

**Madison Public Schools  
Parents' Representative Council Meeting  
Friday, October 20, 2023  
9:30 AM  
Hammonasset Room**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**1. Welcome/Introductions**  
Sarah Drought

**2. Superintendent's Report (9:30-9:50)**  
Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D.

- Wifi / Zoom
  - Zoom is not easy for this room- someone can bring a laptop but doesn't work as well.
  - Thought is to record for presenters/budget
  - For budget season:
    - Dr. Cooke wants to come to each PTO meeting around April for meetings to inform school
- New School
  - On track for Feb/March groundbreaking
  - On budget
  - Naming Committee:
    - For new school- January/February
      - Part may be Jeffrey (auditorium)
    - Brown School will stay Brown School
      - Ryerson auditorium
- Affordable Housing -
  - Bennett member for affordable housing for 8 years
    - Advocate for school budget always, school renewal plan
  - CT required towns to improve affordable housing plans. Madison created a committee in 2021. Done a lot of research, outreach, and developed the plan.
  - Plan is official- to guide work over next years
  - New board of affordable housing to advise the town on how to implement the plan.
  - Outreach:
    - Created a PowerMap- clusters of people in order to hear from people
  - how they came to town and what they think is good for Madison
    - would like to have the voice of the community. Know they can't make everyone happy.

Impact of affordable housing:

- Firefighters- need young people to move into town to replace retiring firefighters
- Employers needed to move into state and stay in town but need to find affordable housing.
- Schools
- Public works
- Vast majority cannot afford mean cost of a house in Madison.
- How can we maintain school excellence if numbers drop because people can't afford to live here.
- Section 8-30G Housing:
  - In any town where less than 10% is deemed affordable under state definition. If a developer wants to come in and build multi family house. Town can't deny.

- We want to be ahead of this for affordable housing for what makes sense for us.
- Madison affordable housing currently is 1.68%
  - Most is senior housing- not available for families
- Ask from PTO is for committee to hear from families in our schools

What qualifies as affordable housing:

- Standard definition is 80% of the median area income pays no more than 30% of their income for their housing costs (rent/utilities) - for 40 years (remain affordable)
- In New Haven County mean is \$120,000- In Madison is \$140,000- so \$90,000 is average- 30% of that is \$2,200/ month for housing expenses
- The focus is for renting
  - Madison is considered an opportunity community
- tax credits available
- Issue in Madison for development (land is an issue, water, and septic)
- Can also have ownership
- School Calendar
  - 2 year calendar:
    - Long summer 2025 because of school move
    - Going to the board in December if there are any suggested changes

### 3. Guest Speakers

- Samuel King, Blue Earth Compost (9:50 -10:10)
  - Based out of Harford- experience getting food scraps out of waste stream
  - Biggest clientele are schools
  - Build culture around thinking about waste consciously
  - Composted 38,194,546 pounds of waste mitigating carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to 8m pounds of CO2 out of atmosphere in CT and MA
  - What they do:
    - Provide expertise/education
    - Provide containers- 32 gallon outside, inside dependent on population
    - Can clean containers on site
    - Cafeteria compost bins with signage in front/ pictures
    - Signage
    - Employee training
    - Weight reporting and sustainability metrics
    - Collection weekly
    - reliability /responsiveness
    - School districts they currently work with:
      - Middletown public schools
      - Greenwich
      - Fairfield U
      - Branford public schools, Deep River, Rocky Hill Public Schools
  - Where compost go:
    - Anaerobic digesters- w/o oxygen like quantum biopower to process food scraps into compost /energy
    - Food waste makes up about 25% of waste stream and over 33% of disposed material is compostable however only a small fraction of this material is actually recycled
  - Grant: ReFED
    - Working with blue Earth Compost, Haven's Harvest, Farm 2X Trifecta Ecosystems

- 4 semesters free
      - Everything blue earth does
      - Reusing food that can be rescued
      - Aquaponics, raised beds, greenhouses, curriculum activities to interested teachers
  - After 4 semesters: 300\$/month- \$3,000 per year
  - Contact: 860-266-7346, 413-824-6504, [sam@blueearthcompost.com](mailto:sam@blueearthcompost.com)
  - Fail Safe: for contamination
    - Front end: Helping with education
    - Back end: equipment to sort out
  - Reasons:
    - Environmental background
- Sherry Farmer, Nite in Hand (10:10 – 10:30) 6/14 Thursday overnight 10pm-5pm
  - 211 seniors
  - Want to seek out volunteers earlier in the year
  - Looking for: Leaders or co-chairs for...
    - chairs for design committee (starting in February) have a theme idea
    - Entertainment chair
      - Working with company
    - Carnival Games
    - Twice a month meeting via zoom (Thursday) 40 minutes
      - Agenda ahead of time
      - You don't have to create SUGs
  - Volunteers secured:
    - Help on committees
    - Can send SUG
    - Help for middle of the night 1am-5am
      - Maybe our PTOs can incentivise parents
      - 50 volunteers at least

