

**MONTROSE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

JANUARY SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
For Specific Purposes

January 31, 2022- 6:00 P.M.
Via Video Conference

(Visit our website at www.masd.info)

Mrs. Mary Homan
Board of Directors President

Mr. Christopher McComb
Superintendent of Schools

The Montrose Area School District Board of Directors Business meeting was called to order by Mrs. Mary Homan, Board President at 6:00 p.m. via video conference. There were 19 Panelists and 42 Attendees.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Mary Homan, Board President

II. ROLL CALL – Mrs. Connie Birchard, Board Secretary

PRESENT: Mr. John Wood, Mrs. Jennifer Strickland, Mrs. Gloria Smith, Mrs. Mary Homan, Mr. Richard Jordan, Mr. Douglas Wilcox, Miss Taylor Warner, Mrs. Gretchen Backer and Mr. Paul Adams

ADMINISTRATORS: Mr. Christopher McComb, Mr. Craig Owens, Mrs. Christine Kresge, Mr. Sean Castellani, Mr. Thomas Lonzinski, Mrs. JoAnne McCain, Mr. Terrence Whalen, Mr. Gregory Adams and Mr. Patrick Matthews

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS

Parent, Mrs. Donna McElwain wanted to know the results of the survey that was sent out to the community. Mr. McComb responded that there were 595 total responses. **First Question:** *Several neighboring school districts have recently changed their health and safety plans to allow close contacts to remain in school as long as they are asymptomatic and wear a masking during the recommended quarantine period. Would you support the Montrose Area School District adopting this same procedure?* 64% in favor with 36% not in favor.

Second Question: *At a recent board meeting, the administrative team asked the board to consider transitioning from synchronous (live) to asynchronous (work assigned through google classroom) when students are required to quarantine. Would you be in favor of this change?* 77% in favor with 23% not in favor electing to stay with our current model. Mr. McComb also answered Mrs. McElwain's second question in response to the Health and Safety Plan changes. The changes would allow students who are asymptomatic to stay in school during their quarantine period provided they wear a mask, those that choose not to wear a mask would have to quarantine at home for the 10 calendar days. We also made our plan for remote instruction to be asynchronous. We will use synchronous instruction only if and when the school district must transition to an entire remote situation district wide or individual building wide. The Health and Safety Plan can be viewed on the district webpage at www.masd.info.

Parent, Mr. Gregg Lewis requested clarification on the quarantine days. Mr. McComb responded asymptomatic close contacts can continue with in-person learning but will be required to wear a mask while at school for a 10-calendar day quarantine period. If the individual has tested positive or is a symptomatic close contact, then quarantine at home for 5 calendar days and return on day 6 if you have no symptoms or the symptoms (other than fever) are significantly resolving you can come to school wearing a mask until day 10. You can view the current quarantine procedures on the district webpage at www.masd.info.

Mrs. McElwain also wanted to know what we were doing for our students who may not be successful in an asynchronous learning environment, for instance students who are already struggling and/or failing classes. Curriculum Director, Mrs. Kresge responded that the teachers are using the Google platform and are capable of downloading the materials on-line and our new math program offers a dynamic classroom which provides students with video tutorials and checkpoints along the way, so if they are working remotely there are systems and teachers who can upload instructional videos to support learning. There is also one on one tutoring available to those students, so if they are struggling teachers have the capacity to meet with them, based on scheduled hours. Mrs. Kresge is hopeful that we have the capacity to stay in touch and engage and support our students along the way.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. None

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. A motion was made by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Wilcox to approve the revised Health and Safety Plan as submitted

ALL VOTING AYE

V. NEW BUSINESS - continued

- B. A motion was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Backer to approve a Shelter Agreement, as submitted, with the American Red Cross for building usage as a temporary refuge for disaster victims

ALL VOTING AYE

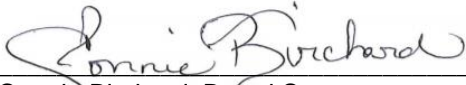
V. OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS -

