

PUBLIC FORUM RESPONSES

JANUARY 15, 2019

Security

Renovate or building new; competing values

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Mental health services for all children. Emotional security.
- Current / modern security in facilities – windows, doors, electronics. Adequate # of SRO's.
- Maintaining SRO presence in the schools.
- Safe from drug & alcohol use – abuse, vaping, etc.
- Not only keeping students safe, but teachers & staff. I don't think we have enough focus on public safety officers inside.
- Not sure what security measures have been taken. Dismissal at Brown / Polson kids just walk out into cars, maybe nice to have more school oversight.
- Providing enough security presence that crimes don't occur. I would favor renovating which I believe is likely more fiscally responsible.
- Focus on hiring personnel to ensure school security rather than focus on physical barriers to potential threats. Continue to work with the Madison Police Department.
- Lack of school security. Kids at Brown can just walk out of school – no check out.
- At all levels – increased protection at entry (I.D., not just doorbell). At the high school and middle school – metal detectors (at school AND events)
- Ensuring children feel safe. Explanations of drills. More resource officers.
- Parents roam into schools – no I.D. check, no secure area. Need onsite security.
- No plan in place at this time for after school at Jeffrey of concern – it's been too long in my opinion.
- Stronger security – law enforcement. Stronger mental health support – address issues immediately.
- Important to know our children & teachers are safe and there is a controlled entrance & campus that is secure.

What is most important about this topic to the entire town?

- Security will be compromised if schools are opened to public use.
- Have full time police officer at Polson and Hand.
- Attention to emotional & social health.
- Provide security balance. Parents know children are safe but avoid prison-like access.
- Today kids have ever-growing needs in an increasingly complex world. Invest not only in physical security of the buildings but also in programs to support the most vulnerable.
- Anti-bullying education and programs.
- Renovating some – building on the old to create modern / new facilities. Security that is smart ... better but not overkill ... slow attacks down ... can't prevent altogether.
- Emotional security – teach harmful effects of hate language.
- Important to the Town to know the community and feel safe in our hometown.
- NO guns for teachers / staff.
- Real important to invest in the most current protections in order to keep our students safe!

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Geography/Transportation/Equal Access and Quality **Ensuring all parts of town have their needs addressed**

What is most important about this topic to you?

- No student should be on the bus for more than 45 minutes, preferably 30 minutes.
- Short bus routes (30 min. max)
- Organized drop off / pick up times
- Traffic help during drop off / pick up near schools
- Neighborhood schools! Leave the schools closer to town center – vibrant for commerce, etc.
- No more than 30 minutes for school bus ride for elementary
- Uniformity or consistency of experience among and between schools, especially elementary
- Don't want our children to have long bus rides
- A central elementary “campus” could make sense, but is there definitive information on whether this can be done within an optimal busing time?
- Access to late bus service to allow students to stay after school for clubs / programs
- Bus rides less than 20 minutes; increase the # of buses
- Longer commute to school. Afraid students spend too much time on the bus. Bring more buses in and make routes smaller.
- Sr. citizens should be able to afford to stay in Madison. Maybe open up the possibility of more townhouses / condo, but keep at a minimum. Allow more land development.

What is most important about this topic to the entire town?

- Avoid long bus rides. Drop off and pick-up can be painfully long North Madison to the shoreline.
- Students should not have to be on the bus for long periods of time (no more than 30 mins.)
- Fair & equal transport trips for all children.
- If bus duration times will become longer for students in some areas of town, it should not have to interfere with their sleep schedule. Later start times for school could benefit the students.
- North – South equity is very important.
- Address needs of all constituents (not just school population). More affordable housing, expanded senior opportunities (majority of taxpayers).

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21st Century Learning Environments

Matching spaces to instructional approaches

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Quality of teachers / use of technology / compelling curricular
- How can we improve the quality of electronic / self-paced curriculum programming to reduce the size of classes & reliance on “old school” lecture based education models?
- How can we integrate 21st Century behavioral knowledge (like having older students start late & younger students start early) to improve performance without increasing costs?
- Ensuring our students & staff has the tools that not only meet the standards of education but exceed it. Our teachers never have enough tools!
- Class sizes & strong, valued teachers are a more important investment than the facility. Teachers & class size empower 21st century, outside the box teaching.
- It is not the spaces that matter, but the instruction is important.
- Quality of teachers / administrators paramount (more important than state-of-the-art facility). Facility wants need to be balanced with affordability for those footing the bill.
- Variety of size spaces and flexible spaces for work in groups (small groups, larger groups, or individually).
- How can we systematize maintenance expenses like colleges do by effectively establishing a computer-based calendar of maintenance? (sight lines)
- Involving as much technology as possible – SMART Boards, STEM labs, laptops for students of all ages.
- Opportunity for students to move around – sit at desks or tables or floor, comfy chairs, nooks, etc. Play areas for all ages.
- Ensuring a balanced between “high tech” education & traditional topics – not every student will work in computers, etc.
- Important for classroom environment to align with instructional models. Flexible seating, large open spaces, technology, etc.

