MADISON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Sarah Fischer
Board President
Stephen Tindall
Vice President

Johanna Ruberto
Interim Superintendent of Schools
Carrie Grapstein
Board Secretary

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

The Public Meeting of the Madison Board of Education, Morris County, New Jersey, was called to order by President Fischer at 7:30 p.m. on November 20, 2023 in the Alice Perlaw Media Center of Madison High School, Ridgedale Avenue, Madison, N.J.

The November 20, 2023 Board of Education Meeting will be held in person at Madison High School in the Alice Perlaw Media Center and virtually on Zoom and YouTube Live. Remote public comment will be available through Zoom. There will be no Executive session. The public session starts at 7:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present
Sarah Fischer, President
Stephen Tindall, Vice President
Carmen Vasto
David Irwin
Heather Reddy
Pamela Yousey
Richard Bruno, Harding representative

Also Present
Dr. Johanna Ruberto, Interim Superintendent
Carrie Grapstein, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary
Vittoria LaPira, Esq., Board Attorney

2. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

Motion by _____, seconded by _____, the Board of Education of the Madison Public Schools in the County of Morris will adjourn into a closed executive session to discuss the item(s) that falls within an exception of our open meetings policy and permits the Board to have a private discussion, since it deals with specific exceptions contained in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b.

1. Federal Law, State Law, or Court Rule.
2. Individual privacy
3. Collective bargaining agreements
4. Purchase or lease of real property if public interest could be adversely affected
5. Investment of public funds if public interest could be adversely affected
6. Tactics or techniques utilized in protecting public safety and property
7. Pending or anticipated litigation
8. Attorney-client privilege
9. Personnel – employment matters affecting a specific prospective or current employee

Be it resolved that the Board will now enter into closed session to discuss matters rendered confidential by [indicate applicable matters listed above]. Any discussion held by the Board that need not remain confidential will be made public as soon as is practical. Minutes of the

closed session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists. All appropriate persons who may be discussed in closed session have been adequately notified.

3. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION TIME: 7:25PM

4. FLAG SALUTE

5. NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Laws of New Jersey, 1975, notice of this meeting has been sent to the Madison Eagle, the Daily Record and has been posted in the Board of Education Office, the Borough Hall, the Madison Railroad Station, the YMCA, the Madison Library, all school buildings and on the district's website. The public is invited to attend. This evening's meeting constitutes an official Public Meeting of the Board of Education. Action may be taken. If needed, the Board will convene into Executive Session to discuss matters permitted pursuant to NJSA 10:4-12. Upon conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board will return to Regular Session at which time public action may be taken.

6. ROLL CALL

7. REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Good Evening-

Before we begin I want to call everyone's attention to some exciting news. In a new public school rankings published this week by the U.S. News & World Report, Madison Junior School was ranked in the top 50 middle schools in New Jersey coming at number #43. While I personally as an educator do not believe rankings tell the full story of any institution, I know many on this board and in the community are focused on them. I want to say congratulations to all of the students at MJS and the teachers and administrators that support their growth. We still have work to do but we are so proud of what you have accomplished.

As promised on Tuesday, I am going to give an update on the CSA search and this will include a comprehensive overview of the search process. Please bear with me, but seeing as concerns have been raised about the legitimacy of the process it is important to continue to be fully transparent and correct the public record. Please note that most of the following information was sent out in the September 5 communication from the board, which was sent to the MPS community, and can be found on the CSA Search page as well as on the News page of the district website. Additionally, there was a more comprehensive explanation of the timeline, thanks to the work of Dr. Tindall, posted on September 29 which is also on the CSA Search Page.

On April 18 the board approved Mr. Schwarz's resignation, the same week we were interviewing Interim candidates. We appointed the Interim Chief School Administrator on May 2 a short five weeks after Mr. Schwarz was appointed superintendent in Ridgewood. On May 2 we also approved the RFP for a search firm and were able to approve the firm at our June meeting and approve the contract by our July meeting. On August 23, 2023 the Madison Board of Education met with the recruiting group Strategic Educational Advantage (SEA) at a special Board of Education to define the timeline of events leading to the hiring of a new Chief School Administrator (CSA). The video recording of the August 23rd meeting can be viewed online. This is when we had a direct conversation about the turnover of the board positions and how it interacted with the search timeline. The board unanimously decided to move forward to fill the vacancy.

