

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

**Madison Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting
December 15, 2020
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 Superintendent Craig Cooke at 7:32 p.m. Dr. Cooke led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Also present: Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent; Art Sickle, Director of Administrative Services, Scott Murphy, Madison Board of Selectmen, Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist, Isabelle Vagell and Eric Dillner, student representatives.

Per Madison Public Schools Bylaw #9410, Board Organizational Meeting, the next regularly scheduled meeting following the election in November shall be the organizational meeting of the Board. A temporary chairperson shall be chosen by a majority of those members present and shall preside until a successor is elected.

At this time, I would like to call for nominations for a Temporary Board Chair.

2. Election of Board Officers (Ref. Bylaw #9410)

2.1. Election of Temporary Board Chairperson

Dr. DeSantis noted that the election of a temporary board chairperson is not necessary as Mr. Cawley is currently the temporary board chairperson, due to the resignation of Katie Stein. Dr. Cooke turned the meeting over to Mr. Cawley.

2.2. Election of Board Chairperson

Mr. Cawley called for nominations of a board chairperson. Katie Stein nominated Galen Cawley for the position of board chairperson. Mr. Pellegrino seconded the nomination. The vote was unanimous, 9-0.

Dr. DeSantis noted it is not necessary to second the motion for nomination of these positions.

2.3. Election of Board Vice-Chair

Mr. Cawley called for nominations of a board vice-chairperson. Dr. Infantine-Vyce nominated Dr. DeSantis for the position of board vice-chairperson. The vote was unanimous, 9-0.

2.4. Election of Board Secretary

Mr. Cawley called for nominations of a board secretary. Katie Stein nominated Emily Rosenthal for the position of board secretary. The vote was unanimous, 9-0.

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

3.1. Public Participation

None.

4. Board of Education Student Representative Report Isabelle Vagell and Eric Dillner

Eric Dillner reported Trimester 2 is in full swing. The fall play is being recorded tonight and will be edited and aired at a future date. Scott Testori, DHHS senior, has been named National Soccer Player of the Year, ranking #1 throughout the entire United States. Eric expressed his hopes that the Board approved the Robotics Donation which is on the agenda tonight.

Isabelle Vagell reported student leadership has met once in November and then again last week. The group is working on a plan to better incorporate those student voices that are less heard. A Google document is currently being developed which will provide guidance regarding who students can turn to for assistance. Students are looking forward to a new Program of Studies which will be online and more user friendly. Virtual orientation and a virtual club fair are being planned for the incoming class of 2025. The junior class is holding a fundraiser where Mr. Becker will be teaching virtual cooking classes, scheduled for January 20. Also looking into a virtual painting class with Mr. DelRusso in the near future. Isabelle noted that the return to the hybrid model of instruction has gone very well, with far less hiccups than before.

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

Dr. Cooke reported it has been a great first week and expressed his appreciation to Central Office staff, school staff, Dr. Paddyfote and the Board. Yesterday was an active day with regard to COVID cases; however, total numbers show we are on the low side in comparison to similar sized districts – 47 instances impacted students and 10 instances impacted staff. Dr. Cooke noted virus transmission is not occurring in school and spoke to the exceptional District Reopening Plan. Although this would be a first opportunity to conduct classes online during a snow day, Dr. Cooke noted this will not occur during the big snow event anticipated for Thursday. Going forward, we would consider a shortened school day and will communicate that as far in advance as possible. The graduation date will be set and brought forth to the Board shortly. Dr. Cooke recognized Scott Testori, noting he has signed a Letter of Intent to play for UCONN.

6. Board Member Comments

Katie Stein asked Dr. Cooke for clarification regarding a shortened school day during potential snow days. Dr. Cooke stated the thought is for online learning to occur between 9 and 1 and confirmed this would count as a full day.

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

7.1. Curriculum and Student Development

Members: Galen Cawley, Chair; Greg DeSantis, Catherine Miller

Mr. Cawley reported the committee met on December 8. An extensive discussion took place regarding connectivity issues and student ability to access and participate in their online education. Data was analyzed from a number of sources, as well as outage clusters and the necessity for a second device, which is in line with Board policy. Art Sickle gave a careful cost benefit analysis of using laptops which is cost prohibitive in terms of money, technical support, resources and time. The use of secondary devices and the concern for students who cannot afford another device was also discussed and the district will continue to monitor and identify students who are in that particular situation. Dr. Battaglia led a discussion regarding suicide prevention & training and outlined the Prevention, Intervention and Response Plan at the high school, as well as training rules and QPR strategy (Question, Persuade, Refer), risk factors and warning signs. Dr. Battaglia and the school nurses have assembled a very thorough safety plan which codifies existing procedures and ensures everyone is on the same page. There are no action items and no recommendations; however, we will continue to monitor online learning.

7.2. Communications Committee

Members: Emily Rosenthal Chair; Greg DeSantis

Emily Rosenthal reported the committee met on December 8, providing an overview of the committee's work and goals to Dr. Cooke. Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist, provided updates on crisis communications around COVID, school stories, social media channels, the district app and the superintendent's Twitter account. Upcoming priorities for the committee, as well as the district as a whole regarding the budget, CIP and buildings were also discussed. The committee also spoke to the structure of the committees and the Board.