What is most important about this topic to the town?

- Up-to-date, real world skills classes.
- Anti-bullying education and programs.
- Teaching kids to be problem solvers. Social pragmatics, experiential learning.
- Not an issue – we already have 21st Century schools.
- Keep design simple and timeless. Avoid state of the art Smart Boards, etc. Future proof facilities.
- How do Madison students prepare for future in diverse workforce?
- Promote student wellness (improved study spaces, comfortable seating, educational subscriptions, guest lectures, etc.)
- Increase in STEM & courses that are related to regional businesses & major in-state employers.
- My high school is more cutting edge & tech/science forward than our schools – and I graduated from it 25 years ago. We are falling behind.

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Costs / Value / Tax Impacts

Overall cost, value to community, impact on mil rate

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Since taxes will go up, let's be 1000% sure this is the right plan, not just for the next 10 years but for the next 30 years.
- More stores – Costco, Trader Joes, Whole Foods, etc. This will create more tax income and more restaurants, more foot traffic.
- Getting the plan right for the future.
- Data driven decisions. Look at what other successful districts/towns are doing.
- Investments in modern facilities & efficient/environmentally friendly tech to reduce costs going forward.
- Making Madison attractive to new families, businesses, schools and town facilities that reflect the future Madison wants are important.
- Having excellent schools increases home values for residents.
- Essential to diversity of town not to allow tax impact to “force” seniors out of town.
- Happy to pay more taxes to improve our schools and Academy / the Green / Surf Club. This town needs some major investment to stay relevant and appealing.

What is most important about this topic to the town?

- Could we make 3 schools work?
- Can we save money by using common design components among 2+ schools?
- With the enrollment # how many schools are needed? Can Polson be 5-8 and have no Brown? Elementary K-4?
- Explore revenue-generating possibilities for facilities (both on and off line).
- Tax impact of schools should not force seniors out of town.
- Sad comment, but assume taxpayers want near zero YTY increase and anticipate healthcare/benefits will greatly exceed inflation COL indices.
- Keeping taxes & mil rate low to ensure property values don't work. Connecticut is a mess let's not follow along.

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Public Use / Multi Use for Other Community Stakeholders Seniors, Town Programs

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Turn Island into Community Center or swimming facility
- Ice Rink / Performing Arts Center / Town Pool
- School facilities should be used more for town-wide programs
- Public use swimming pool
- Town Campus is already a community center – gym, fields, program space, courts, playground
- Madison Youth & Family Services
Access to children during the school day
Time & Space:
 1. Meeting space for large groups
 2. Individual 1:1 meeting space
 3. Time during school day for children to receive services – therapy as well as integrate positive youth development programs into the school day
 4. Offices in buildings for MYFS staff so that kids have contact when needed.
- Improvements to Town Campus gym
- More summer and after-school programs
- Security will be compromised if schools are opened to public use
- Innovation Center – think tank that brings together students and local businesses to work together and learn from each other
- Pool for public use possibly at a school (would need security)
- More town programs
- Public use of some structure in town would be great (Academy?)
- Bringing public into school buildings would need to have a solid security plan
- Proper auditorium / theater for school productions

What is most important about this topic to the entire town?

- Keep schools for secure **educational** programs. Academy can handle community / arts center needs.
- Multiple use buildings to flex with climate / weather events
- Community Center @ Academy with MYFS offices and programs run there & mix use space - coffee house, community meeting space
- Academy School – turn into Community Center and offer programs for all ages
- Public use swimming pool
- Design or re-design space for multiple (community-use). No need to have a “Community Center” at Academy
- Improvements to Town Campus gym
- Work with Academy Ad Hoc Research Committee to utilize multi-use/ government / Community Center buildings
- Economic efficiencies using resources for multiple uses as long as safety is maintained
- Meeting needs of all ages from children through seniors
- Ensuring town agencies have adequate space (MYFS, for example)

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- Open schools up in the summer to as many groups as possible
- Reduce operating costs for the Town
- The Beach & Rec Dept. is often in need of program space. This would be a great opportunity for shared use to serve the broader community, especially after regular school hours.

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Town Asset

Ensuring Madison remains a town families want to live in

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Turn Academy into a community center
- Young family planning to stay, want schools to be strong and competitive and reflect a community that invests in our children (and future)
- Competitive and attractive schools that reflect the important work of the teachers and staff in this small town.
- Funding to ensure post 10 year investment we aren't in the same position. Stewardship.
- Build a community center for all!! House MYFS in Academy – community center.
- Ensure that Madison is a community that is affordable for all – no one feels forced out of town due to taxes.
- Providing town with access to various stores that would keep taxes in town as opportunity to different town (i.e. Costco, Trader Joes) that can lead to more foot traffic to Madison.
- Affordability / low / reasonable taxes.
- Updated facilities that reflect the importance of education in our community and attract new families. Class size. Quality teachers. Competitive w/ surrounding towns.
- Quality programming / updated facilities / community feel / highly trained teachers / class size
- Turn Academy into a community center.
- Keeping our schools smaller / neighborhood located will ensure better value / pride / positivity rather than high industrial sized “mini-cities”.

