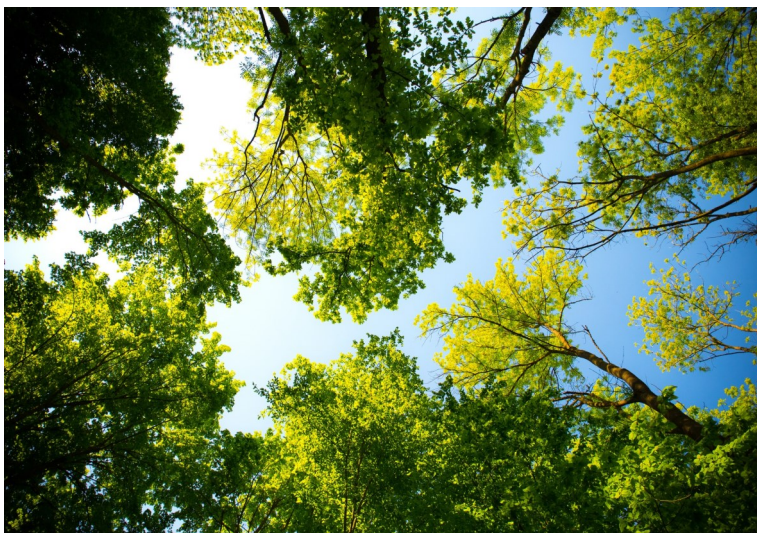


THE DODGER DIGEST

MAY 2019

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With newly sprouted leaves and cherry blossoms adorning our schools, it is clear that May has arrived and we are approaching the end of the 2018-19 school year. In this issue of the *Digest*, we will be sharing some information regarding current initiatives and our plans for September. Please note the following events and be sure to place them on your calendar. If you are interested in having district events appear automatically in your electronic calendar, see this issue's article titled, "The Tech Check: iCal Now Available!" contributed by our Technology Coordinator, John LaPierre.



State of the Schools Address – In June of 2018, I provided the Madison Community with the first inaugural [State of the Schools Address](#). The purpose of this endeavor was to unite the community in a common understanding of our schools' strengths and areas for improvement by providing a detailed analysis of our programs, rankings and student achievement. This year, I will provide an updated Address which will examine our progress and will include an additional analysis of our recent survey of parents, students and staff. The Address will be held on Thursday, June 6, in the MJS Auditorium at 7:00pm. If you cannot attend, the Address will also be made available electronically.

Close of the parent survey window – Please note that parent surveys have been sent to the primary contact for each household with students in our schools. In addition to the parent survey, each student in grades 3-12 will be provided with a unique survey link so that their individual perspectives may each be included. The survey closes on Sunday, May 12, so please make sure that we have a chance to hear your voice. If you cannot access your survey, please contact John LaPierre at lapierrej@madisonnjps.org.

Full Day Kindergarten Information Session – With the passing of the 2019-20 School Budget, the addition of Full Day Kindergarten is now official. In order to ensure that interested community members are engaged regarding our preparation efforts, we will be holding an information session at the June 10 Superintendent Coffee at 7:00pm in the Torey J. Sabatini School Jaguar Jungle (multipurpose room).

Thank you for giving consideration to being involved in our schools. I hope that you enjoy the content of this edition of the *Digest* and that I have an opportunity to see you soon!

Sincerely,
Mark Schwarz, *Superintendent of Schools*

Q&A with the CSA: Realigning our Efforts



On April 30, 2019, the Madison Board of Education approved the 2019-20 budget which includes a new model of providing support to our faculty and students. Since the initial announcement of this change, I have heard varying stakeholder perspectives over recent weeks and I am moved by our community's investment in the success of our schools. Whether expressing concern or support, it is clear that we are all united in our desire to see our students be successful.

Please note that some aspects of our new model and transition plan will be in continuous development, as we must remain adaptive to emerging concerns. Nevertheless, I hope that you find the following responses to frequently asked questions informative. If you are new to this topic, please refer to [April's Dodger Digest](#) for background.