The Board was committed to including the community's voice in the process so we solicited community feedback through an online community survey regarding the characteristics desired in the new Superintendent which was available to all Madison community members from September 5 through September 21, and during in-person stakeholder meetings with SEA representatives held on September 12. Stakeholder Day culminated with an Open Community Forum. These meetings focused on identifying the strengths of the district schools, areas of needed improvement, and desirable

characteristics of the new Superintendent. Stakeholder groups included the Madison Education Foundation, Union leaders, PTO presidents, SEPAG, Madison Music and Arts, Central Office Staff, Administrations, a parent/guardian forum, the Business Administrator, MHS and MJS student groups, the Director of Curriculum, the Harding Superintendent as well as faculty and staff. This input combined with the online survey information was used to create a candidate profile.

On September 26th, based on the community input SEA presented their data analysis methods, a draft profile of the Candidate and an advertisement for further consideration by the Board. The position was advertised and SEA collected and processed applicant information through October 16th. SEA presented confidential candidate information to the Board in Executive Session at the regularly scheduled Board Meeting on October 17th. We had many applicants for the position, but with the help of the candidate profile and the feedback from the search firm the board unanimously decided to move a group of candidates forward.

The first round of confidential candidate interviews was held on October 21st and 22nd. The top candidates who were unanimously selected by the board, were invited back for an in person interview held on October 29th. These interviews were held in Executive Session and were not open to the public.

The final candidates were invited to speak with a representative from the Madison Education Association (MEA) and the Madison Administration Association (MAA). While inclusion of the union representatives is not required nor is it common, the board felt their voice was one important data point to contribute to the decision. On the advice of our search firm, we did not include anyone else in the process beyond the opportunity to contribute to the creation of the candidate profile, due to the importance of confidentiality for our candidates. Additionally, everyone involved, including the board members, signed non-disclosure agreements to ensure the confidentiality of the process. On November 4th, the Board met in Executive Session to hear the feedback and hold further deliberations.

The successful identification of a finalist has been made and approval by the Morris County Executive Superintendent for the selection has been requested. The Board expects to approve a candidate either at a special meeting in the coming weeks or at our regularly scheduled meeting on December 12. At the meeting, the Board anticipates that the finalist will be on hand for introduction to the community.

In terms of timing it was clearly stated in the September 5th communication that "the Board **may** vote on a Superintendent contract at the regularly scheduled Board Meeting on November 14, 2023 assuming we have received state approval." We also discussed the date of November 14th as our target goal, but that we might have to wait until Dec. 12 or another scheduled meeting during our conversations with the search firm about the timeline which occurred in public on August 23. Again these details are and have been publicly available on the website.

We received a question on Thursday Nov. 16 and got a legal opinion to share. In addition, Tuesday Mr. Irwin asked for a legal opinion about the timing of the process which we received around 5:30 tonight.

I hope this provides further clarity on the well planned transparent process this board has undertaken to fill the vacancy left behind by Mr. Schwarz's departure and that we can move forward in supporting our new Superintendent once they are appointed which is what is best for our district.

8. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

9. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

To clarify information from a comment at the November 14, 2023 meeting, Dr. Ruberto offered information about the audit process:

The auditors presented the results of the 21-22 school year audit at the February 28, 2023 Board meeting last year. At that meeting, the Board also approved the 21-22 ACFR (Annual Comprehensive Financial Report), the 21-22 AMR (Auditor's Management Report) and the 21-22 CAP (the Corrective Action Plan to address any findings.)

As for the status of the 22-23 audit, the auditors have not yet completed it. They should be done by early next week. At that point, they will hold an audit exit conference with the Interim Superintendent and the SBA to discuss the overall financial health of the district and the extent to which the district is in compliance with audit regulations, NJ Statue, Code and District Policy.

Per N.J.S.A., 18A:23-8, the final audit documents containing the district's fiscal data are required to be uploaded to the State Repository by December 5, 2023. The earliest we could possibly upload the audit documents to the repository is when it opens on December 1st. It is currently locked.

