



Press Release  
November 10, 2020

## **Middleton trustees approve plan to use federal COVID funds to pay employees for extra time worked as result of the pandemic**

The Middleton Board of Trustees accepted, in a 5-0 vote, a memorandum between the Middleton Education Association and School District that will pay each certified, administrative and classified employee retro payment for additional time worked because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trustees reviewed the memorandum at the Monday night board meeting and agreed that using some of the federal funds allocated to school districts to cover COVID-related expenses would be beneficial for employees. The federal money will also help cover technology equipment and maintenance costs incurred because of the pandemic.

When the state of Idaho cut education spending, it also froze funding for teacher salaries.

Many valleywide school districts have voted to award some funds to employees for the work they've done, and continue to do, above and beyond the normal expectations to educate students this fall. The memorandum states:

“The Middleton School District and the Middleton Education Association have agreed to the following: Each Certified and Administrative staff member shall receive retro pay in the amount of \$1,762.77 for additional time worked due to the pandemic. Each Classified staff member shall receive retro pay in the amount of \$500 for additional work as a result of the pandemic, as well as an additional \$500 from the general fund for compensation loss due to the delayed start of the school year, for a total of \$1,000. The above retro pay will be paid by December 10, 2020.”

Before the vote, Trustee Vice Chair Aleisha McConkie said she appreciated all the hard work that went into determining the retro payments.

“I know it's not perfect, but I appreciate the hard work that went into the discussion and I really think it was a win for all sides.”

The total cost is about \$586,000.

### **In-person learning plan moves forward**

Trustees also discussed the current plan to return all students to Middleton High School and the Middle School for in-person learning four days a week, beginning Monday, November 16. Students have been attending class two days a week and have been home for two days of virtual learning. All elementary students returned for in-person learning October 26.

Trustee Chairman Kirk Adams said he'd like to begin a discussion with district leaders and Middleton Education Association members regarding the number of days students must quarantine before they can return to school if they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID. The Center for Disease Control recommends a 14-day quarantine period from the time someone has been exposed to allow for incubation time.

Adams said some school districts, including the Emmett School District, have shortened the requirement so students can return to the classroom sooner.

No date has been set for that discussion.

Superintendent Kristin Beck said most of the vacant positions within the school district were filled, with the exception of educational aides in Special Education who provide one-to-one care and additional classroom support. It is difficult to fill those positions, and often when one position is filled, another person resigns.

### **In other action:**

The trustees voted 5-0 to accept the report of the 2019-2020 Audit Review, presented by Dan Coleman with Quest CPA. Coleman told the trustees that the audit revealed no irregularities. He also advised the board to increase the fund balance. He said the district, at the time of the audit, had enough funds to pay out 75 percent of one month's costs.

It is recommended that school districts have one and half to three months fund balance on hand, Coleman said.

Business Manager/Treasurer Cheryl Sanderson reminded trustees that the district has increased the amount of funds for the current fiscal year.

### **For more information**

- [Listen to the recording of Monday night's board meeting.](#)

- [View the meeting documents](#)