#### 4. Review of September 15, 2023 Minutes

- Unanimously approve

#### 5. School Update Report

##### Ryerson's updates:

- We have 224 paid members for the 23/24 school year and have crushed our due goals.
- We used Tyco this time for Spirit Wear. They were fabulous to work with and the sale went great!
- Sherri Duskey Rinker author of "Construction Site, Taking Flight" met with the kindergarteners and first graders on October 6th. She was amazing. All the children really enjoyed her time with them and she was very engaging.
- Fall enrichment session 1 for the first through third graders was a huge hit. We still have one last class before we begin session 2. The 4 classes students could choose from were Chess, Cool-ology, Art, and Fluff and Stuff.
- Pies and Cookies fundraiser ended October 16th with a pickup date of November 8th. We were only a few hundred dollars away from our goal.
- Sneaker drive began October 12th and is set to run all year.
- Scholastic Book Fair will begin this Monday, October 23. Teachers and kiddos are very excited. We've made a goal of \$12,000 in sales and 1,500 books.

- Family Trick or Trick night is October 26th which the kiddos always love. This kids will get to go door to door to collect candy and Mrs. Spooner will tell ghost stories in the Multi Purpose Room.
- Tommy James Halloween Magic Assembly is happening on Friday, October 27th. The kids love him.
- Our food drive started October 17th and will run through November 14th. All donations will go to the Madison Food Pantry.
- Charleston Wrapping paper fundraiser is new this year beginning October 30th and running through November 17th. There is holiday, birthday, and other celebratory paper as well as house wares and gifts for friends and family.
- Adrenaline Rush fundraiser is on November 7th from 4-8pm. Adrenaline Rush will give us 50% of the proceeds they make for each jumper who mentions Ryerson.
- Family Bingo night is scheduled for Friday, November 10th.
- Fall Enrichment session 2 for the first through third graders will run during the weeks of November 13 through December 15, excluding the week of Thanksgiving. There are again four classes to choose from: Cool-ology, Lego Steam, Art, and Fluff and Stuff.
- Our holiday toy drive is set to begin Monday, November 27th.

#### Jeffrey Update

- We had a wonderful Author visit from **Sherri Dusky Rinker, to Jeffrey on 10/6!** Sherri gave a presentation to grades 1 & 2 and signed copies of her new book, Construction Site: Taking Flight to anyone who purchased a book.
- The combined Brown, Jeffrey, and Ryerson beach clean up at the surf club was a success on 10/7! A large amount of trash was collected, sorted and disposed of in 2 hours. The most amount of trash found were microplastics.
- For our Fundraisers:
  - Lyman Pie and Cookie dough fundraiser ran through 10/16
  - FlowerPower completed 10/15 and was a very easy fundraiser where we sold bulbs.
  - We sent in 2 large bags of used sneakers for our "got sneakers" fundraiser (we will be continuing that all year)
- Our first round of workshops began and we are off to a good start! This session which runs 5 weeks included 21 workshop choices for families. Most workshops cost 80\$ for 5 weeks (except a few that are business run which were \$100)
- Our Halloween Family Night will be 10/27 from 4:30-6:00 pm and include donuts/ cider and a scavenger hunt. We are doing a gently used toy drive to Re:Joy project at the event
- We sent out our volunteer spreadsheet on behalf of Jeffrey and Ryerson to Polson and Hand to attempt to get student volunteers for our family events. We then went to facebook and posted in some of the Madison groups to contact us if their kids would like to volunteer and we would send them the spreadsheet that way. We got a much better response this way. Would the Polson and Brown PTOs be able to inform on their end? I've attached the spreadsheet if so. This would give the older kids volunteer hour opportunities and the Jeffrey/Ryerson PTOs would give a \$10 donation/volunteer/ event to their club/sports booster <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15TzJo-DMZrmKXaIaLUiZhoGQ31cyQIrm3d7sSxTGVkk/edit?usp=sharing>
  - Here is the google form to share with students.
- For our membership we offered a popsicle party to the classes with the most membership/grade. We are up to 97 members. (Thank you Jan for the info on Hand membership)
- We will have our Halloween parade on 10/31 and we will take pictures of each class to send home.
- Upcoming in November:
  - Book fair 1st-3rd
  - Cultural fair 11/15
  - Chinese Acrobatics assembly 11/10

- Fundraiser- donut fundraiser with blazing fresh donuts through the month of November, and shopping night with Einstein's attic on Monday, November 27th