The following required documents will be uploaded to the repository by the December 5th submission deadline:

- Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
- Auditor's Management Report
- Peer Review
- Cover Letter
- Data Collection Form (if applicable)
- Audit Questionnaire (if applicable)
- Certified Board Resolutions
- Corrective Action Plan

The auditors will present the audit report to the Operations Committee and then to the full Board at a public meeting either at the January or February 2024 meeting.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES AGENDA - Action Items - Grades Pre-K to 8
Moved by Dr. Tindall, seconded by Mr. Irwin at the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, approve the following:

10.a <u>Professional Development and District Travel</u>

RESOLVED, that the Madison Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, approves the following professional development and district travel.

Name	Type of Travel	Dates	Registration	Est. Miles	Miles Amount	Total	Funding Source	Description/Locati
K. Spelker	2	12/1/23	$210.00	62	$29.14	$239.14	Title II	Intl. Dyslexia Asso Annual Conferenc Somerset, NJ

VOTE: 7:0

11. HUMAN RESOURCES AGENDA - Action Items - Grades 9 to 12 and District
MOTION TO REMOVE THIS ITEM FROM THE AGENDA
VOTE 7:0
A MOTION WAS MADE TO PICK IT UP FROM THE TABLE
Moved by Mr. Bruno, seconded by Ms. Fischer at the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, approve the following:

11.a Athletic Contracted Services

RESOLVED, that the Madison Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, approves the contract between the Madison Board of Education and Henrik Tallinder

Dodgers Contract.pdf

VOTE: 6 AYE – 1 NAY Dr. Tindall

12. EDUCATION AGENDA - Action Items - Grades Pre-K to 8

Moved by Ms. Yousey, seconded by Mr. Vasto at the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent, approve the following:

12.a Field Trips

RESOLVED, that the Madison Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, approves the following field trip.

School	Grades	# of Students	Class/Group	Date	Destination	Location	Transportation
MJS	7 & 8	25	Brass Students	11/20/23	MHS to watch a brass band performance	170 Ridgedale Avenue, Madison	District Bus

VOTE: 7:0

13. EDUCATION AGENDA - Action Items - Grades 9 to 12 and District

Moved by Mr. Bruno , seconded by Ms. Yousey, at the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following:

13.a Field Trips

RESOLVED, that the Madison Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, approves the following field trip.

School	Grades	# of Students	Class/Group	Date	Destination	Location	Transportation
MHS	9-12	55	Student Athletes	12/5/23	NJAC Sportsmanship Summit	Mount Olive High School, Flanders, NJ	District Bus

VOTE: 7:0

14. OPERATIONS AGENDA - Discussion Items

14.a Budget Update given by Dr. Ruberto

15. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Irwin asked to have a conversation in public regarding the board attorney's recommendation on a question that asked of the board regarding appointing a new Superintendent. The board as a whole will go into executive session to discuss the matter.

16. NEW BUSINESS

17. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

David Duran stated that as a newly appointed board member he will work with whoever is hired as the new Superintendent.

Johanna Habib commented about previous years' audits.

18. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION *(If Necessary)*

Motion by Mr. Bruno, seconded by Ms. Yousey, the Board of Education of the Madison Public Schools in the County of Morris will adjourn into a closed executive session to discuss the items 2, 8 that falls within an exception of our open meetings policy and permits the Board to have a private discussion, since it deals with specific exceptions contained in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b.

1. Federal Law, State Law, or Court Rule.
2. Individual privacy
3. Collective bargaining agreements
4. Purchase or lease of real property if public interest could be adversely affected
5. Investment of public funds if public interest could be adversely affected
6. Tactics or techniques utilized in protecting public safety and property
7. Pending or anticipated litigation
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9. Personnel – employment matters affecting a specific prospective or current employee

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19. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION

The board went back to discuss a legal option on whether the board can appoint a new Superintendent. Mr. LaPira, Esq., Board Attorney stated that there is a vacancy currently and that this board can appoint a new Superintendent.

20. ADJOURNMENT TIME: 9:00PM

Moved by Mr. Bruno, seconded by Dr. Tindall to adjourn the meeting.