Madison Public Schools
Parents' Representative Council Meeting
Friday April 26, 2024
9:30 AM
Hammonasset Room

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome/Introductions
Sarah Drought

2. Superintendent's Report
Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D.

a. 24-25 Budget
    a. Asked for support to get the word out for the May 14th budget referendum
        i. Discussed putting signs out within the town guidelines on timing
        ii. Discussed sending information fact sheet out through PTOs
    b. A "no" vote will impact the budget through many years, including staffing as it will delay the hiring process over the summer
    c. This budget recommendation also keeps the grant-funded academic interventionists and social workers in place for SEL support
    d. Healthcare funding is a major expense for the BOE
    e. BOE is reducing staffing accordingly at DHHS due to enrollment decrease. Town has also made budget reductions. We are asking to maintain the budget
    f. Madison has one of the lowest budget increases in the states. BOF and BOE have supported the agreed upon reductions
    g. ~3% board increase has a tax impact of under 2%. There is budget info available detailing the budget and tax impact
    h. Academy budget issues may impact voter direction on the town and school budget
    i. Discussed potential impact of DHHS ranking on US News. Not too much of a concern as we are well-ranked within the state and competitive with similar towns
b. Competitive Curriculum at DHHS
    a. Discussed allowing sophomores the opportunity to take AP classes to reduce heavy lift during junior and senior years
    b. Considered addition of the International Baccalaureate program as it is available in competitive towns. DHHS already has the AP and UCONN classes which have structured curriculum requirements
    c. Inquired on adopting a mandatory volunteer requirement at DHHS
        i. Not likely to happen. DHHS students are busy and volunteer in the community already
c. WIFI update
    a. Guest network has been added at Jeffrey, Ryerson, and Brown!
d. Upcoming events
    a. Bus Driver Appreciation on 5/23 @11am at Surf Club (~75 drivers)
    b. Custodian Appreciation on 5/29 @3:30pm at DHHS (~35 custodians)

3. Review of the January 26, 2024 Minutes
    a. Minutes approved by Erica McMillan, seconded by Liz Tucker-Plasky

4. E.C. Scranton Memorial Library – Cindi Schneider
    a. Scranton rolling out a new app to download and check out books
    b. Rolling out a survey by QR code
    c. Opened the discussion with a pro and con of Scranton library
    d. Discussed what programming we would like to see at Scranton
        i. <5 yr. programming has increased
        ii. Tech help is available. Public can book time with Chris Penner
        iii. Suggested a Mahjong club
        iv. Teen library is available. BOLT is the library advisory board
        v. Suggested it would be advantageous to have bus run to the library from Polson/DHHS

vi. Noted that it might be best for Scranton library to be able to send programming notices through enotify to reach school age families to increase awareness
    1. Jeffrey and Ryerson offered to distribute through their newsletters

