

Our Mission is to prepare and support all students within a culture of excellence to do their best and to be their best, so that each can be a successful contributing citizen, able to adapt to change and to successfully respond to the future.

RSU 16

Mechanic Falls * Minot * Poland
The 1st Regular School Board Meeting
for 2021 - 2022 will be held
Monday, August 9, 2021
6:30 p.m.

>>>>> **PRHS AUDITORIUM** <<<<<<

MINUTES

Present:

Melanie Harvey, Patrick Irish, Mike Downing, Emily Rinchich, Jessica Smith, Laura Hemond,
Joe Parent, Mary Martin, Christine Downs, Jennifer Tiner, Scott Tiner, Amber Lyman, Ed Rabasco, Steve Holbrook

Absent:

Arleena Stotts

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Kenneth J. Healey, Superintendent
Pledge of Allegiance & Mission Statement

1.1 Elect a Chair

Motion by: Steve Holbrook to nominate Mary Martin as Chair

Seconded by: Laura Hemond

Vote: Unanimous

1.2 Elect a Vice Chair

1.2 **Motion by:** Mike Downing to nominate Joe Parent as Vice Chair

Seconded by: Laura Hemond

Vote: Unanimous

2.0 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: (10 minutes)**

Mary Martin reviewed public participation policies and procedures. There will be a second public participation section during the return to school discussion.

Mary Beth Taylor brought copies of the Free & Reduced Lunch forms for parents to fill out, as we lost funding last year. Mary Beth would also like to see zoom meetings available for those who wish to participate from home.

3.0 **RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)**

Welcome new school board members:

- o Scott Tiner, Minot
- o Jen Tiner, Minot
- o Christine Downs, Poland
- o Emily Rinchich, Poland
- o Patrick Irish, Mechanic Falls
- o Jessica Smith, Mechanic Falls

Thank you to Jim Crouse for his service. Jim has recently resigned from the Board.

4.0 **AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:**

5.0 **PRESENTATIONS: (20 minutes)**

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 6-14-21 12th Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Support Staff New Hires:

- o Julie Rioux, Ed Tech III – WMS
- o Kaitlyn Mann, Ed Tech II – PCS
- o Amy Kohtala-Langevin, Ed Tech III - ESS

Notification of Retirement:

Notification of Resignations:

- o Katie McFarland, Teacher – PCS
- o Dennis Lacombe, IT – District
- o Kimberlee Dietlin, Teacher – PCS
- o Barbara Howard, Bus Monitor – District
- o Burt Philbrick, Custodian – PCS

Sub Committees Minutes (no meetings were held in June & July)

- Operations
- Personnel & Finance
- Educational Policy Committee

Motion by: Steve Holbrook to approve Consent Agenda

Seconded by: Joe Parent

Vote: 8-0 (Absent – Leena Stotts) (Abstentions – 6 new members)

7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: Will have in Sept when Stacie is present

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

Teacher New Hires: **Ken worked with Administration and met every candidate and highly recommends all of them.**

- o Kendra Elder, Grade 6 – MCS
- o William Flynn, Alternative Ed/RTI Interventionist – PRHS
- o Karen Fuller, Kindergarten (1 year) – MCS
- o Heather Kegler, Grade 5 – ESS
- o Jacie Welch, GaTE Teacher – ESS/MCS
- o Kathryn Shaw, Grade 3 – PCS
- o Sasha Rancourt-Thomas, Teacher Interventionist – PCS
- o Madison Selby, PE/Health – PRHS
- o Mattingly Simaan, PE – PRHS

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of August 9, 2021 is:

Elm Street School (247 – up 11)

Minot Consolidated School (236 – up 5)

Poland Community School (424 – down 6)

Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (285 – up 9)

Poland Regional High School (501 – up 46)

Total Enrollment 1693 – up 65 from 6/14/21

Getting ready to submit the ESSER 3 grant. Here are the requests:

5. List products and/or services to be procured and estimated cost as a result of this project:

7.5 Staff positions = \$817,000 salaries and benefits
 Screeners and Data Dashboard = \$70,000
 Supplies = \$32,800 (supply set aside for each school as they work to address the lost instructional time, books for professional development to support student re-engagement and best practices, and technology for new positions)
 Equipment = \$3,500 (one position will be a teacher who teaches from a cart)

