



**Medford 7-12 Schools
School Board Report
August 20, 2023**

- 1) **Rolling out the new school year-** Most of our open positions have been filled with some great new teachers. We will have 3 brand new staff members at the high school. These include Mrs. Cato and Mrs. Carel in special education, and Mr. Albers in business. Additionally, Mrs. Smith (who subbed for us last year will teach 9th grade English and Mr. Havumaki will move from special education to the Ag department.
- 2) **Faculty will be rolling in shortly-** New teacher workshop is later this week. There will be technology training on Wednesday and then a full day of orientation on Thursday. All teachers will of course report the 26th through the 29th. We have several changes and lots of good information to share as we prepare to welcome back students.
- 3) **Handbook Updates/Proposals/Discussion:** The student and faculty handbooks are ready for your approval. [Student Handbook](#) [Faculty Handbook](#) There are several proposed policy changes, some due to legislation and others to fit current practice or changes in the environment. I have explained these in some detail below. I propose adding or changing the language in the following policies:
 - a) Language added to our Academic Integrity policy regarding student use of AI applications in coursework. Currently the recommendation from all sources is that we adopt policies that allow teachers to create, teach, and monitor the use of these applications rather than trying to ban them- as enforcement of that is difficult. So I am working to provide teachers with a variety of resources and information on current best practice as we are in uncharted territory and it is likely to change multiple times in the future. The language has been updated to say that students must comply with teacher instructions and use guidelines as well as site when they use AI to assist with their assignments.
 - b) Attendance- Steele county has decided that they will not prosecute truancy over the age of 10 anymore. So multiple agencies as well as Blooming Prairie, Owatonna, New Richland, and ourselves have been meeting to discuss how to deal with chronic absenteeism and truancy. The group wrote a grant and was awarded money to pilot a program in conjunction with the United Way to hire a truancy interventionist/youth support coordinator. So we have updated our attendance policies to better fit/work with that agency as well as to reflect what was currently happening at the high school level. I propose that there be a change to the wording which reflects the current practice and new guidelines from the youth support coordinator- 5 unexcused we reach out to families and after 7 they are referred to this program.
 - c) cell phone policy/electronics- as you are probably aware, the state legislature mandated that all schools have a cell phone policy in place by March of this school year. We did have a policy, but it was not totally effective. Starting the first day of school, I propose that like many of our neighbors and counterparts across the country and nation, we transition to no cell phones bell to bell for all students 7-12th grade. Language should also be added about photo capable devices in bathrooms and locker rooms as well as that students may face disciplinary actions if they take/share video/photos without consent and of vandalism and/or other inappropriate activities. [student handbook](#)
 - d) Chromebooks- 7th and 8th grade students only- Last year we began the policy of keeping CB here at school. There were check out procedures for students if they were ill or needed

to finish an assignment as well as for E-learning. This was due to issues with forgetting, issues with dead chromebooks, breakage, and using them for non-school related issues. Additionally, it was felt by our middle school team that students may be more on task if they didn't have the option to take home. They assured me that there is plenty of class time to complete daily work if students use it. We had some issues with the check out in the beginning and some issues with chargers going missing. This year we have purchased new carts to assist with some of this and some new procedures for check out to keep better track etc. I have updated the language to reflect that, as well as to explain consequences for violating the technology policy.

- e) Dress code - Both handbooks- propose updating teacher dress code to reflect current practice. Propose updating student handbook due to lots of issues with enforcement and recommendations from MSBA to have a limited policy- so I propose taking out the picture we added last year and information that was gender specific so that the policy now reads:
1. Appropriate choices for the weather conditions (trench coats, heavy jackets, blankets and capes are not allowed in the classroom);
 2. Those that do not create a health or safety hazard;
 3. Must appropriate for the activity (i.e. physical education or the classroom);
 4. Footwear that does not present a safety hazard;
 5. Headware, including hats or head coverings, that still allow for easy identification of the student's face and do not impede the educational process; (Hoodies must allow the face AND ears to be visible from the front and sides and must not interfere with the line of sight to any student or staff including while the student wearing the hoodie is seated);
 6. All private areas and those typically covered by bathing suits MUST be covered
 7. Purses, backpacks, fanny packs/cross bags, shoebags, and/or any other accessories or articles used to carry objects not approved by administration, should be stored in lockers and are not allowed in class.
 8. Students wearing clothing depicting alcohol and/or drugs, guns and/or violence, and/or those of a sexual nature that are considered disruptive will be asked to change or cover the area.

When in the reasonable judgment of administration a student's clothing or appearance is not in adherence to these standards and the dress code policy (Policy 504) students will be asked to comply and given direction as to how that can be achieved - which may include, a change of clothes, parent contact, or consequences as set out in Policy 506 (Student Discipline).

- f) Finally, after a large increase in tardies last year and the request of teachers, I proposed that under the definition of "Student in Good Standing"- tardies added- after 10 unexcused tardies, a student would no longer be in good standing for the remainder of the quarter.

g)

- 4) **7th Grade and New Student Orientation**-This will be held as part of our annual open house on Wed. Aug. 28. We will have 7th grade and new students from 5-6pm and then invite all remaining high school students to come in from 6-7 and take care of all the new school year business, meet the new teachers, etc. Our hope is to welcome everyone back and/or to the Medford community and get them excited about the upcoming school year. This includes a new online registration and annual enrollment update for all parents and the opportunity to use credit card to pay for fees etc.
- 5) **Site Team**-Planning for the first day of school. We will have an altered schedule to assist in making sure that students get the updates to the handbook that they need, have a chance to ask questions about anything that they are unclear about, do some planning for Homecoming, and then some time to get reacquainted with one another and their teachers. 7th and 8th graders will again have a separate schedule so that their teachers can help them become familiar with google, smartpass, and a variety of other NEW things to middle schoolers without the added stress of finding classrooms amongst the rest of the high schoolers etc. they will then join the 9-12th graders at the end of the day for some fun activities.

Thanks!

Jen Ford