

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2020
MHJH COMMONS

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Mountain Home School District No. 193 was convened at 6:00 p.m., August 4, 2020, at MHJH Commons, 1600 East 6th South, 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:


REVISED
August 4, 2020
NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MOUNTAIN HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 193
Mountain Home, Elmore County, Idaho

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, August 4, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., located at the **MHJH Commons (cafeteria), 1600 East 6th South**, Mountain Home, Idaho, in said District, during which the following business will be conducted:

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER (ACTION)** – Chairman/Vice-Chairman
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE REOPENING PLAN SY20-21**– James Gilbert
- III. **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 29th day of July 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 6:00 p.m. and explained that the board would discuss the reopening plan.
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE REOPENING PLAN SY20-21** – James Gilbert. The MHSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Gilbert discussed the reopening plan for SY20-21. They began by speaking with a representative, Gina Pannell (208.327.8524), of the local CDH. She explained the current status that the different counties and school districts were in and what status our school district was in and the matrix variables used to determine that status. MHSD is considered Category 2 (yellow) – hybrid education of both in-building and remote learning. The CDH will update districts every Monday. *Please visit www.mtnhomesd.org for more information.*

Discussion began with questions to the CDH representative and the details on how the matrix worked resulting in MHSD's status being Category 2. Discussion included disagreements with some of the matrix and matrix data because of lack of testing, assumptions, close contact events, etc. Discussion continued about the incubation period for COVID is 14-days so increases/decreases in cases data is going to be two-weeks behind. Social distancing and face masks help reduce the chances of getting the COVID virus. CDH recommends that school districts in Category 2 (yellow), depending on the size of the school, population of the classroom, and close contact, with the capability of social distancing should have students back in school.

The board and Gina discussed social distancing capabilities, options on how to serve meals to students since cafeterias don't provide for social distancing; options for reducing contamination by using disposal silverware and trays or the capability of sterilizing both; reduce to a minimum the use of common areas such as cafeterias and gyms, etc. Gina stated that overall schools are meeting the requirements. Be prepared to be flexible to change, but yes, schools can safely open in Category 2.

Trustee Binion asked which was more effective, the face mask or the face shield. Gina responded that either one was okay and that it depended on the particulates that escaped through the shield or the mask.

Chairman Abrego clarified that our county is not showing any community transmission. Gina responded that Elmore is showing community transmission, but it is not widespread. It is not the case numbers that are out of control, it is the speed in which the transmission increases. He also asked had the categories changed since the last reopening draft came out; the response was that the categories didn't change, but the matrixes did. Gina informed everyone that there are no school districts in our area that are in Category 1, but the trends change all the time and they change rapidly and that is why we are making determinations on a weekly basis.

Date: August 10, 2020

Ada County	
Boise School District	Category 3
Kuna School District	Category 3
West Ada School District	Category 3
Boise County	
Basin School District	Category 2
Garden Valley School District	Category 2
Horseshoe Bend School District	Category 2
Elmore County	
Glenns Ferry School District	Category 2
Mountain Home School District	Category 2
Valley County	
Cascade School District	Category 2
McCall-Donnelly School District	Category 2

Chairman Abrego said that the CDH website showed an increase in June and July but is now showing a downward trend. The board continued to discuss the trends both recent and past, the different categories and matrixes, summer athletics, transmissions, other countries successes in reducing their trends because of social distancing and face masks, etc.

Chairman Abrego asked if any of the trustees had other questions regarding reopening schools. Trustee Donahue asked about whether the bus company would be able to sanitize the buses after each use and between morning and afternoon sessions. Superintendent Gilbert replied that we are adding midday routes at the elementary level, face masks required, and hand sanitizing required too.

Superintendent Gilbert said that in addition to CDH, we have worked with St. Luke's, St. Luke's – Elmore, and met with Dr. Souza, Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Souza said that what they (medical field) are finding is the wearing of the face masks reduces transmission to others by about 90%, and that children handle the COVID crisis at a much better rate than the adults. Superintendent Gilbert stated that his concern is also with his staff, the exposure, and higher risk of being infected. He reminded everyone of the mandatory wearing of face masks, hand washing, social distancing, and the reduction in movement by students in the building will help reduce transmission of COVID, but it needs to be understood that COVID will hit our district at some point.

