



Press Release
December 16, 2020

Middleton trustees allow for shortened quarantine timeline; sets parameters for two-week remote learning if absenteeism gets too high or positivity rate hits 5 percent

The Middleton School Board of Trustees, in a 3-1 vote Tuesday night, adopted the CDC's shorter timeline for first-hand exposure quarantines, effective immediately.

That means students may not have to isolate for 14 days, as earlier required. However, there are very specific guidelines that must be followed, according to Superintendent Kristin Beck.

Beck recommended that the district continue with the 14-day quarantine, [as advised by both the CDC and Southwest District Health](#).

However, those trustees who voted in favor of the alternative shortened quarantine, indicated they wanted to keep students in class as much as possible, when so few of those students who are directly exposed actually end up testing positive for COVID.

Trustee Jake Dempsey voted no. Trustee Aleisha McConkie, who participated in the discussion, abstained from voting, stating that she was biased. The final vote was 3-1.

According to Beck, students and staff must adhere to the following parameters if they want to return under the revised CDC and Southwest District Health guidelines. Students returning earlier than the 14 day quarantine timeline should also be socially distanced, but the board acknowledged that was not possible and decided to approve the new guidance with that exception.

- **No Test:** A person was exposed, has no symptoms, and was not tested. Isolation may **now** end after day 10 from the last day of close contact with the positive case, provided no symptoms have been reported. Students/staff who fall into this parameter must wear a face covering while at school until day 14.
- **Test:** A person was exposed, has no symptoms and has a negative PCR test result. The test may not be taken before five days after exposure. Quarantine may end after day 7 if no

symptoms have been reported. If a PCR test is not taken, this is not an acceptable quarantine period. Documentation will be required that shows the test was a PCR, if documentation does not include this information, we will need to confirm with SWDH that the test taken was a PCR. Students/staff who fall into this parameter must wear a face covering while at school until day 14.

In related action, Beck told trustees that the district was on the brink of closing some programs and sending students home because too many staff members were out, primarily due to COVID.

In a 5-0 vote, trustees agreed to shift from in-person to full remote learning for a two-week period, if the district experiences high staff absenteeism or if the district's COVID-19 positivity rate hits 5 percent among students and staff. Beck said the district is working on a system that will aid in tracking total cases of COVID-19 within the district to inform this decision and keep the staff and community apprised of transmission levels within the schools.

Beck asked the board to reaffirm the support for the face covering requirement in full face-to-face learning, explaining that not all employees and students are properly wearing required face coverings when they can't properly social distance. No new vote was taken on the request.

In other action:

- In a brief discussion, trustees indicated they did not support a request to fund a shuttle between schools for district employee students. The shuttle cost the district \$15,000 in the previous year, however, the service was cut in the spring. A recent survey on the use and need of the employee shuttle indicated that 26 students of employees were using the shuttle service, with some of the students belonging to the same family. McConkie said the Middleton Education Association did not take up the item for negotiations for the small number of teachers.
- The board approved a date change for Middleton High School graduation from May 20, 2021, to May 26, 2021. The change was recommended because the spring sports season ends with state competition on May 22, 2021. Middleton High also hosts the 3A state track meet.

For more information

[Watch the recorded board meeting.](#)

[Review the documents discussed during the board meeting.](#)