

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**Madison Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
May 11, 2021
7:30 PM
Zoom**

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, Cathy Miller, Violet McNerney, Tom Pellegrino, Emily Rosenthal.

Also present: Craig Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent; Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent; Liz Battaglia, Special Education Director; Heather Dobson, Human Resource Director; Bill McMinn, Facilities Director; Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist; Eric Dillner & Isabelle Vagell (Student Reps), School Nurses: Stephanie Lesnik (Hand), Karen Owen (Polson), Maura Cutler (Jeffrey), Liz Fortsch (Ryerson), Dashana Kytte (TCLC).

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

Eric reported on Future Plans Day which occurred on May 2 and gave an update on Senior events – next Wednesday is School Spirit Day, with a sunrise breakfast planned in the morning and a picnic on the turf later in the day. Sr. Prom and Graduation plans are progressing. A virtual walkathon will be taking place on May 23 to benefit the Madison Food Pantry and Meals on Wheels.

Isabelle reported exams are wrapping up this week. The Jr. Prom is Friday. Last Thursday was the first outdoor band concert and spring sports are coming to a close.

4. Superintendent's Report

Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D.

4.1. School Nurse Appreciation Day

Dr. Cooke, thanked our school nurses for their extraordinary efforts this year keeping our schools open and safe. Dr. Battaglia introduced School Nurses Stephanie Lesnik (Hand), Karen Owen (Polson), Maura Cutler (Jeffrey), Liz Fortsch (Ryerson), Dashana Kytte (TCLC) who were in attendance. Val Alberti, nurse at Brown Intermediate School, was not in attendance this evening. Dr. Battaglia noted we hired Stephanie Lesnik as the head nurse, two months before the global pandemic. None of her questions or concerns for the position aligned what she's done for the past year. We had somebody brand new to the role, and then came into this crazy year that we have never relied on nurses, more than we have this year. Dr. Battaglia thanked Stephanie, and all of the nurses. Contact tracing allowed us to keep our schools safe and open which could have not been done without our school nurses. Stephanie Lesnik spoke to the team effort of all the nurses and thanked the administration for their support.

4.2. Building Project Update

We will conduct a Public Forum regarding the Madison Schools Renewal Plan during the May 25 Board of Education meeting. There will be a Q&A session following the presentation for the public to provide input and ask questions. The Board of Education and members of the school administration will respond to questions at the forum. Members of the public are welcome to send questions in advance of the forum to roosz@madison.k12.ct.us. Chuck Warrington of Colliers and Bill McMinn will be on hand to answer questions as well. A press release was issued on May 10.

4.3. Proposed Use of ESSER Grant Funds

Dr. Cooke and Stacy Nobitz shared a schedule of proposed expenditures over the life of the grant. The board is expected to vote on the expenditures at its next regular meeting.

4.4. End of Year Ceremonies Polson & Hand

Dr. Cooke provided a short report on end of year activities at Polson and Hand, noting we are able to return to most of the Madison traditions, with slight modifications. Dr. Cooke thanked Kathryn Hart and Martha Curran, as well as the Polson staff for their efforts around student-focused events such as the 8th grade dance and picnic.

Dr. Cooke noted we are waiting on guidance from the State for a reopening plan for next year, which is anticipated to be a much shorter, defined plan. The State shared we will need to renew our plan every 6 months until September, 2023. Dr. Cooke also shared the baseball scoreboard has reached the end of its useful life and are looking at the athletic budget for funds. Dr. Cooke spoke to a tool called Data Exchange which is a program that helps engage the community in discussion and is much more interactive than a survey. Dr. Cooke plans to conduct a thought exchange with the board over the next week to introduce them to that tool. LEARN has purchased this tool and the State utilized it when they were building the reopening plan.

5. Board Member Comments

Katie Stein and Dr. Cooke spoke about the possibility of a vaccination clinic for the district, which would be a mobile clinic with the Pfizer vaccine administered. Discussions are ongoing but not finalized.

