



Education Committee educationcommittee@cityofmadison.com

Date: Oct. 19, 2022

To: Madison Common Council, Dane County Board of Supervisors, and Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education

From: City of Madison Education Committee

cc: Mayor Rhodes-Conway, County Executive Parisi, Superintendent Jenkins, Education Committee

RE: Budget Priorities and Recommendations from the City of Madison Education Committee

The City of Madison Education Committee was created by the Madison Common Council to serve as a formal channel of communication and policy recommendations regarding issues of shared concern between the City of Madison, the Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, and Dane County. The Committee includes Madison Alders (Tag Avers and Charles Myadze), Dane County Supervisors (Heidi Wegleitner and Jacob Wright), MMSD BOE members (Nichelle Nichols and Maia Pearson), and designees of the Madison Mayor (Deputy Mayor Vakunta) and MMSD Superintendent (MMSD Senior Executive of Staff Dr. McGregory). At our October 12, 2022 meeting, we discussed our committee priorities, emerging issues, and voted unanimously to communicate the following recommendations to you.

Summary of Recommendations

- Support 9% COLA (County)
- Support increase funding for driver's ed (City and MMSD)
- Support \$800,000 to maintain family shelter operations (County)

- Support funding increases for permanent and affordable housing for extremely low-income (30% AMI) and very low income (50%) households (County and City)
- Support two (2) Public Health Madison patient navigators for reproductive health (County and City)
- Study airport noise impacts on MMSD schools (County and City)

In 2021, we communicated shared priorities we identified, including transportation, mental health, preventing and ending homelessness, youth employment and digital equity. We ask you to be mindful of these priorities, which benefit MMSD youth and our communities at large, when making budgeting decisions. We know employee recruitment and retention in our local governments and in our community partners is a huge concern. We applaud County Executive Parisi for proposing a 9% COLA for county employees and purchase of service (POS) agencies. We strongly support efforts to expand full-time, full-benefit family supporting jobs. We support budgets which enable wage increases for City, County, and MMSD staff as well as in contracts with community partners or POS agencies. We support closely scrutinizing budgets to reduce and eliminate reliance on fines and fees that disproportionately impact BIPOC and low-income people.

In the area of **transportation**, our committee has had some initial discussions regarding drivers' education. We plan to dedicate significant committee time in the remainder of 2022 and 2023 to discussing driver's ed and pursuing solutions to increase access for MMSD students, including returning driver's ed to MMSD. We support funding in 2023 to provide greater access to driver's ed, which is a huge racial disparities issue and greatly impacts employment opportunities for our youth. We encourage the MMSD BOE to support Boardmember Nichols' amendment for \$100,000 to support driver's education. With the addition of City funding, led by Alder Evers, and the existing County funding, driver's education expansion could now be a shared investment among our three governments to reduce this critical barrier to employment.

In the area of **preventing and ending homelessness**, we support funding to maintain and increase services to support families and youth experiencing homelessness. The Salvation Army has identified a funding gap of \$800,000 just to maintain its current capacity at the family shelter on Milwaukee St. We support Supervisor Wegleitner's amendment to provide \$800,000 to maintain family shelter capacity. We also support the County budget initiative to create a transitional living program for youth aging out of foster care and the efforts of the City-County Homeless Issues Committee to address the housing needs of parenting minors.

We also strongly support an increase in funding for **permanent affordable housing** which prioritizes extremely low income and very low income households with barriers to accessing permanent housing on the private market. While an infusion of federal funds through the CARES Act and ARPA have provided support in the form of hotel sheltering and rent assistance to many low income families, there is still a *huge* need for permanently, affordable housing units.

We feel strongly about the need to respond to the *Dobbs* decision and the further limitations it imposes on **reproductive health care** options, particularly abortion, for Dane County residents.

We support the expansions of reproductive and sexual health care resources in Public Health Madison Dane County proposed in the Mayor and County Executive's 2023 operating budgets. We ask the County Board and the Common Council to go further to support access to care, by sharing costs to fund two (2) patient navigator positions in PHMDC to help patients access information and connect to the reproductive care they need.

We are deeply concerned about the **impact of F-35 fighter jets** on MMSD schools as they are scheduled to arrive in 2023. Many of you have communicated your concerns and opposition to the F-35 beddown, either as a body, or as individual elected officials to the Air Force and other government officials. The Air Force's own Environmental Impact Statement admits that there is a significant disproportionate impact on low income and families of color. There is currently a noise study process underway, but we are concerned that the scope of the study does not adequately measure the harm of noise which will be inflicted upon many schools and students and their families. Additional funding could help support the request of Madison Teachers, Inc. to: study all schools on the north and east sides, measure peak noise levels as opposed to just average daily noise levels, consider the impact on educational performance and children's health, expand the study area, lower the levels for the study area to 55 or 60 dB, and increase transparency and community engagement throughout the noise study and mitigation process.

Internet access and **digital equity** has obviously become even more important during the pandemic because it is the way many of us now attend school, receive health care, connect with our work, and attend government and community meetings. We support increased collaboration between our entities in this area. We understand that the Dane County Broadband Task Force has entered its second phase of work and will be digging into access and equity issues in this phase and we look forward to following the task force's work in this area.

Lastly, we thank the County for its ongoing commitment to funding of **school-based mental health services** and recognize the City for its support for **youth employment** initiatives, both of which are Education Committee priorities.

Thank you for your attention to this letter and for your diligent work throughout the budget process. Should you have any questions with this letter or want to learn more about our committee, please reach out. Our committee is a unique public body with potential to enhance collaboration and initiate systems changes to address our shared priorities.