6. Project Budget

Object Codes				
1000-2000	3000-5000	6000	7300	
Salaries & Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies	Equipment	Total Amount
\$17000.00	70000.00	32800.00	3500.00	923300.00

4. List products and/or services to be procured and estimated cost as a result of this project:

\$6,800 - additional nursing coverage for COVID-19 related work outside the contractual hours
 \$1,224,311.12 - facility upgrades including inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards and improving indoor air quality facilities
 \$5,000 - electronic messaging and electronic signature to reduce touch surfaces
 \$16,350 - music and PE supplies/decals to reduce the sharing of materials
 \$37,000 - furniture for meal times to increase spacing between students
 \$5,000 - Radio update at ESS to maintain reliable communication
 \$425,000 - Ceiling mounted projectors to maximize the spacing of students in the classroom.

5. Project Budget

Object Codes				
1000-2000	3000-5000	6000	7300	
Salaries & Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies	Equipment	Total Amount
6800.00	1224311.12	16350.00	467000.00	1714461.12

4. List products and/or services to be procured and estimated cost as a result of this project:

\$65,000 - remote learning stipends, salaries and benefits
 \$13,000 - subscriptions and renewals to platforms used for remote learners
 \$174,000 - technology to maintain regular interaction between students and teachers
 \$10,000 - technology security program and hotspot use for students
 \$11,000 - books and supplies for remote learners
 \$240,000 - given we are unable to predict the future, we want to make sure we continue to be prepared to meet whatever changing conditions with staffing may occur until we are sure the pandemic is finally over. These funds will be the cost of a full-time substitute teacher in each building.

5. Project Budget

Object Codes				
1000-2000	3000-5000	6000	7300	
Salaries & Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies	Equipment	Total Amount
305000.00	13000.00	195000.00	0.00	513000.00

9.0 ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (10 minutes)

A total of 215 students participated in summer school.

The following is the breakdown of students served:

- PreK-2 - 81 students
- Grades 3-5 - 15 students
- Grades 6-8 - 43 students
- Grades 9-12 - 76 students

Pros: providing breakfast and lunch, good attendance by staff and students (used ESSER funds to increase pay rate to recruit staff), teacher leader at each school as well as an administrator on site, provided a more normal school experience, bringing the entire elementary students into one setting, Social Emotional Learning

Cons: making sure there is enough supplies readily available to the teachers

Free and Reduced Lunch forms need to be completed by all families. This provides more funds for our food program, as well as funding for our Title Reading and Math staff. Even though meals are provided at no cost next year, we need the data for Title funding. This year Minot did not receive Title funds and we believe if the forms are completed, we can get that funding back.

The allocations and use of funds are as follows:

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged - \$374,252 (+\$72,887 in Title II transfer to Title I) = \$447,139

- o Title I is a federally funded program that provides supplemental academic support and extended learning opportunities to low achieving children in high poverty schools. The purpose of Title I is to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and achieve proficiency on Maine's challenging academic standards.
- o Our Title I (and Title II) funds pay for the salaries, benefits, and supplies of our Title I Literacy and Math teachers and provide professional development for our Title staff. Funds are also used for PreK-6 Parent Engagement activities with a focus on math and literacy. A portion will be used to pay the ESEA Assistant Program Coordinator stipend (\$3,000). Title I funds are also used to support homeless students and pay a stipend for our Homeless/McKinney Vento liaison (Jenny Rose).

- o Project Title: Professional Development - \$46,555 — Funds will be used to address the unique needs of our schools and meet district goals for professional development in the areas of science, math, STEM, literacy, social-emotional, social studies.
- o Project Title: Drug and Alcohol Counselor - \$8,500.00 — Funds will be used to increase the number of days (2 days to 3 days) students at PRHS/WMS are served by our Drug and Alcohol Counselor.