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

7. Board of Selectmen Liaison Scott Murphy

The Board of Selectmen met this morning. Mr. Murphy reported the Board will resume face to face meetings on May 24th, but will continue to offer a hybrid format for those who want to stay remote. Town Hall will begin to resume some normal operations. The Island RFP is out and we hope to see input in June with a possible Public Hearing in July. A reminder of the May 18 Referendum. Discussions have taken place with the Harbor Master and Scott Erskine regarding extension of the docks at West Wharf as well as voting situations. Also discussed a Harbor Management Plan and keeping the fire boat protected from children.

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

8.1. Line Item Transfers as of April 30, 2021

8.2. Budget Expenditures as of May 7, 2021

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Pellegrino to approve the Consent Agenda.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller, 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

Dr. DeSantis reported the committee met this evening. Gail Dahling-Hench and her team began with a review of the portrait of a graduate courses and the new Connecticut graduation requirements, beginning in 2023 for all graduates, which led to the proposed, required .5 Independent Study Course, and the proposed, required .5 Financial Literacy Course, both of which were recommended unanimously by the committee. The group spoke to the process of developing the courses. The Independent Study Course is one where students can tackle anything they choose and designed to learn how to work independently. The Financial Literacy Course focuses on creating self-reliant citizens and identifies how current world events will impact finances. Mrs. Dahling-Hench also discussed how financial literacy is included in the K-8 curriculum.

Melanie Whitcher and Brian Bodner talked about the work of the Daniel Hand Student Support Team and presented about the Saturday Academy effort, the goal of which is to monitor all student progress regarding grades, attendance and social emotional support. Identified students are invited to attend a Saturday Academy. Approximately 3.8% of the junior class and 7.3% of the senior class have been offered those supports, along with other supports that are provided during the school week. Note the efforts will be funded through the homebound tutoring account which had a balance available due to a reduction in some of those services because of distance learning during COVID.

9.2. Communications Committee

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

No report – the committee has not met. Next meeting scheduled for June 8.

9.3. Facilities Committee

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

No report – the committee has not met.

9.4. Finance Committee

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

No report – the committee has not met.

9.5. Personnel Committee

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

Dr. McNerney reported the Personnel Committee has met and started preliminary discussions. Additional information will be provided as negotiations continue.

9.6. Policy Committee

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

The committee has not met. Mrs. Marino reported there are several policies on the agenda tonight for a third reading, with an action item to rescind those policies and 2 policies for a first reading.

9.7. LEARN Liaison

Katie Stein

No report.

10. Action Item: Motion to adopt Independent Study Curriculum

MOTION: by Miller to adopt the Independent Study Curriculum
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller,
Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

11. Action Item: Motion to adopt Financial Literacy Curriculum

MOTION: by McNerney to adopt the Financial Literacy
Curriculum
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller,
Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

12. Action Item: Motion to approve rescission of Policy #2000 Administration Concept and Roles in Administration, Policy #2120 Administration Organization Chart, Policy #2131 Superintendent of Schools, Policy #2210 Administrative Leeway in Absence of Board of Education Policy and Policy #2220 Administration Representatives and Deliberative Groups

MOTION: by DeSantis to approve rescission the following
policies:
Policy #2000 Administration Concept and Roles in
Administration,
Policy #2120 Administration Organization Chart,
Policy #2131 Superintendent of Schools,
Policy #2210 Administrative Leeway in Absence of
Board of Education Policy and
Policy #2220 Administration Representatives and
Deliberative Groups
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller,
Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

13. Action Item: Motion to approve \$7,600 donation from Ryerson PTO to Ryerson Elementary School to purchase student outdoor picnic tables

MOTION: by McNerney, seconded by DeSantis to approve the
\$7,600 donation from Ryerson PTO to Ryerson Elementary
School to purchase student outdoor picnic tables
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller,
Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

14. Action Item: Motion to approve disposal of used books and equipment

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by DeSantis to approve the
disposal of used books and equipment

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller,
Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

15. Action Item: Motion to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2021 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)

MOTION: by Miller, seconded by McNerney to approve minutes of the April 27, 2021 Board of Education meeting
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: Stein
MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

16. Future Agenda Items

17. Meetings/Dates of Importance

18. Adjournment

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Pellegrino to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.
AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

“The Town of Madison does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and the meeting facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals who need assistance are invited to make their needs known by contacting the Town’s ADA/Human Resources Director Debra Milardo at 203-245-5603 or by email to milardod@madisonct.org at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.”