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Board of Directors Special Meeting Agenda Math & Science Academy

Thursday, August 6th, 2020 - 6:00 pm

Room 8A and Remotely

Meeting Link: <https://youtu.be/KCFGQffYQ5c>
8430 Woodbury Crossing, Woodbury, MN
55125

1. Call to Order by Chair at 6:03

Mission: We provide accelerated curricula in all subjects, with an emphasis on math and science.

Vision: To be an innovative, sustainable model of academic excellence that creates well-rounded, lifelong learners and global citizens.

2. Roll Call of Members Present:

Voting:

Annie Cardenas, Chair

Dan Ellingson, Vice Chair

Cody Schniepp, Treasurer

Michelle Kurkoski, Secretary

Adam Bartz

Robert Krueger

Jennifer Bartle

Maggie Burggraaff

Non-voting:

Paula Akakpo, Student Member

Jenny Abbs, BKDA, Contracted Financial Manager (ex officio)

John Gawarecki, Director (ex officio)

Absent:

Judy Seeberger

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Dan Ellingson

Second: Robert Krueger

Vote yes - 8

Vote no - 0

Abstain - 0

4. Director discussion for each scenario.

Dr. Gawarecki key points based on the guidance from MDE. We will need to discuss not only the plans, but

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also the time period for which this will be in effect. The guidelines will follow 4 steps (on MDE website)

1. Follow selection parameters based on Covid rating (from state data) and use the MDE rubric to determine what we are eligible for. New rates came out today, these new rates in Washington County went up in the last week. That will put our high school at a starting point of Hybrid. Schools can be more restrictive without special interventions, to be less restrictive requires state approval. Ms. Kurkoski inquired about data from countries outside of Washington County that MSA has students and staff living in.
2. State health officials need to sign off on the proposed plan, needs to be approved by the state.
3. Our goal tonight is to evaluate what measures are required, based on the eligible requirements, and whether we can meet those requirements
4. Determine what model that we will start the school year in, understanding the rates that we are seeing additional weeks of data as school approaches.

If we are in a hybrid model, and numbers spike, then we need to go into distance learning more quickly. The data will be released regularly; we need to keep an eye on it.

Key factors to consider

- 1 - we have to meet all MDE and MDH safety requirements for that scenario
 - Minimum requirements needed
 - Limit the number of people in the school facilities and on transportation to 50% maximum occupancy AND with at least 6ft social distancing within school facilities. We can meet the 50%, but the 6 feet measurements will limit classrooms to 10 or fewer per classroom. This number includes teachers and paraprofessionals. Ms. Bartle asked whether those who choose to remain fully distant, there is a chance for hybrid. Mr. Gawarecki indicated that this was possible. The halls would be required to have one-way hallways, which would make it necessary to stagger the release times. The issue of where the students would go becomes another problem. Students would also need to exit out of doors that do not have sidewalks and would become an issue in the winter.
 - Mr. Ellingson stated that he was concerned that there would be a sort of separate group distance learning at MSA and whether that was equal? Ms. Burggraaff states that we all want to do what is best for the students, and we need to make the best of a difficult situation. That we have the ability to do a lot, but we need to work together. Ms. Kurkoski stated that there are changes that were made to the emergency planning versus the distance learning that will happen. The idea of choosing distance learning would also need to be a semester or year long decision. Mr. Ellingson stated that we need to develop a distance learning 2.0, that includes the mission of MSA, but also social and emotional needs. We also need to regularly communicate and evaluate the distance learning plan and all plans.
 - Mr. Gawarecki stated that there have been changes and continue to be refinements of all plans. The schedule is set for all three scenarios, so that there is consistency. Also there will be required synchronous time, which will help the students keep in contact with each other. Academic excellence will also come back. Ms. Kurkoski also stated that there was going to be a shifting nature of support to help the students, not less support, but just different. Ms. Cardenas also mentions that we are including more advisory, with the teamwork of the counselors as well. Mr. Gawarecki stated that the mental health issue is a significant concern and something that is in the forefront of the MSA plan.

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- We have ordered PPE and safety equipment, some has arrived, but a lot is still on back-order. MDE is working on providing masks and face shields, MSA is on track for cloth masks, disposable masks, and face shields for teachers. We will have enough for at least one cloth mask for each student thanks to a number of parents who have sewed and donated them. We are also still waiting for them from the state. Sanitizer is also an issue, as well as wipes. The regional team for MSA (Metro Regional Team) is still in the composition phase, not fully functioning yet. Ms. Bartle asked about the possibility of a drive for supplies, but there are supplies that aren't things that can be part of a drive like that.
- Other considerations
- 2 - anything other than distance learning, we are required to provide transportation
 - We rely on 833 for transportation. They have a number of new metrics that they have to abide by. They are doing transportation studies now, there was a survey request today to MSA families about transportation. The earliest that we will receive information is August 15th. They sent an email today that indicated that they may not be providing transportation 5 days a week for non-public and charter schools. They will provide equal transportation for all students, but that the transportation will coincide with the model that 833 adopts. If school calendar adjustments are made, and there will be corresponding adjustments to the transportation. We will not lose our busing if we adopt a distance model and 833 adopts a hybrid model, just not in the reverse.
- 3 - sufficient IT support (bandwidth, support, plan for equitability)
 - Mr. Gawarecki explained that the current MSA bandwidth would be overtaxed by the streaming of all the teachers at the same time. This would need fiber optic cable put in, which is about a \$50,000 item. There would need to be a sort of staggered broadcasting system. Building A has the servers, which means that the other buildings are getting signals wirelessly, which exacerbates the issues. This issue will need to be addressed, and it is not going away. The finance committee will need to begin to address this and plan for it.
 - Mr. Gehring joined to explain the technology challenges with regard to bandwidth and streaming needed for classes in hybrid. Based on his experience and knowledge of the precision that would be needed by teachers, and all staff present, we would need a minimum of 40mbps to get by. This does not include other factors and unknowns. Right now we are at the minimum threshold, and nowhere that he would recommend for a model like hybrid. With regard to upgrading, Comcast supports up to 35mgbs on a cable, which is an upgrade that we may be able to do. To get to the 200-300 level would require a fiber optic cable, the estimates that we asked for came back as about \$50,000. They are willing to let us pay it off over 5 years.
- 4 - is staffing available to follow this plan?
 - Of 40 staff members who replied to the survey, 11 have medical conditions that would need to be accommodated, 27 stated that they would ask to work remotely in a hybrid scenario. The substitute teachers for those 11 staff members would cost \$1,760 per day. If the teacher is able to teach, we would still need a monitor. That would come to \$1,078 per day. Some staff members will not be on campus because of their medical condition. Legally we have to set up something for them. Our surplus for the year is just under \$2,500, and is based on meeting our capacity goal. When students are withdrawn from the school, there is no readmittance to MSA. There is nothing in state law that gives them a preference, they will be part of regular admission and be part of the lottery process. High school registration closes after the first week of school to fill spaces. If a family withdraws their student(s), there is a likelihood that that family would not get back into MSA. Ms. Bartle asks that, of the 11 who have health conditions, if we have to keep them employed because of a legal medical reason? There have been meetings about this, but there isn't a firm guideline as of yet, which seems to leave it up to the employer. This issue is not yet settled as legal teams are investigating this.

