

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023
AGENDA**

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Communications / Community Engagement

This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business and is not to be considered a public meeting. There are two times for public participation during the meeting as indicated in the agenda. When addressing the Board, you will be asked to state your name. The Board determines the amount of time granted to individuals or groups to speak. Each person shall be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes. Board members may question speakers, but are not obligated to answer questions or make statements or commitments in response to issues raised by the public. In general, such items will be referred to the superintendent for advisement, investigation, study, and/or recommendation or designated as future agenda items for Board consideration.

A. Public Comments

IV. Routine Matters for Approval

- A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 12, 2023
- B. Approval of Bills/Reimbursement of Expenses

V. Milan Area Schools Strategic Plan Business

- A. Finance / Operations
 - 1. General Fund Budget Amendment - Attachment A
- B. Academics / Programs
 - 1. Paddock Body Safety Curriculum - First Reading - Attachments B1, B2, B3
 - 2. Section 98b Benchmark Achievement Goals February Update
- C. Personnel / Leadership
 - 1. Director of Early Childhood Appointment
- D. Learning Environment / Culture
 - 1. Book Study of "Why Meadow Died"
- E. Communications / Community Engagement
 - 1. Public Comments
 - 2. Student Board Representative Comments
 - 3. Superintendent Comments
 - 4. Assistant Superintendent Comments
 - 5. Board Member Comments

VI. Other Old/New Business

- A. Personnel Matters
 - 1. Closed Session - Superintendent's Evaluation
 - 2. Approval of Superintendent's Evaluation Rating

VII. Adjournment

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023
RESOLUTIONS**

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan High School Theater located at 200 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at _____ p.m. on February 8, 2023.

Board Members Present:

Board Members Absent:

Signed in Staff:

Signed in Guests:

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Communications / Community Engagement

This meeting is a meeting of the Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business and is not to be considered a public meeting. There are two times for public participation during the meeting as indicated in the agenda. When addressing the Board, you will be asked to state your name. The Board determines the amount of time granted to individuals or groups to speak. Each person shall be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes. Board members may question speakers, but are not obligated to answer questions or make statements or commitments in response to issues raised by the public. In general, such items will be referred to the superintendent for advisement, investigation, study, and/or recommendation or designated as future agenda items for Board consideration.

A. Public Comments

IV. Routine Matters for Approval

A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 12, 2023

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of January 12, 2023.

Moccio _____ Rosen-Leacher _____ Cislo _____ Faro _____ Frait _____ Heikka _____ Meray _____
Carried _____.

B. Approval of Bills/Reimbursement of Expenses

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses.

Rosen-Leacher _____ Cislo _____ Faro _____ Frait _____ Heikka _____ Meray _____ Moccio _____
Carried _____.

V. Milan Area Schools Strategic Plan Business

A. Finance / Operations

1. General Fund Budget Amendment - Attachment A

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to approve the 2022-2023 General Fund Budget Amendment as included in Attachment A.

Cislo _____ Faro _____ Frait _____ Heikka _____ Meray _____ Moccio _____ Rosen-Leacher _____
Carried _____.

B. Academics / Programs

1. Paddock Body Safety Curriculum - First Reading - Attachments B1, B2, B3
2. Section 98b Benchmark Achievement Goals February Update

C. Personnel / Leadership

1. Director of Early Childhood Appointment

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to appoint the following person to the administrative position listed and Base Salary listed effective February 20, 2023.

* Jessica Kishiyama – Director of Early Childhood (\$88,000)

Faro _____ Frait _____ Heikka _____ Meray _____ Moccio _____ Rosen-Leacher _____ Cislo _____
Carried _____.

D. Learning Environment / Culture

1. Book Study of “Why Meadow Died”

E. Communications / Community Engagement

1. Public Comments
2. Student Board Representative Comments
3. Superintendent Comments
4. Assistant Superintendent Comments
5. Board Member Comments

VI. Other Old/New Business

A. Personnel Matters

1. Closed Session - Superintendent’s Evaluation

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to enter into closed session pursuant to Section 8(1)(a) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, and upon the request of the employee, for the purpose of conducting a periodic personnel evaluation.

Frait _____ Heikka _____ Meray _____ Moccio _____ Rosen-Leacher _____ Cislo _____ Faro _____
Carried _____.

Time entered closed session _____.

Time returned to open session _____.

2. Approval of Superintendent's Evaluation Rating

Motion by _____ supported by _____ to rate Superintendent Bryan Girbach as _____ for the 2022-2023 school year.

(Ineffective, Minimally Effective, Effective, Highly Effective)

Heikka _____ Meray _____ Moccio _____ Rosen-Leacher _____ Cislo _____ Faro _____ Frait _____
Carried _____.

VII. Adjournment - Time of Adjournment _____.

DRAFT

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, January 12, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education was called to order in the Milan High School Theater located at 200 Big Red Drive, Milan MI, 48160, by President Cislo at 7:00 p.m. on January 12, 2023.

