Dear Madison Community,

On Tuesday, March 17, 2026, the Madison Board of Education voted unanimously to appoint Mr. John Connolly as Superintendent of Schools for the Madison Public School District. This appointment is the culmination of a comprehensive, community-centered search process that began in December 2025 under the guidance of search consultants Mary Ann Friedman and Paul Pineiro of the New Jersey School Boards Association and drew from the priorities and values expressed by students, staff, and residents across the district.

The Board extends its deepest gratitude to the NJSBA search consultants, whose expertise and steady guidance were invaluable and ensured the Board selected the best candidate aligned with the district's criteria.

Although unable to attend the appointment, Mr. Pineiro shared that "Mary Ann Friedman and I were impressed by the Board of Education's thoughtful and deliberate search process, which was guided by input from community and stakeholder sessions facilitated by the New Jersey School Boards Association. Mr. Connolly's broad range of professional experiences aligns closely with the criteria established through that input and has prepared him well to lead the Madison School District."

Over the course of three months, the Board reviewed 34 applicants, invited a starting slate of 13, and conducted three progressively deeper rounds of structured interviews designed to identify a leader aligned with the district's leadership profile. Candidates were asked the same core questions, many of which came directly from the community and focused on pertinent valued topics such as leadership, district vision, fiscal management, curriculum and instruction, student achievement, school safety, climate and culture, staff development and mentorship, equity and inclusion, special education, literacy, technology, and community engagement.

The Board unanimously selected Mr. Connolly as a finalist to return for the third and final round, which included a formal presentation and roundtable discussion with the Board. Prior to the appointment, the Board also heard from an extensive list of references, including current and former superintendents, business administrators, and colleagues.

Madison Board of Education President Kelley Browning commented, “Throughout the process, Mr. Connolly was a standout candidate who demonstrated the key attributes valued most by our school district and our community. He is a collaborative and inspiring leader with a proven track record of driving academic excellence and putting students at the center of every decision. His ability to communicate with clarity and bring staff, students, caregivers, and communities together around shared goals was evident from the start. He thinks strategically, plans for the long term, and understands the fiscal responsibility that sustaining a great district requires. We are confident his experience, strong ties to the Madison community, and long-term vision will guide the district’s continued growth and support every student in reaching their full potential.”

Mr. Connolly's experience spans the elementary, middle, and high school levels as well as the central office – a breadth that is genuinely uncommon and one that the community identified as especially valuable for a district leader. He began his career in Madison in 1995, serving the district for more than two decades as a Physical Education Teacher at Kings Road School and Madison High School, K-12 Supervisor of Health & Physical Education, and High School Assistant Principal. Since 2017, Mr. Connolly has served in Millburn Township Public Schools, first as Principal of Millburn Middle School for more than seven years and currently as Assistant Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Connolly holds a Bachelor of Arts in Health & Physical Education from Rowan University and a Master of Arts in Education, Human Services Leadership, from the College of St. Elizabeth. He and his wife, Karen, reside in nearby Mendham with their three children.

In his role as Assistant Superintendent at Millburn, Mr. Connolly led several districtwide initiatives to strengthen instructional systems, expand access to advanced coursework, and support student well-being. He also led efforts to expand dual-enrollment partnerships, refine academic pathways, and align assessment and grading practices with student learning outcomes. As Principal of Millburn Middle School, he worked collaboratively with educators, students, and families to redesign aspects of the school schedule and learning environment to better support academic excellence and student well-being.

Following the vote, Mr. Connolly addressed the Board and audience, sharing, “I am deeply honored, excited, and humbled to rejoin the Madison Public School community as the next superintendent."

He concluded, “I look forward to working alongside the dedicated educators and leaders who make the Madison Public Schools a place of learning, growth, and inspiration. I am eager to listen, to learn, and to partner with all of you as we build on the district’s many strengths and continue to provide the highest quality of education for every student. Thank you for the warm welcome back. I look forward to the journey ahead and what we can accomplish together. And it would be remiss if I didn't say, it's a great day to be a Dodger."

The Madison Board of Education looks forward to the beginning of this exciting new chapter. Mr. Connolly will assume the role of Superintendent of Madison Public Schools on July 8, 2026.

Kind Regards,
The Madison Board of Education

Kelley Browning, President
Carmen Vasto, Vice President
David Duran, Lisa Ellis, Eric Fontes, Nancy Novack, Dr. Stephen Tindall