

Union Pulse

Colorado Springs Education Association
February 18, 2021

Asynchronous Mondays – a full version, since Members have been asking.

Many heard the Board of Education discuss “Asynchronous Mondays” last week, with special attention to Elementary, since families are very vocal about wanting their children in school 5 days per week. The BoE is reacting to the pressure, as neighboring districts are going that way. CSEA recognizes that making such decisions is, in fact, a management right. Board Secretary Jim Mason has written numerous teachers with a timeframe of from 30-90 days. Further, we have heard that after an emergency meeting yesterday, principals are bringing the issue back to schools. We will provide below information we have directly from the Superintendent and principals’ meeting.

A couple thoughts, without lots of polish: Arguing the BoE’s rights doesn’t get us very far, which doesn’t mean there haven’t been lots of discussions anyway. There is no ambiguity about the message we’ve delivered: It is unacceptable to impose a double-teaching burden on teachers (prepare and teach both in-person *and* remote classes). That is where teachers assert their rights. How the year plays out depends on choices, decisions, and actions. Everybody has to own theirs and the responsibility for the consequences. As a District, we share students that parents entrust to us. Facilities has to keep sidewalks shoveled for safety; Transportation has to get kids to school; Payroll has to, well, make sure people get paid to do the work; Admin has to coordinate it all. Teachers are at the heart of the mission, educating the students, and a student who moves from one school to another school moves from the care and responsibility of one or more professionals to another school with teachers just as ready to provide instruction, concern, and investment. You know that. When **you** are the one who gets that new student, you know that you give her or him the love. So will your peers.

The Board and Admin make the decisions they are entitled to make. Now make your rightful decisions. Teachers need to stand together and stop insisting on accepting extra work and responsibility. It’s OK for Elementary teachers to let another professional take responsibility for, say, their remote students. CSEA has worked to assure that teachers don’t have to teach double classes. Allow yourselves *not* to add to your workload by choosing to teach double classes anyway! Share in the planning for the change, if you want, or allow admin to do the assigning.

Secondary has its own challenges (as noted in Dr. Thomas’s list), but similar considerations apply. Put sensible boundaries on the work and don’t accept excessive work because D11’s structural issues outside your control—capacity, decisions about attendance, etc.—loom. Yes, work with colleagues to find best solutions within reasonable bounds, but recognize your responsibility to yourself and your fellow teachers to seek a work-life balance. Stand together. Don’t be a martyr, and don’t encourage it in others. The decisions and needs foisted upon education by COVID have to be shared by all, not owned by teachers. Decision-making should not serve some at the expense of others! Stand *together*. Don’t make choices that damage you.

Below is the information mentioned above. You’ll note that less than 25% of students are on-line, which figures into capacities, which remain a consideration; everybody knows that changing schedules creates challenges—but losing students is a bigger challenge... The CSEA

Board cannot track the particulars of every site, which is why we promoted the School Scorecard earlier in the year; it's still valid.

Dr. Thomas's message to Administrators (with some highlighting):

The target return date is at the start of the new quarter (=10 March, 3 weeks off).

My meeting with the forum yesterday outlined the following:

1. How do sites solve for not teaching both in person and online?
2. There may be teachers who want to do both, if collaboratively agreed upon, we should support
3. Schools find ways to regroup students with their own FTE to either online or in person only
4. Schools partner with neighboring schools to regroup students to either online or in person only
5. Families declare by 2/26 which option they will choose to close the year online or in person
6. Secondary may be more challenging due to class sizes but need to see what can be done

Select Considerations and Thoughts from the Principals' Meeting (Summarized in our words; the original is 5 pages long):

- Why are we going back to 5-day instruction?
 - Students do better in-person
 - Parents are facing challenges with their own scheduling
 - Remote data shows we are serving less than 25% of our population online
- HOW
 - Schools to determine remote/in-person learners to be taught starting 3/10/21
 - Survey will go out to parents to declare by 2/26 what their choice is (remote/in-person)
 - Families are not supposed to flip-flop, but we have to be realistic
 - Remote learners may not have same teachers
 - Brainstormed options for teaching
 - #1 Teachers can continue to teach hybrid if collaboratively decided by staff
 - Asynchronous Mondays will no longer be available
 - #2 Schools create combos and other innovations to create dedicated online teachers, possible remote students won't have same teachers
 - #3 Combining schools so that remote learners can go to another school with online teachers (would become students at that school housing them)

- #4 School teams can come up with the “how” as long as it gets students back in 5 days a week and it is a collaborative process
 - #5 Other ideas: D11 host feedback sessions to gather community feedback - How do we support families and how does this message go out to ensure Parent Voice has been heard?
- We recognize Social-emotional Impact on Kids/Families
 - Having to possibly move schools or staff if staying remote
 - Need family input
 - New pressures mean that moving students conflicts with D11 original messaging about trying to keep students in their schools/classrooms
- Community concerns recognized along with staff's
 - Community don't have same perspective as educators
 - Don't always see the challenges in schools
 - If students have to move schools, **district** should deliver that message

District 11 Board of Education: the Good, the Bad & the Ugly...

Noteworthy observations of and commentary by elected members of the Board of Education during recent meetings:

- The Good: Parth Melpakam - reminding other member of the BOE that since the District gone to a hybrid format, we have not had to shut down.
- The Bad: Jim Mason- pointing out that the criteria to get students back in the classroom is not widely available.
- The Ugly: At last night's Board of Education meeting, in reference to effects brought on by changes in Academic Programming at schools and how they can affect how teachers fit—or not—into an innovated landscape, Deputy Superintendent Engstrom noted that staff “will see the writing on the wall.”

Announcements

Stipend All-call

Teachers, consider developing some clubs and activities to have fun with students in this challenging year. In any case, remember that this is *money negotiated for teachers* and is not for principals to disburse or limit. It will be divided among those who provide clubs and activities. Use the processes in Article XV.D to set them up.

Read Across America is Tuesday, March 2

All across the nation, educators develop Read Across America activities to bring reading excitement to children of all ages. Looking for books to share? Check out this [website](#) for free and low cost books or this [one](#) to search by theme, reading level or genre!

In celebration of Read Across America, CSEA will donate 10 baskets of books to the waiting rooms of organizations that focus on pediatric care in Colorado Springs, Building waiting room libraries will provide literacy exposure to young patients in a potentially unexpected place.

CSEA would love to know how you celebrate RAA. [Email](#) us pictures and we will share them on social media and the CSEA website.

Articles Of Note

[Colorado Schools Advised: Go to Hybrid or Remote Learning](#)

[A Look at the First Colorado Education Bills of the 2021 Legislative Session](#)

[Education Advocates Call on Governor Jared Polis to Tackle Learning Loss this Summer](#)

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