

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**Madison Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
March 02, 2021
7:30 PM
Remote**

MEETING MINUTES

Full documentation of these proceedings can be found through on demand video located in the Meetings/Minutes section of the district website

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The public meeting of the Madison Board of Education was called to order by Chair Galen Cawley at 7:32 p.m. Mr. Cawley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Galen Cawley, Greg DeSantis, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Happy Marino, Violet McNerney, Tom Pellegrino, Emily Rosenthal, Katie Stein.

Also present: Craig Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent; Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent; Liz Battaglia, Sped Director, Bill McMinn, Director of Facilities, Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist, Scott Murphy, Board of Selectman, Eric Dillner, Student Representative.

Various members of the public via Zoom.

2. School / Community Session - 7:30 p.m.

2.1. Public Participation - None

3. Board of Education Student Representative Report

Isabelle Vagell and Eric Dillner

Isabelle was not in attendance this evening. Eric Dillner reported that March 22 - 26 is See Something, Say Something week. Normally this is just a couple of days but by making it the entire week, both cohorts have the chance to participate. Eric also reported the student input form previously reported on has been used frequently. Exam schedules are coming up, which are more like assessments; many students like this approach because it takes a bit of weight off our backs allowing time between classes. For sports we've had different things like senior morning for the gymnastics teams. The girls' basketball team has been doing really well - just shy of top 10 or top 10. Also, recordings of the chorus, concert choir, concert band and jazz band concerts are available on the website for viewing.

4. Superintendent's Report

Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D.

4.1. Board of Education Recognition

March is Board Member Appreciation Month and Dr. Cooke noted each Board member should have received a small token of our gratitude and the town's appreciation for your work. Board members do not receive compensation; they volunteer their time which is spent both in and out of meetings and so often goes unnoticed. Thank you on behalf of the students of Madison for everything you do for them.

Just a few general updates before addressing the agenda items.

Dr. Cooke noted the vaccine is moving incredibly fast for our community. Last Friday we learned that 100 doses would be available to us on Monday (yesterday). Thank you to Heather Dobson for working all weekend on scheduling and rescheduling appointments and then addressing scheduling issues first thing Monday morning. Thank you also to Gail Dahling-Hench and Dr. Battaglia for assisting with planning and to the four building principals for coordinating coverage while people received their vaccine. Thank you to Peggy Lyons and Trent Joseph who have participated in countless Zoom calls to make this happen.

Dr. Cooke reported he met with the Brown faculty who were incredibly appreciative they were able to go through our closed clinics. Previous survey results indicated about 15% or more were unsure or saying no to the vaccine, but that is a very small number now. It is hoped that within three weeks (this being week one) we are completely vaccinated with round one and anticipate starting round two April 1.

Dr. Cooke spoke to the important issue of Hand reopening, noting one of the main issues is giving students a place to eat safely. Heating the outdoor tents would allow us to utilize more space outside quicker. We are working with Hand administration and planning a survey that we hope to have out shortly. We are at 25% full distance learners, the highest number we've had, and really want to see if students would attend if offered five days a week. It is expected the Governor will be lifting restrictions which could impact prom for which we are holding dates, as well as graduation.

4.2. 2020-2021 Budget / ESSER II Grant

Dr. Cooke provided an update regarding the ESSER II Grant, noting the funds are for the 2021-2022 school year. The State has informed us a consultant will be meeting with the district to help determine uses for the funds, which amount to \$344,000. We've had some internal discussions and are hoping to target language arts interventionists for Ryerson and Jeffrey with the focus on grades K to 1 and 2 to 3. These interventionists would also be moved throughout the building as needed as we do expect an increase in enrollment in first grade and potentially Kindergarten. We will most likely need to hire an elementary teacher that would be ready to be deployed to the grade level of the greatest need. Dr. Cooke noted that without this grant, requests for additional funding for classroom teachers and social emotional learning support for grades K-3 and Polson may have occurred. In total, we are predicting 5-1/2 new teachers for next year in the amount of approximately \$320,000.

4.3. Potential Building Project Update

An update will be given during the Facilities Committee report.

4.4. Summer School Options

Based on discussions around budget time, we had proposed three options to the Board with regard to summer school. In light of the receipt of the ESSER II grant, we feel the utilization of the language arts interventionists is a better use of the funds. If we look at last summer, we are not certain we can staff summer school and we do not know how many students will attend.

5. Board Member Comments

Board members asked questions regarding the budget at the end of the previous agenda item (Dr. Cooke's report).

