

**October 27, 2020
Press Release**



Middleton Board adopts face covering requirement for students and staff; Trustee Chairman pledges that MEA will be included in future COVID-19 discussions relating to teachers and their safety

As the Middleton School District shifts to districtwide in-person learning during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Trustees voted 4-0 to officially require all students and staff to wear face coverings anytime a group cannot be safely socially distanced as a whole.

The requirement is effective immediately. Students in K-5 and Middleton Academy returned to the classroom full-time for face-to-face learning on Monday, October 26.

Middle school and high school students return on November 16. Currently, secondary students are in class for two days (Monday-Tuesday or Wednesday-Thursday) and complete school work in virtual settings on their off days.

The board told the district administration at the October 12th special meeting that face coverings would be required, but did not vote on a specific requirement, leaving the administration without something to enforce.

Monday's action backs up the requirement and requires that school administrators send students home if they refuse to appropriately wear a face covering in class. Students are allowed to return once they comply with the requirement. Middleton students continue to have an online schooling option as they have since the start of the year.

One parent, who attended the meeting, objected to the requirement, and asked what would happen if her child comes to school without a mask.

Trustee Board Chairman Kirk Adams said the student would be sent home.

The only time, according to the new requirement, that students would not have to wear a face covering would be when all of the students and adults can be safely socially

distanced as a whole. Trustees said with the colder weather, that probably won't happen often. But it gives teachers some flexibility.

Trustee Jake Dempsey summed up Monday's board meeting: "The face covering requirement is an effort to keep the schools open. An opinion is not going to supersede the standard. We hope the community understands. It is to keep the schools operating at 100 percent for all students."

Trustees also answered Middleton Education Association questions regarding the reopening. The MEA filed a grievance October 14, stating the group had not been included in the conversation leading up to the board's decision to reopen schools for all students. The current contract states the board will include the MEA in discussions.

After the amiable conversation, Trustee Adams pledged to include MEA in future conversations and decisions. Adams also said he will personally pick up the phone and call MEA President Dave Stacy when he knows changes will be considered. Adams also invited Stacy to call when he has a concern.

"By no means do we ever want to leave you out," Adams said to Stacy.

"I think you can see we thought a lot about this. You just didn't know that. I apologize for that."

Stacy thanked the board. "We appreciate the conversation."

Stacy said after the meeting that the MEA "thought the discussion with the board was a positive experience. We consider the grievance to be resolved. We do hope there is clarification on the metrics for future decisions when it pertains to schools."

The district still needs to fill several vacancies, including nine full-time and part-time positions in special education. Those vacancies include the following, and can be found on the [Middleton School District website](#).

- Behavior Intervention Specialist
- Educational Assistant - 1 To 1 Special Ed
- Educational Assistant - Regular Education
- Educational Assistant - Special Education
- Educational Assistant - Technology
- Elementary Education
- Health Technician
- Director of Instructional Technology
- Level Two Network Technician
- P.E. / Health Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Secretaries - Building Level
- Special Education teacher

Important links:

- [Recording of the livestreamed board meeting](#)
- [Board documents](#)
- [Reopening plan -- may not reflect Monday night's decision](#)