What is most important about this topic to the entire town?

- Perception of facilities relative to shoreline peers
- Our family left a “weaker” district for one reason – the schools. Investing in the schools is an investment that everyone will benefit from.
- Not all residents choose Madison because of schools – low taxes & fiscally responsible leadership is most important to many.
- Very difficult to say – town is very divided on this issue (i.e. how much to spend on schools).
- We should really try to integrate the solution for Academy with the school solution.
- Buildings not so important. Don't need a Taj Mahal – taxes will keep families out. Programs & test scores are what matter.
- Town cannot afford a “bad rap” on aging schools. Ultimately we are a bedroom community and must remain an attractive bedroom.
- Preserving our older buildings is an asset to our community.
- Anything we build should represent Madison. The facilities should say that education & kids matter to the Madison community. Don't rush ... the high school was new but really fell short on character & practicality.
- If we don't have strong schools, young families will not move here (or stay here). We could just continue to decline (enrollment).

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- High quality schools raise/maintain property values. Education is one of the most important measures of a town. Shared town assets: performing arts center, pool, ice rink.
- People consider Madison as a place to live because of the school system reputation. But when they see the reality of how our facilities have not kept up with the times or surrounding towns, then Madison is no longer appealing. We live in Madison & our elementary school is so bad that we've opted to pay for private school. We're losing residents and prospective students.

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Size of “Schools” vs. Size of Building **Options for ensuring appropriateness for age of students served**

What is most important about this topic to you?

- Keep class size as is. Need facilities to match standard of education.
- Keep schools smaller for better community interactions within school environment / smaller class sizes.
- Keep class sizes small AND budget for sufficient paraeducator support for each classroom.
- The look of the buildings is secondary to the look of the curriculum. Investment in getting back to having quality education goals and learning outcomes should be first.
- Smaller schools = more personalized learning / age appropriate amenities (Brown playground) / stronger relationships w/ families at the school.
- Small class size is a must. Be able to identify needs of each student to maximize their potential. The best way to do this is with keeping small class size.
- Small (18-20 student) class size makes for a great learning environment. Larger than that is challenging unless there are at least 2 full time teachers per class.
- Small class sizes are important, more important than the size of the building. Larger building doesn't mean you'd lose the community feel.
- Keep class sizes small. Ratio of teachers & students DOES matter. Also keep para in class at elementary level.

What is most important to about this topic to the entire town?

- Avoid previous mistakes of mixing young students with middle and high school.
- There needs to be better scaffolding of learning environment in the classroom. Invest in teachers & technology – not just the size of the building.
- Children should not be pushed beyond their maturity level because of building space. Therefore, Brown should be an elementary school with recess / playground / and classrooms – not lockers & class changes!
- Where all children are bused, the concept of “neighborhood” schools is probably out the window. Larger, centralized schools in a declining enrollment environment might be the only option.
- Keep small class sizes. Parents will leave as class sizes become too large. Our children deserve attention and the opportunity to be seen/heard, not lost in a crowd.

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Topics Not Covered

- MYFS space and access to schools & children
- Proper facilities – auditorium, gym, pool
- Ensure that all new equipment is purchased with the longest warranty available. Maintenance contract should be purchased with all new equipment. Parts list w/negotiated pricing should be part of contract for all new equipment (future cost savings).
- Properly designed facilities that can be used such as a gym & auditorium (not like Hand!)
- Auditorium
- Brown needs a playground/outdoor spaces for the younger students now being sent there.
- Given the significant failure of the 2017 referendum, can the BOE obtain and publicize an economic/town benefits study for future capital referenda? We need to build political engagement among voters who do not have students in the district.
- Can we have another do-over referendum in 2019 now that Island is definitely going to be closed and more families will feel like improving Ryerson impacts them? Ryerson was in bad shape already and now we're adding MORE students there in 2019 fall?
- What are our options for swing space in case we need to build a new school or extensively renovate a school?
- So why \$1.2M for towns & schools each year & now \$10M per year? We've known about maintenance needs for some time.
- Environmental impact. Preservation of "old" character tradition & architectural value. New not always aesthetically pleasing.
- Intergenerational connections
- How did Madison get into this situation? How can we mitigate the consequences? How can we prevent this from reoccurring (e.g. staggered capital improvements).
- More public utilities / more natural gas / why do we have to deal with septic & well water?