5. School Update Report

- **Ryerson**
  - Principal Report - Robust enrollment projected for next year – 328 students. Starting the placement process for next year.
  - Einstein's Attic partnership - 10% of all sales donated to PTO. Brown and Jeffrey already doing this with success.
  - Square One Art fundraiser March - comparable proceeds to last year.
  - Extracurriculars - Six different sessions this year, about to start last session. Taylor Swift Dance party has been wildly popular. Other classes have waxed and waned with popularity - Cool-ology, Lego STEAM, Painting, Learnin' Stuff, Fitness/sports (surprised this wasn't more popular).
  - Donated gardening gift basket to the Nite in Hand auction.
  - BINGO Night - April 19 - Charged for entry. Gave out more prizes than in the fall. Partnered with Portofino for food.
  - Touch a Truck - April 28 - Jeffrey and Ryerson to have a table with activity.
  - Paraprofessionals received gift cards to Madison Coffee House for Paraprofessional Appreciation Day.
  - Administrative Professionals Appreciation gift given to Mrs. Shea. Planning to give gifts to Mrs. Spooner and Mrs. Fortsch for Principal and School Nurses day.
  - Teacher Appreciation - week of May 6-May 10 – Amazing Race theme. Planned events for each day including gifts for teachers, door hang tag to order treats, KitKat ice cream for the whole school, teacher luncheon, bulletin board with teacher baby pictures for students to guess.
  - Incoming Kindergarten Visit - May 9. Students will visit classrooms and have a chance to ride the school bus. PTO will give out small gift to all attendees.
  - Variety Show - May 10. Sizing up the production this year with the location allowing for concessions. Also talking to Madison Flower Shop about supplying flowers for fans to purchase for performers. Charging admission for adults. Working with DHHS stage crew for lights, sound, equipment.
  - Re-recorded Ryerson School Song - last recording was from 2002 and sounded like it! Wanted a better quality sound for Variety Show finale and for any archives once Ryerson closes. Mrs. Soderberg came to play piano and one of the third grade classes performed vocals.
  - Budget Vote - May 14. PTO will put up (politically neutral) reminder signs along Lyle Drive and in Ryerson parking lot. Get out the vote will be important this year with the recent failure of Guilford's budget to pass referendum.
  - Ryerson Art Show - evening of May 15
  - Third Grade playdate - May 16, combined with Jeffrey third graders. Kit Kat will provide ice cream (free to third graders)
  - Last School Store of the year scheduled for May 17
  - Field Day - May 31. PTO is gifting shirts to each student and sponsoring a popsicle/water station with cooling fans.
  - Third grade yard signs - TYCO. Selling at a mark-up this year to subsidize the Third Grade Celebration and gifts.
  - Give to Grow - June 1. Busy pulling together raffle and auction items. Will be holding part of auction online this year to allow people to bid if they aren't at the event. Expect 100-125 attendees.
  - Third Grade Celebration – June 6. Third grade room parents organizing. DJ, dance party, yearbook signing, cotton candy/popcorn/snow cones/treats. Parents invited.
  - Hartford Yardgoats Ryerson Day - June 16 - 60 ticket block purchased, reselling basically at cost. Father's Day celebration.
  - Yearbook - submitted today. Early bird $27 and regular sales $33. Sales closing on April 28 but we always order extra. All third graders will receive a copy regardless of whether their parents purchase.
  - 2024-2025 Board Recruitment - PTO Q&A on Monday. Basically have all positions covered.

- **Jeffrey**
  - <u>February</u>
    - Bullies, Courage, and Tips for your Toolbox Assembly during "cool to care" week
    - IT Adventure Ropes Course Fundraiser (during Feb. break
    - Apres Ski Parents Night Out (raised $10k) : we had a silent auction, online raffles. Held at the stony creek brewery
    - Participated in the chamber of commerce Souper Bowl
  - <u>March</u>
    - Butterbraid fundraiser
    - Science Week (Mobil Ed STEAM museum, Cool-ology, kite making in art, at home science menu, bubble recess
    - Science Fair (90 entries, color changing lemonade station, Polson, and hand robotics team present)
    - Movie day with Ryerson at the Madison Cinemas to see trolls band together, food, pantry, donations
    - Flower Power Fundraiser

- April

  - Yankee baseball game fundraiser
  - Square 1 Art
  - Earth Week (composting at lunch on Zero Waste Day, curious creatures where students got to interact with many different animals, tree planting- from MadTrees, beach cleanup with Ryerson at Hammonasset)
  - Last round of workshops: in total 28k made for the year.
  - Touch a Truck with Ryerson

- End of year
  - Free zoom parenting workshop with Eran Magen (Realistic self-care for parents)
  - Teacher appreciation week: bee themed
  - Field day
  - Art shows/book fair
  - Memorial day veterans assembly
  - Elections for PTO board (after kindergarten orientation)
  - Family carnival
  - Third grade celebrations (lunch, yard signs with Ryerson, ice cream at Brown with Ryerson)
  - Einstein's Attic (10% back to schools code)
  - Spring spirit wear (Tyco is amazing!)
  - Spice Fundraiser
  - End sneaker drive
  - Kindergarten Orientation and Ice cream playground date

