

THE DODGER DIGEST

March 2019

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I hope this message finds you well as we pass the halfway point of the 2018-19 school year! I'm pleased to report that we have had a very productive Fall and Winter so far as we pursue our three District Goals to 1) *Make Learning Personal*, 2) *Empower the Whole Child* and 3) *Model Fiscal Responsibility*. Some accomplishments to these ends include:

Supporting students

- Providing professional development to our staff from experts including Child Psychologist Bob Brooks (district wide), personalized learning expert Alice Keeler (MJS), and other notable providers
- Providing additional training for support staff in suicide prevention and crisis intervention
- Introducing a new [District Dress Code](#) that is gender-neutral and promotes gender equity
- Engaging staff in Professional Learning Communities to evaluate and improve instructional practices
- Creating a Human Resources Department to better support our staff, recruit the most talented candidates, and increase the diversity of our faculty and administrators



Inside the MJS STEAM Facility

Facilities Upgrades

- Planning a capital project to renovate the MHS Locker Rooms and Fitness Center for the 2019-20 school year
- Opening our new MHS STEAM Lab and Music Wing
- Completing a new LED stage lighting project in the MJS Auditorium and a state-of-the-art audio-visual system at the MHS Auditorium
- Evaluating our options for providing air conditioning in our schools

Expanding programs

- Using additional State funding to provide Full Day Kindergarten in 2019-20
- Piloting a new Senior Internship program at MHS
- Redesigning our *More Than Madison* service learning program
- Empowering student voice by including Student Liaisons in our Board of Education meetings
- Exploring a new MJS Master Schedule to optimize the delivery of services to students

Lastly, we are very pleased to congratulate our Technology Team on the release of the new district website! We hope that you enjoy the website's attractive custom design, high resolution images and convenient features. We will continue to develop improvements to the site, including a sortable district calendar with RSS capabilities. Keep your eyes on madisonpublicschools.org for increasing news, information and features.

Sincerely,

Mark Schwarz, Superintendent

A Call for Inclusiveness

Recently, the district conducted a multiple regression analysis of student responses to our Spring 2018 Climate survey. This analysis examined the responses of students within various subgroups including Black students, Hispanic students, Special Education (SE) students, English Language Learners (ELL) and Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students.

First, please note that overall responses from Madison students in grades 3-12 were favorable. Here are a few highlights to consider:

- 91% of all students report having a strong friend base
- 96.9% of all students plan to attend college
- 86% of students feel that bullying is not a problem in our schools
- 84% of students report that they know where to go for help
- There were no significant differences between subgroups' perceptions regarding fairness in school rules



In our deeper analysis of the perceptions of students within the subgroups, however, some concerning trends emerged. Some of the statistically significant findings indicated that:

- SE, ED and Black students were less likely to report having a strong friend base
- ED, Black and Hispanic students were more likely to perceive that bullying is a problem
- Some minority students were more likely to feel as though peers do not value differences
- SE, ED and Black students were more likely to self-identify as average or below average

As our faculty and school leaders reflect on these and other findings, we ask that all parents speak to their students about the importance of inclusive behavior and the harm of discrimination. It takes a village to raise a child and we are committed to doing our part. Please help us to ensure that the Madison School District is a community that celebrates diversity and welcomes students and families from all walks of life. If you are interested in learning more about what you can do as a parent, see this [PBS Resource](#) about inclusion and this [APA Article](#) for how to address the sensitive topic of discrimination.

Full Day Kindergarten Update

On January 8, 2019, Architect Anthony Gianforcaro of Gianforcaro Architects, Engineers and Planners, reported the results of his Full Day Kindergarten feasibility study to the Madison Board of Education. As a result, the district is pleased to announce that it will be moving forward with plans to introduce Full Day Kindergarten in September 2019. After considering an option to realign our elementary schools, the district has decided to maintain our existing neighborhood school configuration, modifying each building to allow for the addition of Kindergarten classrooms within each school.

Please note on your calendars that my Superintendent Coffee on April 25 will include an open forum for the community regarding the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten. All are welcome to join us at 7pm in the Central Avenue School Auditorium to learn more and provide input to the planning process.

Lastly, if you or anyone you know plans to enroll their child in Full Day Kindergarten for the 2019-20 school year, please enroll your child as soon as possible to help us with planning purposes. To begin this process, please visit the [Registration Page](#) on our website.

Air Conditioning



After providing his feasibility study regarding Full Day Kindergarten, Mr. Gianforcaro also presented an analysis of the cost of air conditioning our five district schools. His study explored the implementation of window units, ductless splits, unit ventilator conversion, geothermal cooling and centralized air conditioning.

While the former three of these options proved to be the most economically feasible, all options present a considerable cost to the district.

As we plan our facilities improvements for 2019-20 and beyond, we are evaluating the best options to eventually provide air conditioning for all of our students for the hot months of the school year. In the short term, we'll explore the feasibility of giving priority to cooling our hottest rooms first.

New District Dress Code

Based on feedback and input from students, parents and school staff, the Madison Public School District recently developed a gender neutral [dress code](#) that empowers all students to dress in attire that expresses their individuality.

Students are encouraged to dress for school in clothing they find comfortable and actively engage in their learning environment without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming.

The dress code is designed to ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, relation, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

You can access the new code on all of our schools' home pages under the Parent Resources and Student Resources tabs.



CORRECTION:

In the November 2019 edition of the Dodger Digest, it was incorrectly stated that the District Goals were passed unanimously by the Board of Education. The roll call vote was in fact 6 votes "yes," 1 vote "no." One Board member was absent.