

District Status Report

20 November

2020-2021 Report #21

The purpose for the weekly Status Report is to communicate to members of the School Board important and meaningful information relevant to the business of the school district. The Report is available to the public on the school district's website. Please contact me at 417-2602 if you have any questions regarding information contained in the Status Report. I would also appreciate hearing from you on ways I can improve the Report and make it more meaningful and informative for you.

Dale

Our Mission

**Empowering students with
knowledge and skills to succeed.**

Our Vision

**To be the school district of choice, inspiring
excellence in academics, arts, and activities.**

Information – Communication – Correspondence

1. News From Around the State and Beyond

Accountability: States' accountability changes may impact school designations, improvements timelines
Climate: NRHEG project encourages gratitude
Math, reading work together to prep for real life
Teaching Young Children Remotely

2. **Special School Board Meeting Monday, November 23** – The School Board will meet Monday, November 23, 2020, at 6:00 pm in the Secondary School Media Center. The specific purpose for the meeting is to provide the Board an opportunity to review the most current COVID-19 related metrics and to determine if a change should be made in the Elementary School learning model of hybrid learning, and if so, for how long. In addition, the Board will be asked to determine whether or not to extend the current distance learning period for the Secondary School.

Since the Board met on November 16, there is an increased awareness and concern expressed by some staff for the Elementary School to remain in hybrid learning specifically immediately following the Thanksgiving holiday. As I have previously mentioned to the Board, some school districts in the area are taking what is believed to be a proactive approach in moving to distance learning regardless of their case rate within the school building(s) simply because of the cautions by public health surrounding the Thanksgiving holiday and the likelihood that many families will expand their gatherings beyond their household.

Our Regional Support Team (RST) that also includes representatives from MDH is encouraging schools to consider distance learning due to the surge in the virus spread to include the period of time immediately following Thanksgiving. Specific to the issue of moving to DL for a period of time following Thanksgiving (and the Christmas holiday break), the RST shares: *“Two weeks is one incubation period for COVID. While a two-week pause is better than no pause after the holidays, ideally we would want to see schools wait for two incubation periods (28 days) to let the virus run its course and allow for those who do not get sick until day 13 or 14 to seek medical guidance/testing and identify close contacts. For the schools that are choosing to go to distance learning this will give them a better picture of what viral transmission has occurred.”* Regarding the Christmas or winter break, the RST adds that: *“In an ideal world from a prevention point of view we would like for schools who choose to move to DL to remain in DL for 28 days following New Year’s.”*

County and state public health officials are also encouraging school districts to transition from distance learning to hybrid learning slowly and in phases. Part of the reason is that there is less confidence in knowing how many families have at least one member in the household who has recently tested positive while the school is in distance learning. While a school is in distance learning, we will still expect parents to notify the school district of positive tests within the family resulting in either the students being in isolation (for testing positive) or in quarantine (for being identified as a close contact). However, we might not truly know the number of active positive cases within a school while on distance learning until we return to hybrid learning. For this reason, schools are encouraged to bring students back slowly and in phases. For example, a limited number of grade levels would be brought back over a one or two-week period. This would allow a school to more accurately monitor and account for students who are isolated or quarantined.

As of today, our positive case count in the Elementary School continues to be low. However, we have reason to believe there are several families (as high as 15 or more) who might have at least one household member who tested positive in the past 14 days. However, what is most alarming and of great concern is the significant increase in the daily reported cases across all three of our counties and the uncontrollable spread right now as reported by MDH.

This week, we informed families and staff that based on MDH guidance, we are now asking students and staff to remain at home even if they are experiencing one (1) “less common” symptom rather than two (2). MDH guidance states that for schools, *“When there are high levels of community transmission or multiple unlinked cases in the school, exclusion with evaluation and testing is strongly encouraged even if a person is experiencing only one less common symptom. For these purposes, high levels of community transmission may be defined as greater than 10 cases per 10,000.”* Our communities are exceeding the 10 cases per 10,000 rate. This standard will likely increase the number of those who are to stay at home including our staff. Symptoms include:

- Fever greater than 100.4
- New onset/worsening cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Nasal congestion/runny nose
- Chills

The Board will be asked to consider options including but not limited to:

- a. Move the Elementary School to Distance Learning beginning Tuesday, December 1, through at least Friday, December 11. Monday, November 30, would be a staff planning day and no school for Elementary students. (November 30 would be a school day for the Secondary School)
- b. Extend the Distance Learning period for the Secondary School through at least Friday, December 11

As I have previously shared with the Board, there are school districts who have already decided to extend distance learning until mid-January (or later) to allow for a two-week period (or longer) following the holiday break at the end of December. This would be another option for the Board to consider especially if the decision is made to move the Elementary School to distance learning through at least December 11 as well as extending the Secondary School distance learning period through December 11.

