

The Board of Trustees of Circle Elementary and High School District No. One, McCone County, met in special session on August 31, 2020 at 6:30 AM in the high school library. Trustees present: Bryce Hove, Dusty White, Cary Phillips, Tate Switzer, Tyrel Massar and Krista Beery. Also in attendance were Clerk Della Van Horn, Superintendent Preston Wenz, Principal Megan Murrell, Alan Stempel, Gary Gackle, Mike Bartelson, Kim Gebhardt, Susan Erlenbusch, Darci Wagner, Mary Heide, Nita Crockett, Lindsey Williams, & Ronda Island.

Chairman Hove opened the meeting with the pledge.

The purpose of the meeting was discussion/possible action on the COVID 19 board policies and executive session on the superintendent job performance review.

It was noted that we now have 4 active cases of COVID 19 in the county.

Hove asked for any public comment on any public matter not on the agenda. There was none.

Gary Gackle asked to speak quoting data contrary to the benefit of wearing face masks. It is now being noticed that the CDC is stating that 6% of deaths are strictly tied to COVID 19. Gary said that he and his wife have concerns about the health risks of wearing face masks. He also felt that the school would have to revisit the opt out learning option for those students that are forced to wear masks.

Bryce said that the governor's directive is a legal mandate.

Tyrel spoke about the current numbers published by the CDC that people are looking to challenge the governor and whether this really is a state of emergency. Tyrel said that there are 2 effective treatments for the virus and in his opinion the virus is manageable.

Switzer spoke on the numbers of COVID cases and that a person is more likely to be in a bus accident. He feels masks are a major distraction and hinder our ability to educate students.

Beery asked if any teachers were adamant about wearing the masks. The teachers said they would not make it a negative thing and would be ok with what the board mandates. Beery said that Richey has made accommodations as needed and that we can't ask people why or why they aren't wearing masks.

We can accommodate social distance.

White stated that he felt with policy 1905 we have the option to not require masks, we have the 3 minute passing time and we social distance.

(Noted that the 1900 policy series need to be put on the website.)

Phillips asked why the 4 cases is the "magic number"? It's the same for Yellowstone County as McCone County.

Other discussion was held. The board stated they are giving everyone the choice of wearing masks; staff and students. The board agreed the students need to be in the seats face to face learning. MHSA mandates sports and what is required to participate.

Hove asked if there was a motion to adopt either options by MTSBA in policy 1905? There was no motion.

Moved by Switzer, seconded by White to amend policy 1903F and eliminate the words “provided by the governor of Montana, and directed by the McCone County Health Department” and “are required to comply with all directives regarding use of masks/face coverings while on school property, and are encouraged to use personal hand sanitizer before, during and after an event. Attendees confirm that they have reviewed, thoroughly understand and agree to comply with all guidance for the phased reopening of Montana issued by the Montana Governor’s Office.” Motion carried unanimously by the combined board. Signage will be posted.

The board feels that they represent the community and they (the board) haven’t as a whole, heard from anyone wanting the requirement to wear masks.

It was stated that if students don’t want to attend school because everyone might not be wearing a masks, we need to accommodate those students also.

Discussion was held on the platforms. The teachers felt that things were not working well in this area. They can’t access “Screen Castify”. Krista offered to help with webcams. Also mentioned that we need more help and training for Bo-Peep and the platforms.

Moved by Massar, seconded by Switzer to adjourn the open meeting at 7:20 am. Motion carried unanimously by the combined board.

The chairman declared that the right to individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure and closed the meeting for the discussion of the superintendent job performance review.

The board came out of closed session at 8:30 AM.

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Clerk

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Chairman