What exactly is being "realigned"?

Short Answer: Our system of administrative supports for faculty and students is being restructured to ensure the alignment of our district efforts.

Explanation: While the new school year will see little change to our faculty and staff, the realignment introduces an administrative model whereby principals are empowered within the administrative team to represent their faculty, staff and students in the district decision-making process.

If we eliminate specialized positions, such as content supervisors, who will provide content expertise?

Short Answer: Our faculty members are our content experts; administrators should first be experts in instructional leadership, supervision and communication.

Explanation: Administrators need not be experts in all aspects of educational service delivery, however they must be able to harness the collective intelligence and content expertise of our faculty and staff to maximize informed decision-making. In fact, we do not currently have an administrative expert for every content area. Nevertheless, such areas as our K-12 Technology and STEAM programs, are vibrant and developing through the expertise and leadership of our STEAM faculty. The administration has empowered them to make programming decisions and the results are undeniably positive.

How will our curriculum be supported without curriculum supervisors?

Short answer: Our curriculum has always been and will always be written by our teachers. They will be supported by instructional coaches and our administration in the development, implementation and refinement of curriculum

Explanation: Curriculum will be overseen by Dan Ross, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Personnel. Under Mr. Ross's leadership, the district curriculum will be supported by content area curriculum counsels (which will include faculty members), school principals and instructional coaches.

Q&A with the CSA: Realigning our Efforts (CONTINUED)

Does this model provide more support to the High School than the Junior School and elementary schools?

Short Answer: This model is designed to support all schools equitably and will be continuously refined to ensure that it does.

Explanation: While the primary features of the realignment occur at the high school, these changes are components of an ongoing effort to provide balanced and effective support for our staff and students in each of our schools. It is important to note that while our current district supervisors have K-12 responsibilities, the greatest portion of their time is spent at the High School. The Junior School and elementary schools will not be provided additional administrators, however additional instructional and wellness supports are being instituted.

How will we maintain our outstanding Arts and Music Program without the Visual and Performing Arts Supervisor?

Short answer: The Music and Arts will be fully supported in our new model.

Explanation: Upon reviewing the nuances our district-wide Music and Arts Program, it is clear that we must have a position designated to provide leadership and coordination between schools for our many district Music and Arts functions. The details of this accommodation are currently being developed and we will share the specifics of how the district Music and Arts program will be supported in the coming weeks.

How will our Athletic Department function without the Athletic Director to schedule events?

Short answer: Our Athletic Program is highly valued and will be fully funded and supported.

Explanation: The Athletics program will be led by a High School Assistant Principal (AP) that is designated and guided by the Principal. Most of the functions of athletics scheduling are performed by the Athletics Secretary position, which will remain in place. Athletics are an integral part of the high school experience for many students and the program will remain fully valued and funded. For example, we are continuing to expand offerings by adding a new Girls Ice Hockey Team for 2019-20.



Q&A with the CSA: Realigning our Efforts (CONTINUED)

Why are we reducing a guidance counselor when student wellness and college and career planning are so important?

Short answer: The model does not eliminate a guidance counselor position, however we recognize that our guidance loads are somewhat high in comparison to our peers.

Explanation: Our current Guidance Director counsels forty students and shares administrative responsibilities with the Guidance Counselors. Under the realigned model, Dr. Frank Santora, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, will coordinate district guidance efforts and an MHS Assistant Principal will be responsible for the leadership and administrative functions of the MHS Guidance Office. This will require our four counselors to take an additional ten students each, bringing the average caseload to 220 students per counselor. While this is somewhat high as compared to our Morris County peers (many of whom are under 200 students per high school counselor), our counselors will experience relief in their administrative responsibilities. Nevertheless, we are exploring options to add another counselor at MHS to ensure optimal attention for each MHS student.



Did the process of developing this new model include stakeholder input and collaboration?

