

Minutes of Madison Special Meeting - PROPOSED

The Board of Trustees Madison District Public Schools

A Madison Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Madison District Public Schools was held Wednesday, August 12, 2020, beginning at 7:00 PM in the Virtual Meeting.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance - Led by Mr. Holcomb

2. Roll Call & Public fundamental with Public comments

Present: Mr. Holcomb, Ms. Kastle, Mr. Kimble, Ms. Ott, Mr. Pittman, Ms. Scott, Ms. Thompson

Absent: None

Public comments were made by:

Ivanna Sayajon

Linda Dempsey

Tara Gilmartin

3. Board of Education Action Items

A. Back to school plan

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve and adopt the COVID-19 Response and Preparedness Plan.

Public comments were made by:

Liz Malama (Zoom Chat)

Ms. Dorsey (Zoom Chat)

Plan was shared on the screen for all Board members to see and review. No discussion occurred.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: 7 Mr. Holcomb, Ms. Kastle, Mr. Kimble, Ms. Ott, Mr. Pittman, Ms. Scott, Ms. Thompson

Nays: 0

Motion passes 7-0.

4. Board Discussion on School Year Start. Full Virtual, or Virtual In-Person Combination

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the start of the 2020-2021 school year as discussed—Full Virtual.

Motion by: Mr. Holcomb

Support by: Ms. Ott

Discussion occurred. Ms. Thompson asked for a recommendation from the Superintendent. Mr. Abdulahad state that he would recommend for the first card marking, as a safety protocol, that we go virtual for all of our students. For as much as we think we are prepared, we cannot afford to risk a life right now. Mr. Holcomb asked for the results of the survey that was sent out. Mr. Abdulahad responded that the parent responses varied from building to building; no matter how hard we tried, we were not able to get responses back from all parents. There were a number of teachers that responded with the some risk factors that we are unable to disclose. Mr. Pittman wanted to reiterate that this is a major decision that is going to impact all of our families, financially, emotionally, educationally. This is definitely something that we do not need to rush through. Mr. Pittman stated that he always makes his decision based on the families. He stated that the Governor and the legislature are meeting on Saturday—could this possibly affect the decision that we make tonight. Mr. Abdulahad said it's possible the decision could be taken away from us if we revert back to Phase 3. Mr. Pittman stated that there are many nearby districts that still have an in-person option. We should offer whatever our families want. Ms. Ott asked Mr. Abdulahad for a rundown of what other districts are doing. He responded that Clawson is meeting tonight, Troy announced that they are doing virtual for the first thirty days, Lamphere voted last night to go virtual. He is pretty sure that all of the surrounding districts have already decided to go virtual or are voting in the near future. Ms. Scott stated that she has a child in the district and knows firsthand the failures our students went through in the spring. She state that if the Board is attempting to go all virtual, then the Board needs to adopt some expectations and rules for our Superintendent and our teachers:

- Ongoing training for teachers to teach virtual learning
- Continue to feed students while at home, and find ways to reach those students that can't make it to the school to pick up food
- Make it possible for teachers to be able to check their voicemails/emails from home when working virtually.

- All students have access to equipment and printed materials before the start of school
- All parents and students have access to instructional videos on procedures to teach use of technology and programs
- Weekly Zoom meetings as promised with the parents with the Superintendent
- Updates to the Board of Fridays from the Superintendent
- Measures put in place to ensure that all students are receiving the required educational guidelines
- Measures put in place for weekly teacher/student interactions to be documented and reported to the Board
- Policy and procedure manual on COVID-19 guidelines accessible to all teachers and faculty online and in hard copy
- Planned days that students can receive their specials for OT, PT in the building
- Teachers to address any students that are suffering from depression
- Make sure that our teachers, parents, and students know that they are not villains, but heroes--everyone is essential
- Bring joy back to our students—the Board needs to make decisions based on our students

Mr. Pittman stated that he has always been an advocate for our teachers, staff, and administrators, but he's also been an advocate for our families. The District is not in a position to lose any of our families. He stated that his recommendation is to try and accommodate them all, at least give it a chance until we find out that we can't. We should offer both in-person and virtual. Mr. Pittman stated that a lot of families need their students in school not just for educational purposes but because they have to work. They don't have the opportunity to teacher their kids. Mr. Kimble stated that although he agrees with Mr. Pittman that students need to be in school, we have to take into account that this decision affects not only our 1,000 students, but their families and grandparents, as well. It would be an absolute tragedy if we were to have an outbreak and lose a life. How can we not err on the side of caution at this point? We can at least make a decision and reassess every two weeks.

