

Parent Mini-Webinar Series

Project Facilitator: Sherry Farmer

Overview:

As part of my 092 Change Project, a team of representatives from schools across the district was formed to begin looking at data and ways that we could support parents and students in the new COVID world of learning. From the data collected, the team identified the six most needed topics to address during the first trimester of the school year which were prioritized and presented in six live webinars throughout September, October and November.

A follow-up survey was sent to parents requesting feedback which indicated a positive response to the webinars, however some parents felt they were too broad and wanted a more in depth focus on specific topics or specific groups of students. The largest two groups that responded were parents of high school juniors and seniors and kindergarten parents. The high school parents indicated that they need more support in understanding the many different aspects involved with preparing students for life after graduation. The kindergarten parents expressed needing more support in helping their children develop foundational literacy skills.

Part II:

Supporting parents of students in high school

One way to provide support for the **high school parents** is to create a group of panelists, recent high school graduates and their parents, to discuss these topics in another webinar series. Many families have the economic means to hire external college counselors. Unfortunately, this creates inequities for families who cannot afford that support, and comments on the survey indicate some are feeling lost in this process. We would like to create a panel of students and parents that includes students who attended a local CT college, a big 10 school, a community college, and a trade school to discuss things that worked well for them in the process of preparing for life after high school. The plan is for this webinar series to be shared with juniors and seniors during their PAW period, when support such as this is given to students. The parent webinars would take place during our regularly scheduled time of 6:30pm. Videos will be recorded and posted on our district website with closed captioning to allow them to be viewed with subtitles in different languages as well.

Supporting parents with students in kindergarten

In order to provide support to the **kindergarten parents** at our two elementary schools, we would like to present four webinars using our Google Classroom platform, run by our reading coach, to parents that will give them background surrounding phonological awareness and foundational reading skills, as well as engaging activities they can do with their children to develop these skills. We would like to provide each kindergartener with a specific book that will allow explicit practice of each skill after the lesson. This will allow parents to practice the skill with their child in a structured way. We will follow this up with a Q&A live webinar for parents to ask questions or provide more information for those that may be interested or find they need

more support. Having all students using the same book for each lesson will provide continuity and help to ensure more equity. We are hopeful that it will also increase engagement, as this will be promoted as a district wide Kindergarten activity.

Madison Public Schools has been awarded a grant totaling \$4,200 from the Hartford Foundation of Public Giving to support the work of engaging community members and families in this important work.