

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 271  
Bloomington, Minnesota

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD  
August 17, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, and there being a quorum present, the virtual Special Meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 271 was called to order by Chair Nelly Korman at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 17, 2020. Chair Korman announced that the School Board meeting tonight is being conducted remotely via Hangouts Meet; it is being live streamed by BEC TV and will be replayed per the usual BEC TV replay schedule.

**Roll Call**

Members Present: Nelly Korman, Chair; Tom Bennett, Vice Chair; Dawn Steigauf, Clerk; Beth Beebe, Treasurer; Mia Olson, Jim Sorum and Heather Starks. Administration Present: Les Fujitake, Jenna Mitchler, Andy Kubas, John Weisser, Mary Burroughs, Dave Heistad, Jennifer McIntyre, Rick Kaufman, Jake Winchell and Rod Zivkovich. Attorney Present: David Holman.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Nelly Korman moved, Dawn Steigauf seconded, to approve the agenda. On roll call vote, all directors voted aye.

*Statement by Chair Korman*—This fall will be the first fall every school district will experience during this pandemic. And, like every school board in Minnesota we tackled a simple, but weighty question –do we return to school amid a pandemic with no right answers. As a Board, we had multiple study sessions on the work of our teams that were developing the various learning models, the benefits and challenges with each one. We reached a point two weeks ago, where a decision was made to start the school year in a Hybrid model with a Flex option, along with Bloomington Online School. That was followed by a request for all parents to indicate which learning model they wanted their child to begin the school year. Simultaneously, we asked staff to indicate their intent to return to work, including whether individual staff would seek work-from-home accommodations. Since then, each of us have had numerous conversations with parents, teachers, principals, staff and students who are anxious about the return to school. Thank you to all of you who reached out to us with phone calls and emails. It became clear that the issues and challenges we all face are massive. The two recurring themes we heard were health concerns and a quality educational experience for every child. Tonight, we will receive an update from district and school leaders, along with Wendy Marczak, President of the Bloomington Federation of Teachers, that includes how what parents and staff indicated on their Learning Model Preference and Return to Work Intent forms, for the first time, may or may not be aligned. I believe we will once again be faced with an incredibly complex school reopening decision.

**Fall Planning Update**

The purpose of the presentation is to update the School Board on fall planning work. Superintendent Fujitake indicated that the August 3 meeting was not the culmination of all of our fall planning work. At that meeting administration said it would continue to update the Board on developments with respect to fall planning. Leading up to the August 3 Board meeting, a number of sessions were held with teams presenting information and the Board asked questions and gave feedback to administration to help develop the different models. On August 3, the Superintendent made a recommendation to the Board to start the school year in the Hybrid program based on research, collaboration and problem solving among a number of our leaders and stakeholders. The administrative team believes the Hybrid programs is a well-designed instructional delivery model.

The Board was asked to support the recommendation of the Superintendent as we needed to be able to gather information from stakeholders to determine if Hybrid model is viable. Parents/families were asked their choice of programming—Hybrid, Hybrid Flex or Bloomington Online School. Staff was asked about plans for requesting an accommodation. Eighty percent (80%) of families selected a preference in programming. Twenty percent (20%) of staff applied for accommodations; as provided for by state and federal law. The Human Resources Department is still receiving requests from teachers today. Equipped with this data, administration, principals and other leaders set out to do a number of assessments one of which was to determine if the hybrid instructional delivery model is viable. Oak Grove Middle School Principal Brian Ingemann shared findings of the secondary leadership group. As middle and high school teams consisting of administrative leaders and teachers worked collaboratively to look at providing a high-quality education, they have been studying and focusing on health and safety of our school community for students and staff, high academic expectations, equitable and meaningful academic experience and examining multiple models: Hybrid, Hybrid Flex and Distance Learning models. Dr. Jaysen Anderson summarized the findings of the models studied that included benefits, complications, and various critical data considerations studied. Option #1: Hybrid Model as Currently Drafted was determined to be not viable in its current form; examples of challenges were highlighted. Option #2: Distance Learning with Supports was determined to be viable. Differentiated Distance Learning 2.0 with supports from Distance Learning 1.0, Kennedy High School Principal Akram Osman noted that the first week of school would be devoted to building relationships, routines, and connecting students and parents to school. Building accessibility for students and staff can include assistance with navigating the HUB, a review of expectations and grading practices. Course design in this model focused on synchronous learning schedules and consistent online practices. Oak Grove Elementary School Principal Brian Cline and Normandale Hills Elementary Principal Andy Vollmuth reported on elementary findings looking at schools and staffing accommodations across the District. Elementary Option #1 Hybrid Model as Currently Drafted was determined to be not viable. Elementary Option #2 Distance Learning with Supports was determined to be viable. Wendy Marczak, President of the Bloomington Federation of Teachers. Although administration and staff have worked hard on various models and to make Hybrid programming viable, it is not workable due to staffing. Teachers wish to return to work but under safe conditions.

Superintendent Les Fujitake apologized to staff, families, the Board, and all who have been working on instructional planning over the past several months, that although the Hybrid model is well designed, we are unable to balance staff accommodations with parent preferences; the numbers do not work.

Heather Starks moved, Mia Olson seconded, that the School Board of Independent School District 271 approves the resolution being brought forth by the District. In discussion, it was noted that there is no prepared motion to act upon. David Holman suggested to amend the resolution of August 3. Heather Starks and Mia Olson rescinded the motion on the table.

Presenters and other staff responded to School Board member questions/comments pertaining to: the possibility of in-person opportunities for parents/students to meet teachers, substitute teacher availability, in-person supports for students, especially high-risk learners, and how we are following up with communication to English learner families, in distance learning how will specialty classes such as band, music, art, etc. be conducted, plans for elementary-aged childcare, how students will participate in sports and activities, upcoming budgeting cycle, Bloomington Online School capacity, ability for students to change to another model, example of a typical day in distance learning.

Superintendent Les Fujitake recommended that the School Board rescind its action of August 3 to implement a Hybrid instructional model to start the school year and move to a Distance Learning instructional model.

Should the School Board adopt the Distance Learning instructional model, administration will do an assessment at the end of September/beginning of October and report to the School Board.

Heather Starks moved, Dawn Steigauf seconded, that the School Board of Independent School District 271 amends the August 3 resolution to state the Distance Learning with Supports model in place of the Hybrid model. On roll call vote, all directors voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the School Board, Tom Bennett moved, Dawn Steigauf seconded, to adjourn the Special Meeting. On roll call vote, all directors voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Dawn Steigauf, Clerk