

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE MARSHALL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020 AT 6:00 PM, @  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo\\_Dw2K8ptX5eFKauouPJZQ/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo_Dw2K8ptX5eFKauouPJZQ/)

PRESENT: DESMET, NICHOLSON, MIDDLETON, WILLIAMS, GAMBLE, LANKERD,  
LINDSEY, DAVIS, JONES

ABSENT:

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by President DeSmet.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Trustee Lindsey.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Moved by Lindsey, supported by Middleton, that the agenda be approved as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

President DeSmet called for any members of the audience to address the Board on agenda items only. Notes will be taken and questions will either be answered in Dr. Davis's presentation or at a later time via the MPS:Return to Learn webpage.

Andrea Nessel – Thanked the district for the great communication that is ongoing. Asked if only the teachers who have been trained will teach virtual.

Stacy Metz – She expressed frustration with the lack of details provided for MPS teachers to teach the 100% virtual option, and has concerns about the quality of the education. She felt the 3<sup>rd</sup> party option was dismissed too quickly.

Erica Isham – She is in support of starting the school year with everyone virtual only and feels it is best for the safety of all. She is concerned with how teachers will provide what is needed for virtual only students. She does like the 2:3 model if we are in person.

Lisa Loveberry – She feels more comfortable with virtual only, has concerns with what in person education looks like, and feels we shouldn't rush a safe start in person plan.

Elinor Marsh – She supports the entire district be all virtual to start the year. She expressed her gratitude for Dr. Davis and the administration to be flexible and make adjustments to the plan. She is happy to hear the Middle School is planning on utilizing the 2:3 model and the MPS is requiring masks for all K-12 students and following the strongly recommended items in MI Safe Start Roadmap.

### **BOARD TOPIC**

#### **RETURN TO LEARNING PLAN – REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Superintendent Davis – This has been an incredible process of understanding, input and discussion from administrators, teachers, staff, parents and the board. Our three main focuses for Return to Learning remain unchanged.

1. The health and well-being of our students, staff and teachers
2. A high quality education with highly qualified and certified teachers
3. Social and emotional learning and mental health for students, staff and teachers

Of the 56% of families that replied to the initial survey 76% want their students to have in person learning.

The Better Together Plan Draft for phase 4 and 5 was released on Monday, August 3, 2020 and includes 2 models

1. K-5, MOHS and MYCA students will be on a 4:1 plan for in person learning  
6-12 students will be on a 2:3 plan with cohort A and B
2. Remote only learning for all K-12 designed and taught by MPS teachers.

If we are moved back to Phase 3 all instruction will be taught by MPS teachers virtually using Google Classroom. All assignments and assessments are required and graded.

For Phase 5 and 6; based on data from the Calhoun County Health Department students will move to 100% in person learning. MPS will follow the health and safety protocols that have been established for the specific phases.

This plan allows for families to make the choice that is best for them.

The MPS Better Together: Return to Learn Plan Video was shared. This video was also shared with the State and kudos to Kelly Fitzpatrick and her team for a great job.

The Board has been given the Draft of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan and was reminded of the upcoming due dates. August 10 the plan will be presented to the Board for approval, August 17 the plan is submitted to the ISD, August 19, the plan is submitted to the State. Below are some key points of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

- Under policies and procedures: Calhoun County is part of the Kalamazoo Region which represents 6 counties. Calhoun County is doing well with under 3% positive cases
- Superintendents meet every 7 days with the Calhoun County Health Department
- For Phase 1-3: MPS will provide chrome books to all, establish wi-fi hot spots, provide parent and student tutorials on Google Classroom. Teachers will document student contact. Teachers will continue Google trainings.
- Phase 4: face coverings are required for all students and staff. Hand washing will be stressed. MPS facilities staff will work with the contracted cleaning company (Hi-Tech), the administration team to establish schedules for the sanitizing touch surface. We will also be checking and cleaning the ventilation system and upgrading air filters.
- Athletics will comply with the guidance published by MHSAA
- Health Screenings: MPS is working with the Calhoun County Public Health Department (CCPHD) to develop screening procedures for staff and students in accordance with all strongly recommended activities from the MI Roadmap in phases 4 and 5. All staff will be required to conduct a health self assessment prior to reporting to work and document that on a state website. Parents will be required to screen their children each morning before sending them to school.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS ON RETURN TO LEARNING PLAN

President Desmet - On August 10th the Board will vote on the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan as a whole document. President Desmet opened the floor for Board comments.

Vice President Nicholson

- She would like more information and details and a more definitive plan regarding the virtual only plan.

- Dr. Davis - the MTA and administration are still defining the plan. Scheduling and refining teacher's skill sets are being determined so that classes are taught with fidelity using certified and highly qualified teachers.
- She is worried that teachers will not be able to manage both in person and virtual classes at the same time and would like to have specific times for virtual classes
  - Dr. Davis - talks are still ongoing on how to deliver all courses as virtual classes and will not be live streamed due to privacy issues. Specific times are being considered for virtual classes
- Can some classes, specifically language classes, still be offered by a 3rd party vendor
  - Dr. Davis - we have offered 3rd party virtual classes for courses not offered by MPS in the past
- Dr. Nicholson has been watching data which shows that younger students are not passing COVID through daycare and have not been considered a cause of community spread. She encourages everyone to watch data for our local area and not be distracted by national data.
- She would like parents to opt in to either in person learning or remote only learning
  - Dr. Davis - there is a survey ready for release as soon as Board has confidence in the plan and approves moving forward.
- She stressed the importance of proper mask wearing and consistency amongst teachers with enforcing the requirement.
- She will support the plan to move forward but is requesting more details.

