



Press Release  
August 20, 2020

## **Trustees decide 7-day rolling average of COVID cases will set COVID categories; adopt amended school year calendar to make up for lost school days for delayed start**

The Middleton School District will use Southwest District Health Department's rolling average of positive COVID cases for Middleton's zip code, 83644, to determine which category schools will operate.

The Board of Trustees agreed Wednesday, 5-0 in a special board meeting, to keep the metrics simple, using SWDH's seven-day rolling average daily incident report. Instead of using the category determined for Canyon County, the Middleton School District will rely on more focused numbers with the ultimate goal of keeping students in class whenever possible.

If Middleton schools were to open today, the category would be yellow. Two weeks ago, the category was red. The Board will meet on August 31 to determine what category the district will open on September 8, the first day of school. After that, the board will decide, based on the rolling average, every two weeks, beginning September 9th for the following Monday, in this case September 14th.

Even though students live in other nearby zip code areas, including Caldwell and Star, 65 percent of the district's student population live in the 83644 zip code

Other factors that could influence a decision on opening include the student absentee rate, availability of substitutes and the age range of those who test positive in the 83644 zip code.

At the request of Middleton Education Association President Dave Stacy, trustees also discussed the need to amend the MSD COVID-19 Reopening Plan to give teachers, who have health concerns, options in the event that students don't wear a mask in their classroom.

Currently, the plan states that students and staff be encouraged to wear personal protective equipment, masks or shields.

Trustees shared their concerns for teachers, but also discussed a lack of enforcement in the current plan, and if enforced, what it could mean to enrollment numbers, thereby jeopardizing state funding.

Because the matter was not listed as an agenda item, trustees could not decide Wednesday a final outcome, but discussed updated wording that would require a mask or shield when social distancing, of at least 6 feet, could not be maintained.

In other action, the board adopted a revised school calendar. Superintendent Kristin Beck told trustees that the delayed start of school (from August 18th to September 8th) means a loss of 11 instructional days that have to be made up.

- Option A extended the school year beyond Memorial Day, to June 10th.
- Option B keeps the same end of school date, May 27, but adds Fridays, (normally no class because of the 4-day school week) through the school year for remote learning.

Beck said staff and parents indicated, in separate surveys, their preference for adding in the Fridays instead of extending the year.

Trustees adopted Option B.

## For more information

- [Listen to the Middleton School Board's work session](#) and special meeting
- [View the meeting documents from meeting](#)
- [Southwest District Health Department COVID data](#)
- [Middleton's COVID Plan](#) has three categories, green, yellow and red.
  1. **GREEN** - Traditional school with precautionary measures, online option available. Little to no community/school COVID-19 spread.
  2. **YELLOW** - Blended learning with reduced class size, online option available. Minimal to moderate community/school COVID-19 spread
  3. **Red** - Soft close, all students online learning with limited small group face to face learning. Substantial community/school COVID-19 spread