NEW BUSINESS: (45 minutes)

Extend Superintendent's authority to hire until September 13, 2021—generally the Board has the final authority to approve new hires, but we don't want to lose good candidates in the next month. We still have about five teachers positions to hire.

Motion by: Steve Holbrook to extend Superintendent's authority to hire until September 13, 2021

Seconded by: Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

Approve "Return to School" Plan

Plan started last spring when we explored the possibility of bringing students back to school. Administrators were tasked with determining what they might need to bring students back fully in the fall. The District shared information every two weeks with the community.

Safety will continue to be a priority, including health screening by parents at home, frequent hand washing, using sanitizer before boarding the bus, three feet distance whenever possible, and participation in pooled testing, which will allow us to react quickly to possible covid cases. Allowing parents to choose if their student is masked will be another safety measure, as well as teachers to choose whether to mask.

We are highly recommending that unvaccinated students and staff wear masks. This continues to be a recommendation, but not a requirement of the Educational Commissioner. Masks are mandated on school buses for all persons, as it is considered public transportation.

We are required to provide percentages of staff vaccinated to the DOE. We are currently at 82%, but believe that number will increase from staff who got vaccinated over the summer. The pooled testing is recommended by the CDC and we will follow their procedures. We know things can or may change in the next several weeks to several months and we will follow any required mandates.

In our District, vaccines are not mandated. We educated, provided opportunities for conversation, and held vaccine clinics in the school for staff and students. Our State and Country's leaders recommend vaccination. We want the parents to have the final decision whether or not their student masks. For the pooled testing we are going to educate, provide opportunity for conversation and then give parents authorization to opt in or out of the testing.

Data from our recent survey was shared. 56.4% believe masking should be optional. 13.5% believe masks should be mandatory for all unvaccinated people. 20% believe masks should be mandated for all persons. 9.9% selected they should be optional for all vaccinated people.

Parents were asked if masks are required, 73% will attend for in person instruction. 17.5% would seek another option and 9.6% would homeschool.

If masks are not required, 92% would attend for in person instruction, 4.9% would seek other options and 3% would homeschool.

REEL: Remote learning for students K-6 who have a significant medical need that attending school would be dangerous. Although course wear is not what we would want for our students, we recognize that some students need access to on-line learning. Last year our remote program was very staff heavy and dependent. Our technology coach will work with the virtual learning to make sure they have access on SeeSaw to some of the activities that are being done in the classroom, as well as monitor attendance. We do not have teachers to run remote learning this year. Our Technology coach will monitor student progress on ExactPath to see when students are struggling and may need additional support. We are going to provide SeeSaw and other learning activities with ExactPath. Many of our surrounding communities are not offering any remote options this fall. We want to be very careful about making unique learning pathways for students and the impact that could have on the District. There have also been rumors in the community about losing state funding. It is not a simple formula for determining our EPS funding. It is impacted by students, needs and valuation. The state also finally fully funded a 17-year-old law that moved some of local funding to state funding.

Board Questions:

Melanie Harvey asked how the health screening tool is managed.

Amy Hediger explained that this is the self-check that parents do at home and calling the school when their child is sick.

Melanie Harvey asked about the pool testing plan.

Amy Hediger shared there will be a webinar on pooled testing, parent consent forms are sent out for opting in or out, and then it occurs on a weekly basis.

Melanie Harvey asked about co-curriculars or large meetings which were shared as all guidance will be followed.

Amy responded that fall sports will happen this fall as typically done. There is no order on the size of gatherings, as we are no longer under emergency orders.

Melanie Harvey asked about remote learning for middle and high school. Amy explained that those students are eligible for vaccination and no parent has reached out in this age group.

Joe Parent is wondering why we are not requiring masks when schools have been the safest place so far, and why we are going against the recommendation of our District health provider. Ken Healey shared that we are following recommendations of CDC and DOE. Joe asked about surrounding communities' plans to mask. Most are going to their school board with the recommendation to make masking optional.

Jen Tiner - Please speak to the logic of requiring masks on buses. Ken Healey explained that he can't explain the logic, but they are considered public transportation. We are hoping for more guidance. Jen also asked if we asked parents for the age of the student when they completed the survey. We did not.