Public Comments were shared with the Board via Zoom Chat and Facebook Live Comments. Public comments were made by:

- A. Adrian
- C. Murray
- A. Nicole
- B. Johnson
- D. Miller
- B. Bedard

J. Martens
B. Thrasher
Michelle's iPad
M. Miller
A. Dorsey
R. Morrison
M. Rattee
R. Chambliss
L. Coleman
R. Turner
C. Renee
E. Doemer
S. Rix
C. Brown
S. Padilla
MHS Staff
R. Collins
C. Beaver
R. Easterling
Romaria

Ms. Scott stated that all board members should make a statement regarding this issue.

Ms. Kastle stated she will take into account everything she has learned from the plan and Mr. Abdulhad and all of the town hall meetings she has attended. She has faith that whatever decision the Board makes, no students will be left behind. She has faith and our Superintendent and teachers will do everything necessary to make sure no children are left behind without having to impose requirements or guidelines on Mr. Abdulhad or the teachers.

Ms. Ott stated that this is a tough situation; surrounding districts have already decided to go virtual. She recommends going virtual for at least the first quarter.

Ms. Thompson stated that the Board decisions may not always be popular, but decisions are made in the best interest of the children. If one student were to test positive in a classroom, she's afraid that it will be a disaster and the whole classroom will go down. We don't that whatever decision we make, everyone will not be happy. We can't expect the little ones to keep their masks on or follow protocols.

Mr. Holcomb stated that in his honest opinion, he doesn't think the pandemic is as bad as they're saying that it is. But we can't risk one student life or one teacher life. He wants to go virtual for the first grading period.

Mr. Pittman wanted to clarify that we would never make a parent send their children into the building if they didn't feel comfortable doing so; they will always have a choice. Mr. Abdulhad confirmed, but said that with a 50/50 model, the teachers would all have to come in. Mr. Pittman responded that that's their job.

Mr. Holcomb approved an update to his original motion; Ms. Ott approved the update.

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the start of the 2020-2021 school year as discussed—Full Virtual for the first quarter.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: 5 Ms. Ott, Ms. Kastle, Ms. Thompson, Mr. Holcomb, Mr. Kimble

Nays: 2 Mr. Pittman, Ms. Scott

Motion passes 5-2.

5. Board Comments

Mr. Holcomb – No comments.

Ms. Kastle – Thank you all for attending the meeting tonight.

Mr. Pittman – Thank you to all of the parents and the other board members, it was a tough decision. I wish we could have worked a little harder to come up with a plan that everyone would have benefitted from. Even though I may not have been in the Zoom meetings, I did watch through Facebook.

Ms. Scott – Thank you to the parents for all of their hard work and their sacrifices they're going through. My decision was based on families being able to make the best decision for them, I wanted to make sure we could service all families. I wish our district would have a better plan to accommodate all children. Although board members can say they have faith in the district, until they have to work with their own children and see what they're going through, they don't know what it's like for them. I hope that the promises made by the Superintendent are followed through. I want to thank the parents and teachers for doing the best that they can. Thank you Mrs. Dempsey for your comments, I, like Bill, am here for the students.

Ms. Ott – We are all here for the students and for the staff. Before we start getting upset with each other and the decision, it might be a moot point if the Governor

decides that everyone will be virtual. I am sorry that we could not accommodate everybody, but we have to do what we have to do for the students and for the staff. They also have families. I hope we can all work together and make this work.

Ms. Thompson – Our decision was based on what was best for not only the children, but everyone else they come into contact with.

Mr. Kimble – I have been really studying this and the instances of COVID-19 among children are on the rise. If it wasn't for the fact that we would require teachers to come in, possibly against their will, I wouldn't be against a choice. If one student or staff member dies over this, to allow it, when in three months this could all be in our rear-view mirror. I defend the decision that was made tonight and I'm sorry if it doesn't please everybody. Thank you to everyone for coming out and I hope everyone stays safe.

6. Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 PM.

Motion by: Ms. Ott

Support by: Ms. Thompson

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: 7 Mr. Kimble, Mr. Pittman, Mr. Holcomb, Ms. Scott, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Kastle, Ms. Ott

Nays: 0

Motion passes 7-0.