Short answer: The realignment plan was developed by the Superintendent in response to an analysis of the district's operational effectiveness, which included feedback from staff and the community via public forums, concerned emails, and survey responses.

Explanation: Ensuring the alignment of resources to support continuous growth and optimal delivery of service is the responsibility of the Superintendent. The Board of Education was given the opportunity to vet the plan before it was made public. Since the new model was announced, multiple staff meetings, Superintendent Coffees and Board of Education meetings have been held. All staff and community feedback has been taken into consideration and several adjustments to the model are being made as a result.

How will the transition between administrators be handled?

Short Answer: A transition plan is being developed to ensure that all administrative functions, including MHS student scheduling and MHS Athletics, are appropriately coordinated.

Explanation: The positional changes will take effect July 1, 2019. If for some reason one of our assistant principal candidates may not be able to start at that time, their responsibilities will be managed by the Principal, current Assistant Principal and secretaries with support from the Central Office team.

THE CURRICULUM CORNER: Full Day Kindergarten Update



Madison Public Schools continues to lay the groundwork for the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten for the 2019-2020 school year. Our three K-5 principals are excited for the new initiative and planning meetings are ongoing to ensure that we have a smooth opening in September.

From the construction side, the creation of new instructional spaces and bathrooms for each kindergarten classroom will begin on Monday, June 24th. Our excellent Facilities team, led by Mike Zulla, will carefully monitor the progress of the work through site visits and discussions with the contractor and construction manager. Building principals and central office administrators will also be onsite on a regular basis to ensure that the project is completed by mid-August. All buildings will remain open during the construction, although some areas may have limited access for safety reasons.

From the curriculum side, the district will continue to support the workshop model of instruction and will bring in three additional tools to improve student learning and engagement for the new full-day program.

- In mathematics, students will use Math in Focus as the core text series and additional support for students' spatial reasoning and logic will be provided through the use of **ST Math**. ST Math will be used regularly during class to ensure that all students gain access to fundamental mathematical concepts from an early age.
- In language arts, the district will be introducing **Schoolwide Fundamentals** as the core set of instructional materials, which will provide all three K-5 schools with aligned materials so that students have a similar basis for instruction regardless of their school location.
- For early literacy support, students will have access to **Fundations**, which is a multisensory, structured language program designed to support core instruction. Teachers will implement Fundations daily in class to help build students' reading skills and also identify areas in which individual students need additional assistance.

All core programming will be aligned to the NJ Student Learning Standards and will allow for a balance of academic engagement and play-based learning. If you have a child who will be entering kindergarten in September, please be sure to register now!

And if you have any questions, please join us at the June 10th Superintendent Coffee, which will serve as an information session for full-day kindergarten. The Coffee will be held at 7:00 pm in the Torey J. Sabatini School Jaguar Jungle (multipurpose room).

THE TECH CHECK: iCal Now Available!



As part of our efforts to expand the functionality of our district website, we have made some enhancements to our district and school [website calendars](#). First, please note that our calendars can now be viewed at the district and school level. In order to see all of the district events in one calendar, navigate to the district home page and either click on the Calendar quick links button, or scroll down to view the calendar. You also have the option of clicking the “View Calendar” button that is located just below the scrolling calendar. Please note that you also have the ability to view an individual school calendar by navigating to one of the school home pages and scrolling down to the calendar section. You also have the ability to click the “View Calendar” button for that school in order to see an expanded view of that school’s calendar.

Another exciting feature is the ability to set up an iCal feed to any of your devices, such as iPhones, Androids, Outlook Calendars and Google Calendars. The iCal feed function allows you to set up a link to either the district or one of the school calendars. Once set up, this feed will show all of the events on the district or school calendar on your device’s calendar. This feed is live, so as events are entered on the calendar they will appear on your device.

For an explanation of how our calendars work and for instructions on how to set up an iCal feed, please visit the help page on our website at www.madisonpublicschools.org/calendarinstructions. We hope you enjoy this improved functionality!