

District Status Report

04 December

2020-2021 Report #23

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

Teaching: Most students buckle up for another stretch of distance learning
Teachers feel strain of teaching during a pandemic
Parents concerned about long-term effects of pandemic
Is there a better alternative to seat time?

2. **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.
3. **Building and Grounds Committee 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.
4. **2021-2022 Budget Development** – I will be recommending the Board meet in a special budget work session in January to begin addressing actions needed to occur in order to achieve the Board’s finance goal of that *by June 30, 2020, adopt a planned budget for 2021-2022 that achieves the Board’s fund balance target range while balancing the amount of revenue with planned expenditures. In the event of an unsuccessful referendum vote, the Board will need to be prepared to conduct a budget reduction process in advance of adopting the 2021-2022 budget.* The Finance Committee may be asked to meet prior to the work session.
5. **Winter Sports Start Date(s)** – The Minnesota State High School League’s (MSHSL) Board of Directors has approved the Return to Participation Task Force's recommendation to begin winter activities when allowed by State guidelines. The earliest start date would be December 21, three days after the scheduled expiration of Executive Order 20-99. Competitions could begin no earlier than Jan. 4. It is my recommendation the Board considers meeting in advance of the potential December 21 MSHSL start date to determine the status of a potential start date for school activities. The last communication to coaches and families regarding the status of activities was on November 18 immediately following the Governor’s announcement. The communication stated: *As of Saturday, November 21, 2020 all NRHEG in person activities are paused for four weeks. This means the start of the winter activities are again being adjusted. As schedules are developed and we approach a possible return date, more specific information will be shared with everyone.*

I will follow-up with Rick Schultz to determine if a special Board meeting will be held on a date prior to the December 21 regular School Board meeting.

6. **Staff Working Remotely** – I continue to respond to questions regarding staff working remotely while a school is in the *distance learning* model. The most updated guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education as referenced in the *2020-2021 Safe Learning Plan* states on page 16:

The Governor’s Work from Home Order (Executive Order 20-99) states that all employees who can work from home must work from home. This is a broad mandate that applies across industries. For school districts and charter schools, this means if a staff member can perform their essential job functions from home, they must work from home. The purpose of this order is to limit unnecessary travel and intermingling of people to limit transmission of the coronavirus and spread of COVID-19. The analysis about whether the essential duties of a job can be done at home should be done on a case-by-case basis and will be dependent on the circumstances of a position. School districts and charter schools should not issue blanket orders that require all staff

to work in person. If a staff member cannot perform all their essential job duties from home, they can be required to come into the school building to perform those duties that cannot be performed remotely.

Under the Governor's Safe Learning Order (Executive Order 20-82), if a staff member is medically at-risk for complications as a result of COVID-19 or has members of their household who are at-risk, the school district or charter school must allow them to work from home to the extent possible. This obligation extends beyond the more general work from home mandate in Executive Order 20-99 and applies to those employees who may not typically be able to work from home but who may be able to as an accommodation for being in the at-risk category or having a member of their household in the at-risk category. School districts and charter schools should use the same HR processes and ADA analysis that they normally use when an employee with a disability requests accommodations in order to perform their essential job duties.

If a staff member feels they are being forced to come to work in violation of the Work from Home Order, they can contact the Work From Home Violation Helpline at 651-539-1132 or toll free at 833-454-0152, or by email: WFHviolations@state.mn.us. If a staff member is at risk and feels they have been denied a reasonable accommodation, they can call the Minnesota Department of Human Rights' Discrimination Helpline at 833-454-0148.

The decision whether or not an employee can perform the essential functions and duties of their position from home ultimately rests with the supervisor. For most employees, it is the building principal who determines if the employee must report to the worksite or can perform the functions and duties required of the position remotely. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Bunn continue to observe and evaluate teaching practices within the virtual classroom to ensure that their expectations for staff are being met on a daily basis. Staff are expected to remain engaged with students throughout the school day regardless of the learning model.

Moving a building to distance learning is not only for the health and safety of students, but also for staff. However, staff continue to have the option of working in the building while students do not. There are staff members who must report to their building due to the unique requirements of their position.

7. **Board Member Quarterly Check-in** – Thank you Board members for taking time to check-in with me this week. Items discussed included:
- Staff working in buildings during distance learning and travel
 - Distance Learning Wednesdays
 - Quarter grades
 - Activities
 - Board meeting reflections
 - December 21 Board Truth in Taxation Hearing and Board Meeting
 - World's Best Workforce 2020-2021 Plan
 - School Learning Model update
 - Facility update
 - 2021-2022 Budget Development

Please call me with questions regarding any of the items.

8. **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.

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
January TBD , 2021	TBD	School Board Budget Work Session

Dale's Calendar for December 7 – 11 (As of 12-4-2020)

Monday	1:00 pm	Check in with Donna
	1:30 pm	Check in with Dave
	2:00 pm	Check in with Karla
	2:30 pm	Check in with Doug
	3:00 pm	Weekly Call with Steele County Public Health
	3:30 pm	Check in with Sue
Tuesday	1:00 pm	Winters Activities Start Date Planning with Dan and Dave
	2:00 pm	Budget Development with Karla
Wednesday	7:30 am	Monthly Check in with Teacher Association President
Thursday	7:30 am	Waseca County School District Weekly Call with MDH
	9:00 am	Check in with Donna
	9:30 am	Check in with Macy

4:00 pm MDE Weekly Call
6:00 pm MSBA Phase II Training – Part 1

Friday In the District

Thank you for all you do!