>th</sup> school board meeting the district shared its draft reopening options. The reopening options being presented at this meeting incorporate revisions recommended by the board on July 20<sup>th</sup>. He additionally shared that, following the board’s approval of a reopening plan, the district would be hosting a number of webinars to share reopening details/protocols and answer questions.

More than 70 individuals spent hundreds of hours to develop the options being presented. There was a *Steering Committee*, led by Superintendent Woodward, plus four individual task forces: *Special Education* (led by Suzanne McKibbon, Special Services Director), *Operations & Safety* (led by Dr. Jared Hoadley, Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent), *Secondary* (led by Mt. Spokane Principal Darren Nelson) and *Elementary* (co-facilitated by Midway Principal Christine Spinnell & Shilo Hills Principal Lisa Horn).

Teaching & Learning Assistant Superintendent Heather Havens and Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley presented the details/protocols of the reopening options. The presentation included a review of:

- Guiding Priorities
  - Health, Safety, Well-Being
  - Engaging Learning Activities
  - Social Emotional Learning, Relationships & Equity
  - Flexibility to Move Between Stages
  - Options to Meet Family Readiness
  - Professional Learning for Staff
- Guiding Agencies
  - Governor's Office
  - Washington State Department of Health
  - Washington State Department of Labor & Industries
  - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
  - Spokane Regional Health District
- Guiding Input
  - Parent Surveys
  - Task Force Members

A three-stage reopening plan was shared (Option 1). By design this three-stage plan provides for flexibility to move between stages. Every stage provides high levels of learning for all students in safe environments and every stage includes extra support for students furthest from educational justice with face-to-face assistance and help. The three stages are:

- Continuous Remote Learning
  - Elementary
    - Highly structured day
    - Morning & afternoon whole class meetings
    - Morning & afternoon academic workshop blocks
  - Secondary
    - Highly structured 3-period block day
    - Periods 1-3 on Monday & Wednesday
    - Periods 4-6 on Tuesday & Thursday
    - All periods on Friday
- Rotating Hybrid Learning
  - Elementary
    - K-5 attend every day
    - Strict safety protocols in place
  - Secondary
    - Highly structured 6 period day
    - Group A attends Mo, We & every other Fr
    - Group B attends Tu, Th & every other Fr
    - Students furthest from educational justice will likely attend more days for additional support
- Daily Face-to-Face Instruction
  - Elementary
    - K-5 attend every day
    - Strict safety protocols in place
  - Secondary
    - 6-12 attend every day
    - Strict safety protocols in place

A second option for secondary students would be online distance learning. This is designed for families not yet ready to return to any sort of in-person instruction. Students would access classes online and learning would be self-paced.

The presentation additionally included a very brief review of *Safety Protocols*, *Nutrition Services*, *Transportation Services* and *Technology Services*. Each of these areas was covered in detail at the July 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Superintendent Woodward shared that both Governor Inslee and the Spokane Regional Health District have recommended schools in areas, such as Spokane County that are considered “high risk”, begin school remotely. These are recommendations not mandates like last spring.

On August 3<sup>rd</sup> the district sent a survey to families asking them to indicate their preference for the start of the school year . . . some form of face-to-face instruction or remote learning. Included in this survey was a quote from Dr. Bob Lutz of the Spokane Regional Health District with his recommendation that schools start with remote only instruction. 4,632 families, representing approximately 78% of district students, responded to the survey with 69% indicating their preference for some sort of face-to-face instruction. Assuming a student population of 10,545 it is estimated, if given a choice, 7,500 would attend for some sort of face-to-face instruction and 3,045 would select an at home option.

Questions from the board included:

- **Liability** (from Director Olson) - Has Clear Risk been contacted and, assuming all safety protocols are followed, given permission to move forward with all options as presented? Answer: Yes, the district has received clearance from Clear Risk to move forward with any of the presented options.
- **Implementation** (from Director Denholm) - Can the district successfully implement all of the presented options? Answer: The district cannot safely open for 100% face-to-face instruction at all grade levels (K-12) and follow all recommended safety protocols. However, the district can implement the hybrid A/B rotating face-to-face option at the secondary level and 100% face-to-face at elementary.
- **Outbreaks** (from Director Cannon) - What happens if there is a COVID outbreak? If a face-to-face option receives board approval will the district open and then close again? What is our ability to spot cases? Answer: The district will respond following Spokane Regional Health protocols. Depending on the situation and contact tracing it could involve just a few students, one classroom moving to remote learning or an entire school. The presented three stage plan allows for flexibility to move between stages.
- **Substitutes** (from Director Olson) - If a teacher is exposed do we have substitutes available to cover classes? Answer: The district could certainly use a deeper sub pool. If there are times we don't have the necessary work force there could be disruptions.
- **Space** (from Director Burchard) - With 30% of families indicating they will access remote learning from home can we, especially at the elementary level, spread kids out more? Answer: At the elementary level some classrooms may need to move to another learning space particularly at 5<sup>th</sup> grade where the class size is 30 students. That could mean a shift to another building or moving to a larger space in the school such as the gym. Unless the district were to hire additional teachers close to 30 students would be assigned to each 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