- **Brown**
  - **February**
    - Family Bingo had about 100 attendees and was so much fun!
    - Offered access to national Tech Talk to help educate parents on the latest trends in social media, tech, and parental controls in relation to students
    - Author Visit – James Ponti, author of the City Spies series
  - **March**
    - Coffee with the Counselor and CT State Police media awareness program (this replaced our general meeting)
    - PTO sponsored Madison Youth Lacrosse Intro to Lax after school fun clinic for 4th & 5th grade girls.
    - PTO sponsored Young Authors Day assembly to promote reading and writing. Performer (mime) acted out stories written by the students
  - **April**
    - Spring Workshops: Again well attended despite busy schedules.
    - Successful Book Fair! Gifting Library and homeroom teachers with books and gift cards with profits.
    - 4/30 Deadline for 24/25 Board nominations
  - **Coming up**
    - Brown Variety Show on May 3rd will take place in the Polson auditorium.
    - Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week – Taylor Swift/Eras Theme
    - Annual Meeting and Elections – May 16th
    - End of year celebrations
      - 5th grade shirts and other gifts tbd

- **Polson**
  - March
    - CT Association Schools (CAS) Middle School of the Year -Polson came in 2nd Place
    - Spring Sports have started - softball, baseball, volleyball
    - Spring Intramurals have started - Clay Club, Tabletop Gaming Club, Friendship Bracelet Making, French Movie & Game Club, Polson News Club, and Everything Unified
    - 3/12/24 - State Trooper James White gave a media presentation to Polson. . Information was shared to encourage students to make appropriate choices online, regardless of the app, game, or platform they use. Families learned about current trends and how to support students in navigating the world of social media
    - Polson students performed with the VIBE Show Choir for their season finale

- Students from our Diversity Club and Student Council worked with peers from Bailey Middle School in West Haven to celebrate "Our World Day." These students researched, collaborated, and presented information about the traditions & cultures of countries around the world. Additionally, our café offered international lunch options and our PE classes enjoyed games from around the world.

- April
  - Polson Art Show is ongoing
  - Polson Sports and Intramurals are ongoing
  - Planning for the following May activities has started: 8th grade dance, EOY field trips, Teacher Appreciation, SBA (Smart Balance Assessment) first 2 weeks of May, Concert and performance season (orchestra will be performing with Hand), Law Day, and Referendum Bake Sale

- **DHHS**
  - We are all ready for the District Art Fair tomorrow 4/24. We purchased lemonade and cookies for the event. This year we will have signage sharing that the refreshments are provided by all schools and PRC. If each school could send $20 to DHHS via venmo @DanielHand-PTO that would be great. Or you could bring a check made out to DHHS PTO if that is easier!
  - We will again be purchasing gift cards to thank the MYFS staff for all they do for our schools. We will purchase $10 gift cards and a bagel breakfast for them in May or June. If each school could send $45 to DHHS via venmo @DanielHand-PTO that would be great. Or you could bring/send a check made out to DHHS PTO if that is easier.
  - Tomorrow (4/24) we are recognizing the DHHS Admins with $20 gift cards to RJ Julia along with a handwritten note thanking them for supporting our students and parents and the PTO of course! We are hard at work on Teacher Appreciation week 5/6-5/10 and will host a donut day, snack day and a luncheon. Night in Hand Auction is 5/10 from 6-9pm at Camp Laurelwood. Here is the link to RSVP and receive 5 free raffle tickets. There will be a cash bar and light refreshments. It is really a fun night and you can come home with lots of great things! Please consider sharing this with your families.
    http://email.madison.myenotice.com/c/eJwUj8Fq6zAURL9GWgbp6sqWFlrkPaqmNJSGFtKsjH0tOQLHCrZwSr6-eD3DzDmUp9JSaVLvFColeO-ksp3RPDhZS1AopER-daGu21gLE63uOgRZCUREbToLQWtteHJVJYUiE3tL0DWy6kOthZEWACNDMWZqx2teyu7WppGP7lrKfWFqz8Az8H2mZTfkPIxhR_nGwMc835YtYeADAy_9_u1-On4FoPSMSdLx8N__Tt_-sH68XwrY4flv9GG6fB7P85leffP4Ob20AwO_pvDY5vh2naZh89XKKIt8dgvlUuoKrEKGYtgqGwEvbsolxURtSXlqljCvicJfAAAA___qu1-f
    Our March blood drive was a success. We collected 25 pints of blood and one student volunteer will earn a $250 scholarship for college. We are looking to switch the dates for next year to enable more student athletes to participate.
    - **MYFS Update**
      - The MYFS board meets monthly, generally on the second Tuesday of the month, at 7pm at Memorial Town Hall. There is a public comment time at the start of every meeting and MYFS welcomes your comments and input, ideas and feedback. Please get in touch with me or Scott Cochran, MYFS Director for more information, or just check the Town of Madison page to confirm date and time. Scott can be reached at (203) 245-5645 and cochrans@madisonct.org. You can visit the MYFS website at for more information https://www.madisonct.org/812/Youth-Family-Services and follow MYFS on Facebook to stay up to date on events: https://www.facebook.com/MadisonYouthandFamilyServices
      - The MYFS Board met on Tuesday, April 16th, one week later than usual due to the school holiday schedule.
      - Thanks to Rob Xeller, MYFS board member who works for the CT DSS, for meeting with two MYFS staff to discuss nuances of DSS case work and the application process for benefits for things like food and heat help.
      - This month's staff update was from 4 of the six interns who have been working with MYFS this year. MYFS is now affiliated with 10 universities to provide supervised clinical experience for students pursuing degrees, certifications and licenses in the various clinical fields. MYFS interns are trained and closely supervised as they handle cases, and all families working with student interns are informed and accept working with these staff members. MYFS has typically had two interns per year but due to the needs for services and waitlists for child and adolescent therapy at MYFS, having six this year was a tremendous help. By using interns, MYFS is providing excellent care as though they are fully staffed, but saving costs by using interns who are unpaid. Having 10 staff and contractual clinicians and six interns all in need of safe, private, and confidential meeting spaces, as well as areas for parents and siblings who are also part of the sessions or waiting, highlights the critical need for space and services at MYFS.
      - Student Liaisons reported on the new structure for Advisory meetings at DHHS, where older students will partner with younger students to offer advice and guidance from their more experienced perspective.

