



October 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

On October 13, 2020 the Billings Education Association became aware that a high school in the district was beginning to implement a movement strategy in which, “that if teachers have students move around in classrooms every 14 or so minutes, the COVID droplets are dissipated enough and neutralized to where the risk of being contaminated is greatly reduced.”

I immediately contacted Superintendent Upham in regards to this directive and the BEA’s concerns with the issues it would cause for creating undocumented close contacts, creating more opportunities to spread the virus, and the negative ramifications on teaching and learning.

I was assured that this was not what was meant to occur and that the issue would be addressed.

On October 16, 2020 another school issued a directive to, “Please be practicing with your classes moving every 14 minutes when students are closer than 6 feet apart and with each other for 15 minutes or more. Do this to protect them from Close Contact Tracing.” Again, the BEA contacted the Superintendent with grave concerns about this strategy. This issue was not immediately addressed.

On October 20, 2020 the Billings Education Association Representative Council met for their monthly meeting. At that meeting they unanimously voted to issue a statement that Rep Council condemns the District’s suggestion to periodically move students in the classroom (in this instance every 14 minutes) in order to prevent Covid spread and/or Covid tracing as unscientific and dangerous, and as such we will not follow this practice.

Our Representative Council and our members are justifiably concerned for the health and safety of teachers and students during this pandemic. We have worked hard to collaborate with the district in order to navigate through this pandemic with safety and education as our two primary goals. We cannot conform to this new strategy with the two goals of safety and education in mind, and request that the district cease its implementation and inform our membership and the community at large in writing that it has done so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rachel Schillreff'.

Rachel Schillreff, BEA President
Billings Education Association Representative Council