

Board of Education

Mesa County Valley School District 51

Board Special Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023

Board Special Meeting Minutes

A - Doug Levinson
 B - Kari Sholtes
 C - Andrea Haitz
 D - Will Jones
 E - Angela Lema

Board of Education
Mesa County Valley School District 51
Board Special Meeting: March 9, 2023
Adopted: April 18, 2023

	A	B	C	D	E		ACTION
						AGENDA ITEMS	
						<u>SPECIAL MEETING</u>	7:33 p.m.
Present Absent	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call ➤ Dr. Sholtes attended remotely.	
Motion Second Aye No	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	2. Agenda Approval	Approved
Motion Second Aye No	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	3. Resolution to Close East Middle School ➤ Board members shared their thoughts and elaborated on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Haitz spoke on steps already taken to address declining enrollment, including requesting buildings to cut unfunded positions and requesting the District's demographer explore options and make recommendations. • Mr. Jones expressed a need to make a decision to honor the requests of the school administrators and staff. • Ms. Lema noted it would be irresponsible to continue paying for unfunded staffing positions knowing funding cuts are coming and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) funds are ending. • Mr. Levinson expressed a need to pause any changes to allow time for all options to be explored prior to closing any schools. He feels the District still has one more year before reaching a crisis mode where decisions have to be made. • Dr. Sholtes felt the District should pause to allow time to involve the community, build trust from the community and to research all other viable options to address declining enrollment. She believes the recommendation from the demographer, to close East Middle School over West Middle School, was not based on true numbers and the process was flawed. She requested information as to which positions were being paid from ESSER funds. 	Adopted
Motion Second Aye No	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x	4. Resolution to Address Secondary Grade Configuration in the Fruita Area	Adopted
						5. Board Open Discussion ➤ Dr. Sholtes requested information on staff supports for displaced teachers and students with the closure of East Middle School. ➤ Superintendent Hill, Mrs. Jennifer Marsh, Chief Academic Officer and Mr. Ari Goldberg, Site Director, shared information on steps already taken should the Board move in the direction of closing a school. They shared information on systems and supports being put in place to assist and support staff, parents and students with getting questions answered and to reduce any stress and or anxiety some may be feeling with a school closure. Regular updates will be sent from District Communication to parents, students and staff.	

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					AGENDA ITEMS	ACTION
Motion				x	<p>➤ Board members discussed the need to make a decision whether to follow the demographer's recommendation to close one or more elementary schools or to pause any decisions regarding elementary schools until a committee can be formed to look at all options to offset declining student enrollment. The Board will hold a Special Meeting on March 16 to vote on next steps to address declining enrollment at the elementary school level.</p> <p>6. Adjournment</p> <p style="text-align: right;">_____ Bridget Story, Assistant Secretary Board of Education</p>	9:18 p.m.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education’s vision is to engage, equip, and empower each and every student every day; and

WHEREAS, the District has been experiencing declining enrollment since 2019; and

WHEREAS, declining enrollment has a direct impact on school staffing and programming, can lead to inefficient and unsustainable staffing, create difficulties in providing adequate services for students, creates underutilization of facilities and increased safety risks; and

WHEREAS, Western Demographics Demographer, Mr. Shannon Bingham, presented to the Board of Education information projecting declining enrollment over the next five to seven years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bingham further recommended the closure of East Middle School, located at 830 Gunnison Avenue, Grand Junction, Colorado, to address current issues facing middle schools due to declining enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the closure of East Middle School will necessitate boundary changes to incorporate the East Middle School area students to other middle school attendance areas; and

WHEREAS, the closure of East Middle School will require the Challenge Program to be relocated to another location; and

WHEREAS, the closure of East Middle School will displace seventeen non-probationary teachers/counselors; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education finds it in the best interest of the District to close East Middle School; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby directs the Superintendent of Schools to work with District and school administration and staff to close East Middle School and relocate the Challenge Program; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mesa County Valley School District 51 Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent to work with Mr. Shannon Bingham to facilitate the redrawing of school boundaries, as necessary, to accommodate the closure of East Middle School.

I certify that the information contained herein is accurate and was adopted by the Mesa County Valley School District 51 Board of Education on March 9, 2023.

Bridget Story
Assistant Secretary, Board of Education



Mesa County Valley School District 51

Resolution to Address Secondary Grades Configuration in the Fruita Area

Board of Education Resolution: 22/23: 71

Adopted: March 9, 2023

WHEREAS, Western Demographics Demographer, Mr. Shannon Bingham presented stakeholder information to the Board of Education showing the majority of stakeholders in the Fruita area prefer the secondary schools in the Fruita area return to traditional grade configuration of grades sixth through eighth and ninth through twelfth; and

WHEREAS, the District has been experiencing declining enrollment since 2019; and

WHEREAS, declining enrollment has a direct impact on school staffing and programming, can lead to inefficient and unsustainable staffing, create difficulties in providing adequate services for students, creates underutilization of facilities and increased safety risks; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby wishes to address programming and staffing issues caused by declining enrollment at Fruita Middle School and to transition the secondary schools to a traditional grade configuration; and now

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby directs the Superintendent to begin working with District staff to make the recommended and necessary changes needed to transition the secondary schools in the Fruita area to a traditional grade configuration of grades sixth through eighth and ninth through twelfth.

I certify that the information contained herein is accurate and was adopted by the Mesa County Valley School District 51 Board of Education on March 9, 2023.

*Bridget Story
Secretary, Board of Education*