

# Board of Trustees Meeting Synopsis

## Tuesday, August 25, 2020

*By John Rieping, Executive Administrative Assistant for the Superintendent's Office*

Below is a brief summary of this week's regular meeting of the MUSD school board. It is not comprehensive and is for informational purposes only. Meeting recordings can be seen online ([here for video](#)). Official minutes listing board actions at each meeting are approved at the following meetings and can also be viewed online ([click here](#)).

### Closed Session

**CASE SETTLED** - After the meeting's closed session, Superintendent Todd Lile reported that the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the settlement of a Special Education dispute (Student v. School District, OAH Case No. 2020040916). No further details were shared.

### Information and Reports

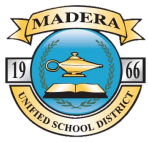
**RESTORATIVE PRACTICES** - Staff talked about a strategy known as "restorative justice" or "restorative practices" that builds relationships through better understanding, empathy, and compassion with others.

The strategy has different "tiers" of responses to injustice. Tier 1 involves teachers communicating better with students by putting "restorative" principles into practice. Taking place out of the classroom, Tier 2 responds to offenses between those at schools by creating a safe forum where victims can be heard by their offenders and others.

"In my experience, the person who caused the harm didn't realize the harm they'd caused," said Student Services Director Alyson Crafton. A Tier 2 forum (called a "Harm Circle") is neither scripted nor chaotic, she said, and it gives students a chance to learn from mistakes and grow. "What we're looking for is (a) long-term change that is intrinsic so they will do the right thing even when no one is looking. We want them to internalize the harm they may have done to someone else."

In Tier 3, Re-entry Circles are for those who've been jailed or expelled and they focus on identifying who will support them and what they will do to try to change their path.

While some staff has been trained in restorative practices, MUSD plans to offer more staff training in the future. Training set for March had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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### Superintendent's Time

1. **THANKS** - Superintendent Lile thanked many people who worked to make the first week of school successful, including parents, students, teachers, office staff, technicians, counselors, administrators, and others. They did their best to solve problems, connect with families, get to know students, and make learning fun and exciting, he said.
2. **INTERNET CONNECTIVITY** - The Superintendent informed trustees that 10 buses will be equipped with Wi-Fi next week. Each will be able to wirelessly transmit an Internet connection to students up to 300 feet away. Other efforts to increase student access to the Internet are being considered.

### Consent Agenda

1. **MOBILE HOTSPOTS** - The Board of Trustees ratified an agreement with AT&T to buy 1,250 hotspots with a 12-month service contract at a cost of \$540,000 from COVID-19 Relief Funds. The devices will be loaned to students who wouldn't otherwise be able to access the internet well from home.
2. **STAFFING CHANGES** - The Board of Trustees approved filling empty positions for paraprofessionals (4), groundperson, receptionist, and attendance secretary, and created a new position of Independent Study Teacher at Furman High School. Trustees also okayed 14 fall sports coaches for Thomas Jefferson Middle School, 6 fall sports coaches for Matilda Torres High School, and new full-time positions of Migrant Student Advocate at Student Services and Safety Officer at Matilda Torres High School.
3. **NEW COORDINATOR** - The Board of Trustees approved the hiring of Vivian Uchima to fill the vacant position of Coordinator of Assessment, Accountability and School Improvement. Uchima said it is her 11th year of being an educator at the district where she works with "wise and amazing" people, and she was humbled and honored by her new role.
4. **INTERVENTION SERVICES** - The Board of Trustees okayed a contract with educator and consultant Nancy Akhavan to help the district with Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervention Services. This fulfills a California requirement for learning agencies, such as MUSD, that the state believes over-identify students of certain ethnicities, or multiple ones, as eligible for Special Education. Efforts to improve the district's intervention services were delayed by pandemic-related school closures. The contract's cost will be \$48,000.
5. **PEAR DECK** - The Board of Trustees approved a one-year consultant agreement with [Pear Deck](#) for setup and use of online software that works with presentation programs such as



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Google Slides. Pear Deck enables students to interact with lessons by answering questions or reacting to requests for input. The responses are transmitted to their teacher. This can be done during live lessons presented by a teacher as well as with independent, self-paced learning. Used by MUSD secondary math teachers in 2019-20, Pear Deck will be used to help teach kindergarten through 5th grade students how to better manage stress and maintain healthy relationships. The district-wide license and training cost will be \$24,000 from a School Climate Transformation Grant.

6. **EMERGENCY SERVICES SOFTWARE** - The Board of Trustees okayed a revised contract agreement with [Titan Health and Security Technologies](#), which makes an app for two-way emergency mass communication. Staff set up Titan HST at Madera and Madera South high schools and Howard Elementary School in 2019-20 to test it out, and now recommend using it districtwide. The revised contract increases the number of licensed users from 2,021 to 2,550 for the 2020-21 school year. The cost will be \$5,074.50 (\$1.99 per user) from the safety budget.

### Old Business

1. **COVID-19 MITIGATION** - The Board of Trustees unanimously approved Board Policy 0490 - COVID-19 Mitigation Plan. The policy covers issues such as grading, student health screening, social distancing, attendance, personal protective equipment, hygiene, sanitization, food services, contact tracing, and nondiscrimination against those infected by COVID-19. It supersedes other MUSD policies and administrative regulations. Some trustees questioned whether it was strict enough, and some suggested removing references to COVID-19 so the temporary policy could be reinstated during any similar health crisis.
2. **CHARTER SCHOOL POLICIES** - The Board of Trustees unanimously okayed five Board policies, two administrative regulations, and an exhibit that all must be revised due to new state laws on charter schools. The changes add new requirements to charter schools and extend timelines within the process of getting a charter school authorized.
3. **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS** - The Board of Trustees approved a modified agreement with the City of Madera for law enforcement services in the 2020-21 school year. The one-year agreement adds another School Resource Officer, if needed, and updates compensation costs and language on indemnity and "hold harmless." The cost will be \$405,000.



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### New Business

1. **DEVELOPMENT FEE** - The Board of Trustees reviewed the district's School Facilities Needs Analysis for home development and its Fee Justification Study for commercial and industrial development. Both will be voted on in the September 8th meeting of the Board of Trustees.
2. **SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY** - The Board of Trustees heard the first reading of a revised Board Policy and an Administrative Regulation, both on suicide prevention. The revisions would require instruction in suicide prevention for kindergarten through 12th grade (instead of only for secondary grades).

### Advanced Planning

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING** - The next regular Board Meeting will be Tuesday, September 8, in the Madera Unified School District Boardroom at 1902 Howard Road. The meeting may be held virtually.