6. Audience Response to Information Presented (Ref. Bylaw #9540.10) - None

7. Board of Selectmen Liaison

Scott Murphy

Mr. Murphy reported the Board of Selectmen unanimously passed the Board of Education budget on February 22 and has now passed it along to the Board of Finance. The Board agreed it was a very

responsible budget. The Board of Selectmen has completed their facilities study which involved 47 buildings in town. Three components were considered: condition, usage and emergency shelter capability. Based on criteria established by the committee and DRA (contractor), Polson has been identified as the most appropriate facility for an emergency shelter. A study conducted by Loretta Jay of Parasol LLC regarding Madison Youth & Family Services has determined they provide exceptional, cost effective and comprehensive services and commended the collaboration with the school district.

8. Consent Agenda (Ref. Bylaw #9540.2 and #9540.8)

8.1. Line Item Transfers - none

8.2. Budget Expenditures as of February 25, 2021

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to approve the Consent Agenda.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

9. Board Committees / Liaison Updates (Ref. Bylaw #9450)

9.1. Curriculum and Student Development

Members: Diane Infantine-Vyce, Chair; Greg DeSantis, Catherine Miller

The committee met on February 23. Dr. Infantine-Vyce reported that Gail Dahling-Hench gave a presentation on Easy CBM fall 2020/winter 2021 assessment results, K-8, focusing on the 50th percentile benchmark as was requested by the committee. Kindergarten and 1st grade in particular were discussed when comparing results. The committee was concerned with those results - letter sounds dropped from 71% in the fall to 38% in the winter and for phoneme segmenting a drop from 83% in the fall to 45% in the winter, the possible reasons for that and how it is not a nationally normed number due to COVID. The committee also discussed Foundations and how it was implemented in Grades 1 and 2 in the fall. Kindergarten and 3rd grade did not start until January so we hope to see an increase in the results of the next testing. At our next committee meeting, the elementary school principals will give a presentation showing how the data is being used, examining student growth and how it triggers re-teaching.

Dr. Infantine-Vyce noted the committee was presented with data from Grades K-8 and that overall, test scores were somewhat better than the older grades. It is also noted that among the problematic assessments, a large percentage of students were virtual.

9.2. Communications Committee

Members: Tom Pellegrino, Chair; Diane Infantine-Vyce, Greg DeSantis

No report – the committee has not met. Next meeting is April 6.

9.3. Facilities Committee

Members: Emily Rosenthal, Chair, Happy Marino, Katie Stein

The committee met this evening. Mr. Warrington of Colliers International gave a building project update, reviewed the milestone and project schedules and discussed next steps. Consultants have been re-engaged for educational specs and demographic reports which will dictate space requirements for classrooms and other spaces. Mr. McMinn reported that the Town facility study has been completed and is available to the public. Dr. Cooke reported an executive session is planned for March 16 when the Board will discuss specifics with regard to security. Dr. Cooke also reported the enrollment report

will be received within a week and as expected, it is likely we will experience an increase in Kindergarten enrollment as well as birth rates. Mr. McMinn spoke to the work scheduled for the summer and reported the water fountains have been received, with installation planned during April break.

9.4. Finance Committee

Members: Katie Stein, Chair, Happy Marino, Tom Pellegrino

No report – the next meeting is March 16.

9.5. Personnel Committee

Members: Violet McNerney, Chair, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Catherine Miller

No report – the committee has not met.

9.6. Policy Committee

Members: Happy Marino, Chair; Violet McNerney, Emily Rosenthal

There are eight policies tonight scheduled for a second reading and 6 scheduled for a first reading. Comments have been received which will be addressed at the next Policy Committee meeting.

9.7. LEARN Liaison

Katie Stein

Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director of CAPSS, presented on the CAPSS Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools and discussed the newly released Governor's proposed state budget resulting in reduced Educational Cost Share funding. The Blueprint to Transform CT's Public Schools has been broadly accepted by state representatives and senators. Ms. Rabinowitz summarized the intent of the 30 proposed objectives presented in the blueprint, highlighting that this approach is holistic and hoping for a systemic overhaul to school funding model, versus a few quick fixes. The funding model, also mentioned in the presentation of the plan, is designed so that no districts would lose funding. The Blueprint will require an investment of significant funds to support all students in Connecticut. The Blueprint is a 15-year cohesive plan to include all districts, educators and the legislature working together with well-defined common goals. A GANT chart is being built by CAPSS to outline the work of the blueprint over the next 15 years.

At our next meeting we will discuss learning loss among the student population and how to assist in creating ways to regain the learning missed. Some districts are considering an extended school year to make up the deficit.

10. Action Item: Motion to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021 Board of Education meeting.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

11. Old Business

12. Future Agenda Items

13. Meetings/Dates of Importance

14. Action Item: Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss potential land acquisition

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by DeSantis to enter into Executive Session to discuss potential land acquisition. The motion was amended to invite Mr. McMinn and Dr. Cooke into the meeting and was accepted by Mrs. Stein
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

15. Adjournment

MOTION: by McNerney, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

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