- **Staff With Health Conditions** (from Director Burchard) - What about staff/teachers who cannot, for health reasons, teach face-to-face? Answer: Those teachers would be assigned to teach a remote learning class.
- **Serving All Students** (from Director Green) - How would we serve all students, those from single parent households and dual income families, if the only option is remote at home learning? What about essential workers? Answer: The district would look to partner with outside providers to help mitigate the impact. However, it would be a false statement to promise the district could help in all situations.
- **Staff Preference** (from Director Denholm) - Has the district surveyed staff to inquire about their preference for in-person or remote instruction? Answer: A recent staff survey did not ask about preference. It only asked about underlying health conditions. 9% indicated they have an underlying health condition. It is expected that number could grow.
- **Testing** (from Director Olson) - What is the turn-around time for a COVID test? Answer: Currently 3-10 days depending on volume and where it is sent. It is hoped expedited testing will be in place by the start of school that provides results in 12-48 hours.
- **First Diagnosed Case** (from Director Burchard) - What happens with the first confirmed COVID case? What if there are 3-4 cases in the first 30 days? When do we say we tried and it didn't work? Answer: It would be up to Spokane Regional Health to close a school or the entire district. They would help guide that process and would look at things on a case-by-case basis. The district's proposed reopening plan positions staff to transition easily between stages (all remote, hybrid face-to-face, 100% face-to-face).
- **Lap Tops & Connectivity** (from Director Green) - Do we have Chromebook devices for all students and the ability to provide connectivity for those who need it? Answer: Yes, each district student will have a Chromebook checked out to them and, using CARES dollars, the district is procuring hotspots to serve 250-300 families.

Board comments included:

- **Director Green** - This decision has kept her awake at night. Schools play a central role in the lives of our families. She expressed concern that 38% of nurses have school-aged children . . . if they have to stay home to help with school how does that impact the health care system? When schools are closed how does that impact the learning and social emotional health of our at-risk learners including those with learning disabilities? Daycare centers have remained open . . . if the district shuts down does that devalue their work?
- **Director Cannon** - Important the community understands the board has been deliberating about how schools will reopen for quite some time. He expressed concern around the tone of the reopening discourse that has included shaming and choosing sides. He shared that the science and data around the opening of schools is not always consistent and included COVID, flu and H1N1 statistics. Director Cannon acknowledged there is "lots to consider." He believes the district can provide families with flexibility by providing them with both a face-to-face option and a remote at home option.
- **Director Olson** - He has also lost sleep over the decision and has spent considerable time weighing the pros and cons. He is concerned parents would be in jeopardy of losing their jobs if there is not a face-to-face option. He is additionally concerned about the risk of student suicide. He indicated

he is inclined to vote for a reopening plan that includes the option for face-to-face as well as at home instruction.

- **Director Denholm** - He has done a lot of reading on the subject of reopening schools. Based on the fact that 70% of families would like a face-to-face option he is also inclined to approve a plan that includes that option.
- **Director Burchard** - Asked for clarification that there would be no extra-curricular activities offered if schools open for some face-to-face instruction (that was confirmed). He also asked how band, choir and PE would take place (Dr. Hoadley responded they would “look different” and that specifics are still being worked out). He acknowledged this is not an easy decision and that he is concerned about what happens when the first student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID. Many believe this is a political decision but for him it is about how to help Mead families and students. He expressed his support for a parent choice model indicating his willingness to “give it a shot . . . If we are wrong we will admit we were wrong.”

Director Green thanked each board member for their questions and comments. Director Green additionally shared she has considered the impact to staff and teachers if the district were to reopen for face-to-face instruction. She understands everyone’s risk tolerance level is different, adding that all professions have a certain level of risk.

Director Denholm made a motion to approve a fall 2020 reopening plan that offers two options for families. A daily 100% in-person learning option for grades K-5 and a rotating, A/B schedule, in-person option for grades 6-12, along with a remote on-line learning option for both elementary and secondary students. Director Burchard seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Denholm made a motion to approve Resolution 20-7, District Reopening Plan, as presented. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

A revision to the 2020-2021 school year calendar that would delay the start of the school year until September 14, 2020, to allow for time to implement the approved Fall 2020 Reopening Plan will be brought to the board for their consideration at the August 10, 2020, Regular School Board Meeting.

### **III. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

---

**President**

---

**Secretary**