If the Board would move the Elementary School to distance learning through December 11 along with extending the distance learning period for the Secondary School through December 11, this would result in some or all students returning to hybrid learning on Monday, December 14. There would be a total of eight (8) school days between December 14 and December 23. Of these 8 days, 6 would be in-person (every-other-day) and 2 in distance learning. Each student would be attending in-person for 3 days.

If the Board would decide to move the Elementary School to distance learning, below is the tentative transition plan.

- Elementary School would remain in Hybrid Learning for November 23 & 24
- Wednesday, November 25 would be a distance learning day in the morning with the afternoon devoted to grade level and/or department planning time (as originally communicated to families and staff)
- Monday, November 30, would be a non-school day for students to allow staff to continue planning for the transition to distance learning
- Tuesday, December 1, would be the first day for distance learning for all students

3. **School Learning Model Look-up** – If you want look up a specific learning model for a school district or school, you can go to the MDE website at [Enter the Safe Learning Model Look-Up system](#). Simply enter the school district you are seeking.
4. **Building and Grounds Committee Meeting to Meet** – The next Building and Grounds Committee Meeting is tentatively planned for Tuesday, January 19, 2021, beginning at 5:30 pm prior to the start of the regular School Board meeting. Agenda items may include discussion about potential land sale, construction project follow-up, and examining the Board’s goal of developing a long-term facility plan.
5. **Board Member Quarterly Check-in** – If you do not already have a quarterly check-in date and time scheduled for the week of November 30, please contact Sue Kulseth.
6. **New Board Member Orientation** –Terri Engel, Loren Schoenrock and I met for their first orientation meeting on Wednesday, November 18. A second meeting is planned for Monday, November 23 at 3:30 pm. Mrs. Engel and Mr. Schoenrock are also registered for both Phase I and II trainings with MSBA in December. Both trainings are virtual.
7. **2021 MSBA Leadership Conference** – The 2021 MSBA Leadership Conference will be held virtually this year on three different Thursday mornings. Please contact Sue Kulseth to let her know to register you. See the communication below from MSBA

The **2021 MSBA Leadership Conference** will be presented to you in a **virtual format**.

Save the dates on your calendar for these Thursday mornings — **January 14, January 21, and January 28, 2021**.

As a membership benefit, the Leadership Conference is offered at no cost to your district, **but registration is necessary and will be opening soon**.

MSBA gathered your feedback from a membership survey in August – and your message was loud and clear. While you would like to attend the MSBA Leadership Conference in-person, due to a variety of health and safety reasons, more than half of you do not feel an in-person conference is a viable option in January 2021.

You also shared that you are saving the nights and weekends for your family and away from technology. The preferred date and time for attending the conference virtually is Thursday mornings.

The conference will include a number of top-notch workshops, roundtable sessions, and much more. Some sessions will be available via recording at a later time. Watch the [MSBA website](#) for more details.

This year’s conference will feature two keynote speakers: **Phyllis Braxton-Frierson** and **Dr. Phil Gore**.

- **Braxton-Frierson** is the CEO and Founder of PINK Consulting, LLC, and has worked in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) field for nearly 25 years.
- **Gore** is in his sixth year as Division Director for Board Development Services with the Texas Association of School Boards and is a nationally recognized researcher on school governance.

Though it will not be the same as seeing you all in person at the Minneapolis Convention Center, the MSBA staff, the MSBA Board of Directors, and I look forward to interacting with you virtually.

Thank you for your leadership and your service – and for the great work you’ve done during this incredibly critical and challenging time.

School Board Calendar of Events

December 21, 2020	6:00 pm	Truth in Taxation Public Hearing – Secondary School Media Center
	6:30 pm	School Board Meeting – Secondary School Media Center/Remote
December 24, 2020 – January 1, 2021		Winter Break
January 4, 2021	5:30 pm	School Board Organizational Meeting – Board Room
January 19, 2021	6:30 pm	School Board Meeting – Secondary School Media Center/Remote

Dale's Calendar for November 23 - 27 (As of 11-20-2020)

Monday	10:30 am	Check in with Doug
	1:00 pm	Weekly check in with Donna
	1:30 pm	Check in with Dave
	2:00 pm	Check in with Karla
	2:30 pm	Check in with Sue
	3:00 pm	Weekly Call with Steele County Public Health
	3:30 pm	New School Board Member Orientation Meeting #2
	6:00 pm	Special School Board Meeting
Tuesday		In the District
Wednesday		In the District
Thursday		Office Closed
Friday		Office Closed

Thank you for all you do!