Mrs. McElwain indicated that since we have already voted on the Health and Safety Plan, it is probably a moot point. She feels that overall, the revised Health and Safety Plan is a move in the right direction and a move in the way she would like to see things go and a lot of parents agree with that. But, with all due respect, our survey left something to be desired. She felt all the answers were yes and no and the survey should have had an option for other or community feedback. She also expressed that she is happy that we are moving toward a return to normal education and this is not our normal going forward. She also stated that there are several schools in our state that have no Health and Safety Plans in place. Board member, Mr. John Wood also expressed that's the direction we want to be and feels the Board has been pretty consistent about. We are definitely trending towards that and thinks the majority agrees that's what we are looking for. A debate was heard regarding what the next step is moving towards a return to normal. The Board agrees that Mr. McComb monitored the situation closely, and as soon as there was an opportunity to relax the protocols, he suggested that to the Board and the Board said yes. We are moving in the right direction and understands that everyone who's had the opportunity to be vaccinated has done so. As long as we are moving in the right direction, let's call it a win and then keep our ear to the ground.

Teacher / MEA President, Mr. Ryan Griffiths wanted to speak as a classroom teacher and as the teachers Union President regarding this move that we've made from synchronous to asynchronous remote instruction. Our teachers took this survey, not once, but twice and overwhelmingly our teachers who have experienced teaching in this pandemic for a year and a half felt that this move was beneficial to the vast majority of our students and not only was this concern shared by the overwhelming majority of our faculty this was also a concern that was shared by our administrators at the end of last year and going into this year. This move was beneficial, because we were seeing serious concerns regarding attendance and regarding students' academic progress in the synchronous remote model and, it was a very serious challenge for our teachers to balance the needs of our in-person learners with those who were remote and that was especially trying for our teachers at the elementary level. He wanted to stress that point and it was a collective decision, not just on the teachers' part, but a collective decision on the part of the educational professionals in our district. As a teacher, both as a classroom teacher and as an ap teacher for those higher students, our teachers are dedicated professionals and we offer robust supports and resources through our online google classrooms. They are consistently available whenever students need help or assistance and doesn't think that's going to change and he's not speaking for himself, he is confident in the dedication that our faculty has shown throughout this pandemic and will continue to be dedicated professionals and committed individuals who will be there to serve our students. The Board thanked Mr. Griffiths for a well-spoken dialogue and they appreciate what he and the other teachers and administrators stand for.

Mrs. McElwain also wanted to be clear that she does appreciate everything that is being done and when she speaks out against something or voice her concerns, it's not an attack on any one individual or the job that everyone is doing. She just wanted to be sure her concerns were heard. She thanked everyone for the job they are doing, even if she doesn't always agree with the decisions that we are making. She again wanted to know what are the next steps? Board member, Mr. Jordan responded that he's heard this question coming up repeatedly asking us to give some sort of advisory opinion on a fact situation which you cannot develop. When it develops, whatever it is, we will respond to it but short of having all the facts, there is no way we can answer Mrs. McElwain's question. An exchange of views was heard regarding this issue between the Board and a few other parents. Mr. McComb ended the deliberation saying that we need to look at the direction our country is headed and the direction our state is headed and look at things that are working in other schools and things that are not. There is not a concrete definite roadmap for us to get out of this. We will continue to take it one day at a time like we have, and he believes we are heading in the right direction. When those things point in the right direction, then we will make the recommendation to make the next step, but what those things are right now, he doesn't know what those are. He doesn't see that happening tomorrow or next week, but he sees us heading in that direction. So, when we get there, we'll know, but right now there is not a concrete roadmap that anybody has to get us out of this. He will continue to take it one day at a time and make the decisions, based upon the best information that we have and that's what he'll continue to do.

- VI. ADJOURNMENT** – A motion was made by Mrs. Backer, seconded by Mr. Wood to adjourn this special meeting at 6:53 p.m.
ALL VOTING AYE



Connie Birchard, Board Secretary

CM/cjb