7.3. Facilities Committee

Members: Tom Pellegrino, Chair, Galen Cawley

The committee has not met. Next meeting is January 5, 2021.

7.4. Finance Committee

Members: Happy Marino, Chair Galen Cawley, Tom Pellegrino

Happy Marino reported the committee met this evening. The administrative team conducted a budget retreat today and spoke to the committee about their approach to the budget during this pandemic year and the three main issues: academic concerns, technology needs, school security. Staff reviewed the 4 requested position as well as the sped increase. Overall, there is a 1.94% budget increase, which includes debt service. The committee discussed the approach the Board of Finance is taking with the Town – no new positions are requested. The Food Services deficit update was unable to be discussed during this meeting, but Mrs. Marino will request that information from Mr. Sickle.

7.5. Personnel Committee

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

No report.

7.6. Policy Committee

Members: Greg DeSantis Chair; Violet McNerney, Emily Rosenthal

Dr. DeSantis reported the Policy Committee met this evening and discussed the following:

- Adjustment to Policy #1160 (from Shipman & Goodwin) which is scheduled for a 3rd reading tonight. The committee did not recommend delaying the 3rd reading.
- 2021-2022 School Year Calendar which will be brought forth to the January 5, 2021 Board meeting for consideration and review
- The committee will begin its review of the 2000 series policy recommendations from Shipman & Goodwin

Dr. DeSantis requested the following motion be added to tonight's agenda:

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to amend the agenda to include the vote on the approval of the 9 policies presented for a third reading this evening.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

7.7. LEARN Liaison

Diane Infantine-Vyce

LEARN met on December 10, the audio recording of which can be found at:

http://www.learn.k12.ct.us/about_us/board_of_directors/board_of_directors_2020-2021_meetings

Legislative Update #1 – Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel for CAFE provided the following: Experienced legislators have returned to guide the Education Committee. Number of bills will be reduced due to the current virtual environment. More opportunities for public participation. Vaccinations will be discussed. It is the intent that the teaching staff will be in the group following first responders and health care workers. A mandate to vaccinate will be decided at the local level. Priorities of the next legislative session will be school funding efforts, which have been challenged by the state’s current fiscal condition, PD guidelines, removal of the cap on special education cost, and support of equity work. Black and Latino studies are to be included in district course offerings.

Legislative Update #2 – RESCs are advocating for increased funding for magnet schools. Teacher Residency Program funding will be requested to increase the number of minority teachers across the state. Through this program, it is expected to increase staff diversity by double the current number.

LEARN’s new HR Director was introduced. Staffing shortages at LEARN continue. After the first of the year. Teachers will be asked to return to in-classroom teaching. There is concern regarding resignations and retirements resulting.

Roundtable discussion: concerns with work that will be needed to catch up students on learning lost during the COVID pandemic. Discussion followed on how we prepare for this challenge. How do we assist teachers in preparing new models and practices that will assist students towards regaining the momentum needed to achieve their academic proficiencies? Planning needs to begin now with careful considerations toward developing a reasonable process that is equitable to students and teachers alike.

7.8. Board of Selectmen Liaison

Scott Murphy

Mr. Murphy reported the Board of Selectmen met on December 14. DHHS Math teacher David Fuller has been named the Madison Youth & Family Services Chairman. The Board recognized Neighbor to Neighbor for their donations of approximately \$67,100 to COVID relief. A Charter Revision Committee has been established and nominations are currently being accepted. A tax-exempt program has been suggested for the volunteer fire department. An early retirement program has been proposed which will result in some reorganization – a possible merger of Beach & Rec and Senior Services. Discussed Island Avenue School and the renewal of the lease, as well as affordable housing and the establishment of an ad hoc committee. Also discussed land use updates/opportunities.

8. Audience Response to Information Presented (Ref. Bylaw #9540.10)

None

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

No Consent Agenda.

10. Action Item: Motion to approve the following policies:

- Policy #1150: Smoking
- Policy #1160: Possession of a Deadly Weapon
- Policy #1170: Automatic External Defibrillator (formerly #5120.3.5)
- Policy #4118.14: Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504 - Personnel (formerly Disabilities)
- Policy #5200: Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504 – Students
- Policy #1000: School-Community Relations Program (rescission)
- Policy #1312 - Public Complaints (rescission)

- Policy #1316 - Conduct on School Property (rescission)
- Policy #1350 - Relations with Law Enforcement Officials (rescission)

MOTION: by Infantine-Vyce, seconded by McNerney to approve Policies 1150, 1160, 1170, 4118.14, 5200, 1000, 1312, 1316, 1350.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

11. Action Item: Motion to approve the \$2,500 donation to the DHHS Robotics Club by Mr. Leighton Lee

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by McNerney to approve the \$2,500 donation to the DHHS Robotics Club by Mr. Leighton Lee.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

12. Action Item: Motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2020 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to approve the Minutes of the December 1, 2020 Board of Education meeting.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

13. Old Business

14. Future Agenda Items

15. Meetings/Dates of Importance

16. Adjourn

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Pellegrino to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

“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.”