Superintendent Gilbert directed his administrators to have table-top exercises with their staff by taking what we have in place and having dry-run scenarios exercises, the protocols, etc., and then the protocols come naturally. Building administrators and staff have drafted building plans that are unique to that building using staff input. He also commended the board for the face mask mandate. He also reached out to the County Commissioners and City Mayor to support the face mask mandate because it takes a community to have these things in place. We need parents to step up and keep their children home if they have a temperature, a cough, or intestinal issues. The hybrid model allows kids to be in school in which they learn the best and receive the support they need.

Chairman Abrego said a MHHS teacher emailed him questioning why there were two days in a row of no planning time for teachers and then questioned having all the students together in one class with no instruction when she could have that time to plan. Mr. Gunderson said MHHS has class periods 1-4 on Monday (A-L last names) and Tuesday (M-Z last names), collaboration Wednesday and Thursday in

the mornings in which teachers were told that this would also be for their own planning to compensate for no planning period on Tuesday; class periods 5-7, and a Tutorial (like a homeroom for a group of students every day to help students academically), so teachers do not lose a planning period, it was adjusted. The same teacher questioned why there wasn't an A/A, B/B online. Mr. Gunderson stated that idea wasn't even brought up until after we met with our teachers and our teachers gave all their input, it was brought up well after the fact. The same teacher also asked Chairman Abrego if teacher input was even sought after and Chairman Abrego said it was apparent that teacher input was in fact sought after.

Chairman Abrego said that a MJHJ teacher also emailed him and stated that she needed to be with the students full time and said her students suffered in the spring with remote learning. She also questioned when teaching in-person to students one day and then the other half is remote, how is she supposed to monitor everything while she is teaching live and how is she supposed to police the masks.

Superintendent Gilbert explained that most of our educators would prefer to have the kids in the classroom all five days. He added that each building has that in their building plans, so he referred to Mr. Cochran. Mr. Cochran replied that last names A-L were Mondays, last names M-Z were Tuesdays, with Wednesday and Thursday following the same alphabetic last names, and Friday is an online day for all students. We have Canvass for the teachers to help manage their classes.

Superintendent Gilbert explained that Canvass is a new learning management system that will be used in place of Google Hangout and it can also be used in the classroom, so much of that will be crossover and can be done remote or in class. If a teacher is working on assignments in classroom the student can also work on assignment at home. Understand that there will be hurdles and bumps to start.

Discussion about Canvass began regarding the purchased Canvas package, about training that has been and still is available. He added that we have a lot of teachers who took advantage of Canvas and are already in the training. Those teachers who have taken the time to learn Canvass will obviously be much more prepared than the teacher who didn't take the time to train.

Chairman Abrego said that he has received emails from parents who are upset because the elementary and secondary class schedules don't match, and the parents aren't able to use their older children to watch their younger children and now they have to look for daycare. Superintendent Gilbert explained that the ½-day schedule was driven by teachers because they felt it was important that the kids receive direct instruction those four days. HMS teachers wanted the A/B type of schedule for their 5th & 6th grade students. Secondary schools must consider their class credits moving forward, so there will be a divide among elementary and secondary levels.

Discussion continued about emails Chairman Abrego received from teachers and parents including parents of special education kids and what the recourse is for those who refuse to wear a face mask. The district will try its best to provide services to special education kids in the buildings. Regarding the mandatory wearing of masks, everyone is required to wear a mask; teachers need to handle the kids who refuse to wear a mask the same as any student who refuses to do what is required of them in class.

Superintendent Gilbert, referencing his conversations with Dr. Souza, stated that the medical community absolutely believes that face masks and not shields protects a person from particulates. He stated that there are very few reasons not to wear a mask, and for now this district will follow the medical community and mandate the wearing of face masks.