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- 5 - is there funding to make the plan happen
- 6 - what about activities - clubs and sports?
 - MSHSL has been meeting about this. Ms. Froberg joined the discussion to explain the options that we have. If we are mandated to go DL, we cannot have sports. If we elect to go DL, we can still participate. There are new guidelines for fewer individuals at meets, the venues are not allowing many of these meets, our conference is not having a lot of final tournaments. For CC - JV and younger, no competitions, varsity competitions, but there can be practices and we can follow safety guidelines. Mr. Ellingson asked about band, orchestra, and others. These are considered classes, so they would be part of whatever system. Ms. Froberg is meeting with Mr. Sletten to work on what to do about choir and band. Mr. Krueger asked about the emotional and mental health of the students and what we can do about getting kids together in various ways. They are looking at options, and trying to make it all work. Mr., Krueger makes the point that not all things to get students together cost money or are during the school day. There are ways that parents can coordinate together to make opportunities as well.
- Ms. Cardenas asked whether we would like to motion to have a vote for a time period or to have a provisional approval of a plan to be reevaluated later?
 - What happens if there are changes in our Covid rates? Should we add the statement that the Director and Chair would have latitude to make a change?
- Mr. Bartz asked to clarify about the requirement about having 50% capacity, with classrooms limited to 10 or fewer. If in a hybrid, there are more students who opt for hybrid than there is capacity for, how do we determine who gets to be in class? Mr. Gawarecki said we have the capacity in classrooms to do it (with some classes potentially moving), but that the issue of the hallways still remains.
- Ms. Bartle had concerns that, if we never offer hybrid, that we will lose students.
- Mr. Schniepp asked whether in a hybrid scenario we could have different proportions of students instead of 50% to allow it to happen.
- Ms. Kurkoski notes that any motion that we make should include a statement that the BOD will review the plan regularly. Science is constantly evolving and it is important that we know what those changes are because it could change what schools have to do to be open or in hybrid.
- Ms. Burggraaff also agrees that we want to make sure that our plan is the best it can be and that we should continue to work toward the best solution.
- Mr. Krueger also agrees that the school is working to make this the best distance learning that we can. If they are focusing on that, the students get their whole effort. With hybrid, they are getting divided attention.
- Ms. Schniepp shared that he is an MSA alumni whose post-high school education included AAS degrees and is pursuing a BA currently. He shared that as a college student, he was unprepared for online classes when he first decided to take them. He made the point that online learning can be effective as long as students and teachers have the skills to do so. He knows that there are those who believe that in-person is the best way for students to learn, but contradicted that with his experience. He also shares that he joined the board with an idea that this may be a way to continue virtual learning in some capacity at MSA after the pandemic planning is no longer needed.
- Ms. Bartle notes that she has concerns with distance learning with regard to distance learning, if we never go back students will leave. Also that 11th and 12th grade students will opt for PSEO instead of staying at MSA on site. She is also worried about depression, suicide, isolation, cyber-bullying, academic slide, abuse, addiction. She is also concerned about the financial burden we are placing on families who may need to stay home with their younger children.

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5. Approval of school opening scenario

Motion: Because Minnesota Governor Tim Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-82 on July 30, 2020, and the Safe Learning Plan for 2020-2021, The MSA Director will implement the Distance Learning model learning model for the first semester of the 2020-21 school year, with monthly evaluations at MSA Board meetings.

Motion: Annie Cardenas

Second: Cody Schniepp

- Ms. Cardenas asked if there were any additional discussion points from BOD members.
- Mr. Ellingson asked whether the evaluation needed to have additional description, or whether the BOD understood the intention behind the phrase. Ms. Cardenas noted that we can also call a special meeting to amend this motion if there is new data, vaccine, etc.

Vote yes - 7

Vote no - 1

Abstain - 0

6. Motion to Adjourn at 8:50

Motion: Robert Krueger

Second: Adam Bartz

Vote yes - 8

Vote no - 0

Abstain - 0

Submitted: Ia Xiong, Board Recorder

Approved: Michelle Kurkoski, Secretary