#### Trustee Lindsey

- Kelly Fitzpatrick and Becky Jones communication has been excellent on Facebook and responding to questions in a timely manner.
- Supports teachers having more training before school starts.
- He supports another survey and recognizes that what's best for one family is not what is best for all.
- He feels Calhoun County is currently at minimal risk but everyone needs to have a common understanding of what benchmarks will be used if there are positive cases
  - Dr. Davis - the CCHD has benchmarks that they will be monitoring and that if a threshold is hit the CCHD investigates to determine community spread and the next course of action. MPS will follow CCHD guidelines.
- He encourages administration to communicate weekly with staff with CCHD updates.
- He feels the plan can move forward but feels he needs more details before voting August 10.

#### Secretary Middleton

- She clarified that tonight's meeting was to provide more plan details and to continue to refine the plan before August 10 vote and asked when MTA would be meeting
  - Dr. Davis - the MTA meeting is upcoming and there are a lot of details that still need to be refined.
- When do families need to make a final decision on in person or remote learning
  - Dr. Davis - parents will have time after August 10 to make a decision and that building level forums will happen between the 10-17
- She supports the plan moving forward

## Trustee Lankerd

- Ironic that the Board can't meet in person but we are planning for students to be in person learning.
- Happy to see plan has been amended to include face masks for all at all times
- Questions the teacher comfort level with in person learning and being prepared to teach both in person and virtual.
  - Dr. Davis - there is anxiety with making the best decision for all. MPS has been consistent with safety being our top priority and is listening and modifying the plan as needed. We need to rely on our colleagues to assist and support each other.
- She acknowledges that she is against a 3rd party vendor for virtual and feels the MPS teachers are the best option for remote learning although scheduling does need to be a concern.
- Concerned with the lack of air conditioning and ventilation. Worried that students and staff will overheat in face masks.
- Concerned that special education students will not have all the services they need provided
  - Dr. Davis - that there is a subcommittee led by Jamie Rogers making sure all special education students needs are meet. All students with IEP's or 504's can attend 4 days of instruction in any building.
- At this time, she can support the plan moving forward but still require more details.

## Trustee Gamble

- Feels that there has not been enough information provided on the number of students for both virtual and in person and riding buses.
- She would like a more comprehensive survey of all students in the district and feels that plans and decisions cannot be made without that information
  - Dr. Davis - there is a fresh survey being released if Board gives approval to move forward which will include both in person and virtual options and busing needs.
- Do teachers have the option of choosing to teach in person or virtual
  - Dr. Davis - there is some choice especially if a teacher is in a higher risk category but the final decision has not been made
- Is there current data on the spread of COVID in daycare or summer school settings
  - Dr. Nicholson - is not sure how current the data is. There were three cases in Detroit during summer school, but they were in three different buildings. She does not feel that the data will be accurate for several weeks after in person learning resumes.
- Feels that teachers should screen all students every morning and not rely on parents
  - Dr. Davis - teachers and staff will be trained on symptomology and will monitor students throughout the day and that all buildings have non-contact thermometers
- Can the school calendar be adjusted
  - Dr. Davis - we are on a common calendar with other schools within the ISD
- At this time Trustee Gamble cannot support the plan to move forward

## Treasurer Williams

- He commends the administration, superintendent and the return to learn committee members on all the information that has been provided, and the options that have been offered to families
- Feels safety has been our top priority and that MPS's plan is farther along than other districts.
- He supports the plan and is comforting with moving forward

#### President Desmet

- Appreciates all of the work has been done by administration, teachers and staff. There is not one easy answer for all. Questions and concerns have been taken into consideration and adjustments have been made to the plan based on that input.
- The communication has been amazing.
- More data will be shared with Board as it becomes available.
- Supports the plan moving forward.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

President DeSmet opened the meeting for the public comment. Notes will be taken and responded to at a later time on the MPS: Return to Learning Website.

#### Tracy Haroff - MTA Co-President

- Appreciates Board questions and concerns.
- 3rd party virtual options have been used at the high school when a class was not offered or to provide more opportunities in a student's schedule.
- School will not look the same and will be an adjustment for everyone.
- MTA surveyed teachers and 82% felt MPS teachers should provide the virtual only option, although the majority felt uncomfortable with doing so.
- MTA feels that there should be designated teachers for K-5 virtual teachers.
- The MTA appreciates the confidence the Board has in MPS teachers.

#### Kelly Karen's

- Feels that there should be designated teachers for K-5 virtual only option.
- Concerned about the air ventilation and appreciates that those concerns are being addressed.
- Concerned with the ability to comfort, support and teach elementary students and maintain social distancing.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS FOR WHICH NO ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING**

There were no additional comments.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

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LISA MIDDLETON, SECRETARY

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LESLIE PARSHALL, RECORDING SECRETARY