Christine Downs - Shared concerns that we couldn't bring students back in the spring because we couldn't meet the three-foot guidelines, and yet we are now bringing them back even with the Delta variant. Christine is concerned that students may not wear their masks if they are peer pressured or bullied not to wear them, and we will support their parents' decisions. Ken answered that we will do our best to meet the three-foot rule. We do not allow bullying for any student and would address that. Christine feels we are missing an opportunity to keep students safe.

Emily Rinchich - Shared a quote from a Doctor at John Hopkins on the importance of students seeing faces and learning emotions. Feels that education should be primary responsibility and not making medical decisions.

Ed Rabasco - Concerned that we are missing what CDC wants—for the Board to follow their recommendations and make a policy. The science is overwhelming that masks stop people from being sick, going to the hospital and dying. He feels his first priority to the students is to keep the students safe. Our medical director has the same opinion as other medical professionals. There is no medical downside to masking. Ed is concerned about the options for parents.

Mary Martin - Thinks we have done an extraordinary job getting staff vaccinated. Still concerned about the 18% who are not vaccinated and their safety.

Jessica Smith - Would like to see us extend the virtual option for remote learning for the older students. Mary asked us to speak to the capacity of our District to do the remote learning. Amy noted that Edgenuity did not produce the results we had wanted. We do not have the staff available to provide the extra support. We provided a lot of stipends and pay to teachers to provide additional time and support last year. Confidentiality is a concern with zooming. There was also a concern with student engagement and access to materials.

Public Participation:

Whitney King Buker (Minot): Two elementary students at MCS. Concerned about the reading instruction that happened last year. Feeling routine is very important for our students. Asked if pooled testing is required. It is not mandatory, but Supt Healey explained that it will allow us to do less quarantining next year. Whitney is concerned that pooled testing will interrupt their routine. Concerned that this added test will be stressful for parents. Amy Hediger explained that pooled testing will reduce the quarantining by allowing us to determine the positive cases. The students who are negative would be able to stay in school. Amy explained that students who do not participate in pooled testing would have to quarantine. Whitney would be in favor of another year of masking in lieu of pooled testing.

MaryBeth Taylor (Poland): We did such a good job last year. We did not ask meeting participants to do health screening and we are not all three feet apart at this meeting. A parent shared a concern that other parents are making decisions for their students. Concerned that we are basing our decisions on a survey and not science.

Jenny Raby (Poland): What is the plan for educating quarantined students? What is the plan for distancing students when eating (when everyone is unmasked)? Key points from a Board letter: strongly recommend masks and that masks protect others. Concern that students whose parents want them to be masked aren't there, and teachers can't/won't monitor this - so why not have everyone masked. In regards to funding, she has been attending Board meetings and concerns have been raised all year about a loss of funding. Every family who leaves is a funding loss. Would like to see a remote plan available for anyone who wants it. Feels survey is inaccurate and if survey is going to be shared, then we need to make sure there is no duplication. Feels abandoned by the District.

Sarah Rand (Poland): Masks sacrifice our student's rights and are a band aid approach. She does not support masking.

Heather Campbell (Minot): Medical science is not an exact science. There are studies that say masks are not effective. Her four children have said they will not attend school if they have to wear masks.

Elizabeth Martin (Minot): Feels it is the parent's responsibility to ensure the child's health and it is the Board's responsibility to educate the students.

Angela Swenson (Minot): Kids need five days a week. Depression and anxiety have skyrocketed from not going to school. This is an emotional subject for everyone. Our school system needs to provide security and consistency for our students. It is up to parents to make medical decisions for their kids. Let the teachers teach.

Zachary Campbell (Minot): Appreciates being given the opportunity to make decisions for their own children.

Curtis _____ (Poland): Would like to know of elected board members who are mask mandators. Ken Healey shared that a vote would be taken and he can make his own determinations.

Motion by: Joe Parent to approve the plan as presented with the following amendment "that anyone coming onto or into school property who are not vaccinated, must wear a mask and that those folks who are vaccinated it is highly recommended they wear a mask".

Seconded by: Mary Martin.

