

September 24, 2020



## Middleton Board Update

The Middleton School Board of Trustees discussed several options Wednesday during a special meeting to determine how best to open schools to all students.

Superintendent Kristin Beck gave a brief report about how COVID has directly impacted the Middleton School District. She did not provide details to protect student and employee personal information, as required by law.

“With regards to the tragic loss of a District employee, the Board was fully aware of the loss,” Trustee Chairman Kirk Adams said. “It was brought up during the meeting so the full scope can be considered.

“It was important for Superintendent Beck to remind the board so it has a complete picture of COVID in our schools as we consider any further opening of the schools,” Adams said.

[\(Read Beck’s statement that was sent Wednesday night\)](#)

Currently, the elementary and secondary students attend class on a hybrid schedule - two days in the classroom and two days online at home. The Middleton School District is operating in the yellow category.

Trustees discussed at length options for reopening schools to all students each day for face-to-face learning. Staffing concerns and safe distancing for students and staff remain paramount issues for the district.

“We know the risk for our students is quite small, but the risk for our staff is greater,” Trustee Chairman Kirk Adams said during the meeting.

Some of the trustees pushed for getting elementary students back in classrooms four days a week.

One option would be to have elementary students in the classroom each day, but only for half the day. The district will try to determine transportation costs. Another option would be to return all students to the classrooms in phases, starting with the youngest.

Beck said about 450-460 of Middleton's students started in the online program, which shifted classroom teachers to online teaching positions. If schools fully open, class sizes will prevent the ability to meet social distancing recommendations.

In an effort to staff classrooms in accordance with previous year's student to teacher ratios, and account for the staff moved online to accommodate the online school, one more teacher should be hired at the elementary level, and six additional teachers should be hired at the secondary level. This would cap class sizes at approximately 25 and 32 respectively.

Director of Curriculum and Assessment Lisa Pennington summarized how students are performing in tests. She said not all students have been tested, but preliminary results show that the students are testing at about expected levels. She also said that in just a few days of instruction, students are already showing improvement in their reading.

Trustee Aleisha McConkie said she took the time Tuesday to tour all the district's schools, except for Middleton Academy.

"Our teachers and administration have a great attitude," McConkie said. "They are making lemonade out of lemons."

Trustees agreed that a survey of parents and staff is a good first step in determining what are best options.

Adams said with that additional information, trustees may be able to make informed decisions regarding reopening schools at full capacity at the regular meeting scheduled for 6 pm Monday, October 12.

"Our biggest goal is to not go backwards. If we open up too quickly we will need to go 100% online and cancel sports; nobody wants that for a solution," Adams said.

### **In other action:**

**Athletic tickets to events:** Effective immediately, the board approved a plan to offer up to four tickets to sporting events for student athletes and band members, instead of 2. Parents can bring their own chairs to the soccer fields and they will use some of the visitor space, Athletic Director Andy Ankeny said. The High School will still only offer two tickets per athlete for visiting teams.

**Impact fees for schools:** Agreed to support a resolution drafted by the Kuna School Board of Trustees that puts forth recommended legislation to enable the collection of impact fees for the construction of public schools. Currently, cities can collect impact fees on new construction to help offset growth, but it can only be used for police and fire. If approved by the Idaho Legislature, schools

could collect and save impact fees to build new schools, instead of having to rely so heavily on bond measures, Adams said.

**Additional Cares funding from the State:** The board directed district administration to work with members of the Middleton Education Association and members of the board to decide how new CARES funding, about \$1.2 million for COVID related expenses should be spent. Director of Finance and Operations Cheryl Sanderson said there are specific guidelines and as well as a timeline for how the money can be used. The funds do not replace budget cuts that already occurred. Trustee Derek Moore volunteered to serve on that committee.

Links:

[Wednesday's recorded Middleton Board Meeting](#)  
[Meeting documents](#)