### Brown Update

- Membership: Approximately 120 paid members to date for the 23/24 school year
- Mystery Movie Day was a great success! The students overwhelmingly voted for Goosebumps 2. We collected non-perishable food items for Madison Food Pantry and the Cinema generously donated a small popcorn to everyone who made a donation! We delivered 3 large bins of food to the food pantry and a check for \$100.
- We gifted movie passes and treats to Mr. Price who won our monthly Brown Staff raffle.
- We purchased "I Survived" book sets for the school using scholastic dollars, and in support of November 2nd author visit
- We held our first school store and it was very popular with the kids. Adding more parent volunteers for next time to reduce wait times/lines. The store will be open the first Friday of the month.
- We wrapped up our first fundraiser and we met our sales goal! Kids won cute prizes based on their sales and the grand prize was an electric scooter! Product delivery will be the week before Thanksgiving.
- Our first general meeting is Thursday October 26th at 7 PM. Brown Math and LA team leaders will be giving an overview of the curriculum.
- We are planning fun activities/dance party for students during their lunch and recess time on Halloween, which is also a spirit day where kids can wear their costumes and donate a \$1.
- Looking ahead
  - We will hold a bake sale on election day
  - Family Skate Night at East Haven Ice Rink is scheduled for November 18th
  - We will start collecting donations for Holiday Shop
  - Talks started for workshops to start in Jan/Feb after this round of intramurals
  - We are purchasing 2 digital cameras for students to help take photos for the yearbook

### Polson Update

- Clubs/sports off to a great start. Now adding Student Council and Excel.
- Each grade is working on executive functioning skills including stress and time management. Students completed an executive functioning survey. Teachers and Counselors are supporting 6th grade integration to Polson and shared tips with parents during the 10/5 General Meeting
- 10/20 Dance-a-thon (Created by teachers. all students invited.) \$10 donation per person. All proceeds go to Columbus House and Eddy Shelter in New Haven
- 10/30 DESSA
- 11/2: 8-9 a.m. Executive PTO meeting
- 11/3: November 3rd Career Day, Lunch
- 11/7: Election Day Bake Sale
- 11/10 Veterans Day Breakfast for Veterans and Student Council reps
- 12/11-12/15 Polson PTO will host its first Scholastic Book Fair! We'll be looking for parent volunteers
- Polson dues are down by almost half from last year. PTO has reached back out to families last week and got an additional 25 families to support this year. Note: Polson PTO can't support our annual activities without additional family support through dues. Polson relies solely on dues and does not fundraise throughout the year.
- Additionally, in follow up to last month's PRC discussion, I've reached out to local CPAs in an effort to find a replacement for retired MJ Walker to assist PTOs with filing annual tax paperwork. There has been no interest yet.

## DHHS Update

- 1) We currently have 147 members. Our goal is 200. Our membership is \$25 per family. In our October PTO meeting, I shared with everyone that a portion of our dues are given back to the classes at the beginning of the school year. In the past, we purchased furniture or other tangible items for a classroom gift with the membership dues. We realized that these gifts, may not reach every DHHS student. So, we decided that best way to ensure that the PTO membership dues reach each student, was to contribute the donations to the classes. We donated \$3000 this year which has been split amongst the classes (2024, 2025, 2026, 2027). This impacts each family once their student is a senior as the funds will help offset cap and gown fees, senior brunch and picnic fees and prom tickets. The contribution also helps the freshman class since they do not have any class dues accumulated to date. The freshman class officers will put these funds toward the deposit to hold the date for the junior and senior prom. I am hopeful this explanation helps people understand that their membership fees make a difference.
- Jeffrey had asked how we had so many people join our PTO. I really think displaying the Ven Mo QR code has been helpful. I continue to remind people to donate at the meetings and we had board members at a table with the QR code at freshman orientation and back to school night. We sent an enotify with the QR code reminding people to join and we saw a few memberships trickle in that day.
- 2) PSAT's were administered during school October 16 and 17. In the past, they were taken on a Saturday so this is a welcome change. The PSAT format has recently changed from paper and pencil a computer based format. This computer based change for the actual ACT will start in 2024.
- 3) We will celebrate Halloween with the teachers by setting up a candy bar. We plan to put out full size candy bars for the teachers to grab as a snack.
- 4) We are trying to post pertinent information on our Facebook page to help senior parents stay on top of the many deadlines that are rapidly approaching.
- 5) MYFS update is below

## 5. PRC/PTO Reminders/Discussion/Subcommittee Assignments

- Political Action (Candidates Forum/Vote Campaign/Signs)
  - Discuss Candidates Forum – Will PRC continue to help?
    - Move to next month
  - PTO Best Practices Task Force:
  - Transportation Council (Attend Quarterly Meetings & Bus Driver Appreciation)
  - Food Council (Attend Quarterly Meetings)
  - MYFS/MADE (Attend Monthly Meetings)
  - PTO Best Practices Task Force:
  - By-laws/ Budgets/Treasurers Reports/Insurance/Websites
  - PTO Websites/Forms/Fundraising/School Gifts/Forms
    - Staff Appreciation: Custodians & Banner
  - District Wide Outing or Social Event Ideas
  - PRC Speakers

## 6. Old Business

## 7. Future Agenda Items

## 8. Adjournment