

# Schools Make Madison Advocates



Foundation for Madison's Public Schools

The Foundation for Madison's Public Schools championed the [Vote Yes 2 Invest campaign](#). This effort was integral in the passing of a historic operating and facilities referendum on November, 3 2020 – delivering \$350 million in resources to the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). This was the beginning for what is now the Foundation's advocacy arm, Schools Make Madison Advocates. We are committed to solidifying our role as one of the leading voices for Madison's public schools. The operating portion of the referenda will be essential to ensuring the district has an equitable recovery from COVID-19, but our work is not done. The lingering effects of the pandemic continue to impact the district on multiple fronts, shaping our 2021 priorities

## **2021 Priorities: MMSD COVID Recovery & Voucher Transparency**

As Madison's public schools begin a phased return to in-person learning, Schools Make Madison Advocates will fight on behalf of issues critical to a healthy recovery:

- a. **Wisconsin State Budget** – Governor Tony Evers is calling for one of the most ambitious K-12 budgets in the state's history. [His proposal](#) would restore the state's commitment to funding 2/3 of public education costs. In the budget, we are closely monitoring Governor Evers' plan to fund full day 4-k – an equity project MMSD has started piloting at three schools. We will urge the legislature to pass this critically needed budget that addresses many issues facing our public schools, several of those, in the context of MMSD, are described below.
- b. **Food Security** – over 12,000 (47%) MMSD children qualify for free or reduced meals. These students rely on MMSD for two meals and snacks, 180 days a year. There is a high need to cover operating costs so MMSD can continue to service mobile food pantries **and** provide food to students attending school.
- c. **Child Care** – When schools shut down in March of 2020, Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR), a department of MMSD, offered childcare services through their Cares program for 650 children in grades K-5, Monday – Friday. While this unique programming will end on April 21, 2021 – MMSD will face a significant budget gap due to the extraordinary increase in demand for childcare during virtual learning.
- d. **Broadband Access** – virtual learning has once again brought the digital divide to the forefront of inequities. Persons without reliable internet access continue to be at a higher risk of falling behind, deepening already existing achievement gaps.
- e. **Mental Health** – COVID-19 has contributed to spikes in anxiety and depression. As part of COVID recovery efforts, there is a need to advocate for expanded social-emotional well-being resources across the district.
- f. **Federal Relief** – any and all funds from the federal government can be used to provide relief for the issues impacting our public schools.

**Voucher Transparency** – an increasing percentage of City of Madison property tax funds are supporting private and religious voucher schools. This year, we will push for a Madison property tax bill insert detailing public and voucher school allocations. This action is motivated by factual transparency. We are not making any claims about efficacy of the voucher schools in our community.

## **Questions?**

Visit [fmps.org/advocacy/](https://fmps.org/advocacy/) or contact Melinda Heinritz, Executive Director, Schools Make Madison Advocates: [mheinritz@fmps.org](mailto:mheinritz@fmps.org)

## **Support Our Advocacy Agenda**

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