Melanie Harvey asked if we would be crossing a line to gather the medical information. Ken Healey shared that he would not be able to request that medical information. Amy Hediger asked what would happen if an unvaccinated staff member refused to wear a mask then how would we handle this—it could shut down the school. Ed Rabasco asked if we fired anyone last year and Ken Healey shared that no, all staff wore masks last year.

Scott Tiner asked if we should be looking at other options for remote learning this Fall. Amy Hediger expressed concern about staffing, classroom size and the implications if we make significant changes to the plan.

Emily Rinchich asked if we could find a compromise. With pooled testing, we will have a better pulse on how things are going. Can we pick a metric such as an uptick or spread and then re-visit the mask policy? This might help make parents more comfortable if we agree to re-assess. Ken Healey shared that we would be constantly re-assessing based on data.

Mike Downing asked how we would know if someone on school property has been vaccinated.

Patrick Irish asked about Fall athletics and how away teams would be mandated to wear masks as that technically is school grounds.

Ed Rabasco feels we can mandate this just as we mandate the no smoking on school grounds.

Vote: The motion fails with 94 votes for and 854 votes against.

Motion by: Ed Rabasco to accept the Superintendent's plan with the following amendment "to require masks in our buildings".

Seconded by: Joe Parent

Emily Rinchich asked when this would end.

Ken Healey said we will come back and look at it at the October board meeting.

Vote: The motion fails with 382 votes for and 566 votes against.

Motion by: Steve Holbrook to accept the Superintendent's plan

Seconded by: Emily Rinchich

Vote: Delayed awaiting proposed amendment.

Ken Healey shared they will review and share information every two weeks.

Motion by: Scott Tiner to propose an amendment to Steve Holbrook's motion "to accept the plan, but direct the administration to expand the REEL program to all/any parents who do not feel comfortable sending their children to school with other unmasked kids (PreK-12).

Seconded by: Ed Rabasco.

Amy Hediger asked how we would do that.

Scott Tiner noted that the Board would leave those details to the administration. Ken Healey shared that this will impact our goal to get students back to school five days a week, and with this shuffling in-school students could be in larger classrooms.

Jessica Smith asked if grant money could be used to fund this program. Ken Healey shared that we have not been able to hire staff, so it is not a money issue.

Vote: Motion fails with 439 votes for and 509 votes against

Motion by: Steve Holbrook to accept the Superintendent's plan as written

Seconded by: Emily Rinchich

Vote: Motion fails with 308 votes for and 640 votes against

Motion by: Jessica Smith to approve the plan with the following amendment "masks are required in the three PreK-6 schools until a vaccine is available for 60 days. Masks would not be required in the middle or high schools".

Seconded by: Jennifer Tiner

Vote: Motion passes with 797 votes for and 151 votes against.

11.0 OLD BUSINESS: None.

12.0 POLICIES: None.

13.0 REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Student Representatives: (5 minutes)

Our student representatives are Anna Brettler, Senior and a Junior will be appointed soon. Anna was not able to join us tonight, but looks forward to joining us again.

Report of the School Board Chair: (5 minutes)

- School Board Meeting Dates 21-22 **2nd Monday of every month**
- Subcommittee Meeting Dates 21-22 **4th Monday of every month**
- MSBA Proposed Resolution Revisions & Additions—**sent out every Fall to school boards**
- MSBA Virtual Delegate Assembly—requests one member of every board be part of an assembly- will vote at the September meeting
- **Everyone is invited to back-to-school/staff opening on Monday, August 30th at 8:00am at PRHS**
- MSMA's Fall Virtual Conference
- Attendance
- LRP/Board Governance

14.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

A Team Reports – none for August

15.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

16.0 HANDOUTS: LRP Publications - July & August 2021

17.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

18.0 REMINDERS: Signed Policies

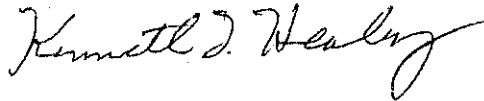
19.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by: Mike Downing to adjourn at 8:46 p.m.

Seconded by: Patrick Irish

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth J. Healey