- As prom and graduation season approaches, all DHHS students and staff attended a powerful assembly focused on the consequences of choosing to drive drunk. On April 16, motivational speaker Chris Sandy talked to the audience about the choice he made in his early 20s to drink and drive and how that choice has impacted every moment of his life since. He killed two people as a drunk driver and spent about a decade in jail and now speaks with young people about choices. It was a very impactful presentation. Following his talk, there were VR goggles and other experiential simulations for students. This was a direct response to MYFS survey results in the fall that showed more DHHS students choosing to drive with someone who had been drinking.
- There is now much uncertainty regarding MYFS moving into the renovated Academy School at this time. Despite years of requesting adequate space to provide services our community needs, and despite increasing requests for services from the community, given budget concerns with the Academy project, MYFS may not be able to move there. There are many unknowns at this time.
- Madison PD Lt Jeremy Yorke reported that the job description for the outreach social worker who will be embedded in MPD as a "second responder" will be posted soon. MYFS will supervise this employee who will follow up on MPD response calls.
- Catherine Barden, MYFS Assistant Director is leaving MYFS at the end of April. Catherine's remarkable commitment to Madison's youth has impacted every child in town. This is her note to the staff and board: "It is with a mix of emotions that I announce my departure from MYFS after nearly 13 remarkable years. This decision was not taken lightly as my time here has been truly incredible. I am immensely proud of the work we have accomplished together, and you all have become a second family to me. From celebrating the highs to receiving support during the lows, I have cherished every moment with you. I truly believe that I will never find a group of colleagues like you anywhere else.
  As you can imagine, the opportunity that led me to make this decision must be truly exciting, and I am delighted to share that I have been chosen as the new Director of Public Health at Advancement Strategy Consulting. In this role, I will be overseeing their CDC and SAMHSA contracts to deliver training and technical support to states, organizations, government agencies, and local coalitions nationwide, focusing on putting the latest substance abuse research to practice.
  While I am looking forward to this new chapter, it is bittersweet to say goodbye. While my last day will be April 26th, I will continue to support and root for each one of you as you continue to make a positive impact here in Madison. The town is fortunate to have such dedicated individuals helping, supporting, and empowering our youth and families.

5. PRC/PTO Reminders/Discussion/Subcommittee Assignments

- Political Action (Candidates Forum/Vote Campaign/Signs)
- 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