

From: [Kester, Annie](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Subject: paid childcare leave offered through the American Rescue Plan
Date: Monday, April 05, 2021 10:24:18 AM

Greetings!

This email is in regards to Item 11 on agenda of the April 5th Finance Committee meeting.

I am so glad that the City of Madison is able to take advantage of the many programs that are being offered in the American Rescue Plan. There is one program in particular that I think would be of great benefit to City of Madison employees and their families: FFCRA, the 10 weeks of paid childcare leave while schools are virtual. The paid childcare leave that employers were required to participate in last year is now available on a voluntary basis through September of this year.

MMSD is phasing back in in-person instruction, but it is a process. MMSD now has a date for each grade to return to in person instruction, which is great. However, there is no current plan (at least not shared with the public) for any grade to be in person 5 days a week, and grades 6 and higher will only be 2 days a week. There are still many employees who are affected by school closures, especially mothers of middle schoolers. It is very stressful for families when parents try to work full time hours while also overseeing virtual schooling. It can lead to unpaid leave, unsupervised children, deteriorating mental health of all family members...

Also, just because MMSD is currently committing to X number of days in person doesn't mean that they can guarantee that they will remain open for in person for all of those days. There may be some quarantining due to exposures and positive cases. Schools may also shut back down totally due to the more easily transmissible variant B.1.1.7.

Virtual schooling has affected women at higher rates than men. At the library, women were more likely to use the paid childcare leave than men even after compensating for the higher rate of women employed in the department. This is clearly an equity issue. I would also venture to say that school closures have affected lower income people at a disproportionate rate as compared with higher income people. Parents with more disposable income are more likely to be able to hire a tutor for their children. They are also more likely to have jobs that they can choose to work remotely.

Please reconsider our participation in this program. There is so much at stake.

Sincerely,
Annie Kester
Library Payroll Clerk
mother of a kindergartner and 3rd grader, both MMSD students