Trustee Binion asked why HMS was following a secondary schedule when the students are closer to elementary students' ages. Mrs. Smith replied that teachers wanted the A/B/C days instead of ½-day schedule so that they have more classroom time with students.

Chairman Abrego commended everyone from teachers to administrators on the amount of time and the work that went into the draft plans and he knows that this is about the students first and would like to see the effort of HMS matching the elementary schools' schedules for many reasons including transportation, safety, student maturity.

Discussion began about football and that it has been in session for a few weeks and there has been a lot of contact and breathing on each other, no social distancing, yet, none of the kids have COVID. Chairman Abrego discussed COVID with other districts; discussed the COVID testing, summer schools and zero

issues with COVID all summer long; his disagreement with the CDH's matrix numbers and data; etc. He would like to see the district start school in the green and then see what happens in a couple of weeks. Discussion continued about the different categories, rights of school boards' to determine the district starting category; the government agencies and the data they publish; categories are the decision of school boards and can change from week to week; discussions on the considerations of how to open MHSD or shutting schools and starting remotely; levels of transmissions; nervousness of staff and parents; trying to decide what is best for students first, but still taking the health and safety of staff into consideration; etc.

Trustee Monasterio wanted the district to start in the red and see what happens in the upcoming weeks to address the virus or determine the transmission levels for safety reasons.

Trustee Binion hadn't yet decided whether to start in Category 3 or remain in Category 2 and gave his reasons for either category.

Superintendent Gilbert asked if there was anything the board wanted to change in the district or building plans or a current recommendation to start the school year. He added that we should state that no matter the decision tonight, things could change weekly.

Chairman Abrego asked that we purchase thermometers and take the temperature of everyone going into the building. Superintendent Gilbert responded sure we can, but Dr. Souza doesn't believe it's worth the money the district would have to spend on the purchase; again, Dr. Souza stated that face masks are the best deterrent of COVID.

Chairman Abrego called for a motion to determine which category MHSD would start SY20-21. Trustee Binion moved to open MHSD in Category 2 – hybrid. Trustee Donahue seconded the motion. Trustee Binion, Trustee Donahue, and Trustee Knox voted aye. Chairman Abrego voted no and Trustee Monasterio stated that he opposed opening the schools for face to face teaching under the conditions stated for Category 2. The majority vote was to start SY20-21 in Category 2 – (yellow) hybrid. Motion passed.

Chairman Abrego asked for a motion to approve the district and building reopening plans. Trustee Binion stated that HMS needed to revise their building plan so that 5th and 6th grade align with the elementary schools' schedules; ½-days for grades K-6, and A/B days for grades 7-12. Chairman Abrego again called for another motion to approve the district and building plans to include the revisions to the HMS building plan. Trustee Binion moved to approve the district and building reopening plans with the exception of HMS, which first needed to revise their building plan to align with the other elementary schools, received a second from Trustee Monasterio. Motion passed.

Superintendent Gilbert asked for the board to make a motion that the board decision is revisited weekly through CDH and if there are any changes to the matrix or category of Elmore County or MHSD that a special board meeting would be called to adjust the district's category. Chairman Abrego called for a motion of such. Trustee Binion moved to revisit the board's decision weekly via CDH and call for a special board meeting should the matrix and/or category of MHSD change. Trustee Monasterio seconded the motion. Motion granted. (A copy of the MHSD Reopening Plan and School Building Plans can be found on the school district website and the school buildings' webpages.)

Chairman Abrego and Trustee Knox would like to see thermometers in all the buildings, if not for students than definitely for staff.

Trustee Knox asked whether the all-day remote learning on Fridays was beneficial for kindergarten students. Mr. Kuntz responded yes, it was more beneficial to have the kids on line learning than nothing at all.

Colonel Mays addressed the board and asked the board to consider having all students online for the flexibility to go back and forth from Category 2 to 3 and visa versa. He also asked the board to consider having the busses sanitized twice a day.

- III. **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 Knox. Motion granted. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Chairman Abrego

Clerk Whitman