Board Members Present: Cislo, Rosen-Leacher, Moccio, Heikka, Meray

Board Members Absent: Frait, Faro

Signed in Staff: Bryan Girbach, Ryan McMahon, Yvette Kashmer, Krista Hendrix, Jennifer Barker, Lindsay Kriner

Signed in Guests: Michael McVey, Rachel Hobbs, Andrea Bennink, Sydney Smith, Jayme McElvany, Jacob Bennink, April Nicks, Shannon, Lake Foster, Izzy, Logan Tisdale, Holli Vallade, Josh McElvany, Carolyn Wetzler, George Elder, Trish Parker, Elizabeth Satterly, Annie Kruise, Doug Charles, George Wilkins, Stacy Terassi, Darryl Ansel, Mike Charter, Ashley St. Clair, Eric Rice, Michael Orr, Kurt DeMars, Jessica Leacher, Jill Tewsley, John Leacher, Jodi Overbeek, Pam Ackerman, Larry Biederman, Amy Bissell, Mike Angstadt, Heidi Johnson, Jennifer Bolanos, Laila Jasper, Alecia Powell, Jessica Lubke, Anthony Carvalho, Catherine Pucci, Dallas Aitson, Nicholas Wilson, Yvonne Smiley, Mary Kerkes, Maya Faro, Avery Powell

Pledge of Allegiance

The Oath of Office was ceremoniously performed by President Cislo for our two recently elected Board Members (Betty Rosen-Leacher: re-elected and Sara Meray: newly elected). Betty and Sara will be serving 6 year terms. The official Oath of Office was performed at an earlier date.

In recognition of National School Board Month, Superintendent Girbach recognized the Board for their hard work and tireless efforts to support our students.

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Andrew Cilso for President of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Betty Rosen-Leacher for Vice President of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Moccio supported by Rosen-Leacher to elect Michelle Heikka for Secretary of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to elect Tom Faro for Treasurer of the Milan Area Schools Board of Education for a one year term. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the appointments listed below:

Washtenaw School Board Association Representative Kirsten Frait

Legislative Relations Network Representative Kirsten Frait.

All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Public Comment:

- Michael McVey of the Saline Area School Board of Education and the Washtenaw Association of School Boards (WASB) spoke in support of the Board and the WASB.
- Rachel Hobbs asked if the Board had reached out to legal counsel regarding an ACLU letter received by the Board and presented her own research to rebut the statements in the ACLU letter.
- Andrea Bennink asked questions about the criteria used by the book review committee, suggested segregating books based on ratings, and suggested compromises.
- Sydney Smith spoke of Governor Whitmer's focus on education and pointed out that students sign appropriate use forms when issued a chromebook and that the school uses filters to prevent access to obscene material.
- Jaime McElvany read excerpts from books she finds objectionable and Penthouse magazine.
- Jacob Bennink spoke about the upcoming Big Red Board Chat and sought clarification on the status of providing paraprofessionals keys. He also described positive interactions at the High School.
- April Nicks expressed concern regarding certain books available in the library.
- Shannon read excerpts from books she finds objectionable in the library.
- Lake Foster expressed his opinion that the reading of books during board meetings was getting old.
- Izzy admitted she is only 17 years old and read books she finds objectionable in the library.
- Logan Tisdale, of Temperance, quoted the Bible, shared his religious beliefs, and reminded the Board of their duty to avoid stumbling blocks to education.
- Holli Vallade spoke in favor of the Board reading Why Meadow Died and spoke of bullying and discipline policies.
- Ashley St.Clair read an article from author Stephen King regarding book banning.
- Josh McElvany spoke of Jayme McElvany and his concerns regarding her reading materials she finds objectionable.
- Carolyn Wetzler spoke favorably about teachers, staff, and the Board.
- George Elder read books he finds objectionable in the library.
- Trish Parker quoted the Boy Scout oath, expressed concern about certain materials in the library, and the treatment of paraprofessionals.

- Elizabeth Satterly spoke in favor of certain materials in the library, parental choice, and allowing victims to process sexual assault without belittling their experience. She also read quotes from teenagers expressing their thoughts on book banning.
- Annie Kruse congratulated newly elected Board members and sought clarification on the Superintendent's annual evaluation, the Board's handling of conflict of interest issues, and FOIA requests.

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Special meeting of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Moccio supported by Rosen-Leacher to approve the minutes of the Special meeting closed session of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Rosen-Leacher supported by Moccio to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting closed session of December 21, 2022. All Ayes. Carried 4-0 Abstention from Meray

Motion by Meray supported by Heikka to approve the bills/reimbursement of expenses. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

The Board heard the First Reading of the General Fund Budget Amendment as included in Attachment A

Motion by Heikka supported by Moccio to approve the purchase of two 77 passenger buses from Midwest Transit Equipment as described in Attachment B. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Motion by Heikka supported by Rosen-Leacher to approve a future book student of "Why Meadow Died" by Andrew Pollack and Max Eden. All Ayes. Carried 5-0

Public Comments:

- Jayme McElvany alleged that providing certain materials to minors is a felony, accused the Board of hiding behind educational exceptions in the law, spoke of the ACLU and their attempts to avoid book banning, provided her interpretation of the First Amendment, and indicated that the Board would receive a letter from the St. Thomas Moore Society regarding books in schools.
- Holli Vallade spoke again about the Board's book study, alleged that concerns regarding books are limited to the books and not teachers, read excerpts from a book allegedly at Paddock Elementary School, and alleged that the book, the Bluest Eye, normalizes pedophilia.
- Annie Kruse alerted the Board that the audio on the live feed was cutting in and out.
 - President Cislo indicated that while the live feed may be an issue, the meeting was recorded and would be posted on YouTube in its entirety.
- Doug Charles read an excerpt from the Bible discussing sex.

- George Wilkins expressed concerns about books in the library and stated that he believes the Bible is different.
- Stacy Terassi read excerpts from books she finds objectionable.
- Rachel Hobbs gave her thoughts on the First Amendment and its relationship to books in the library, indicated that she appreciated the Board's upcoming book study, stated that she believed that the book Fun Home was donated to the GSA and that the donation was unlawful and should be investigated, asked if the District uses the EBSCO database, and welcomed new Board members.
- Trisha Parker expressed concern with students attending Board meetings for classes.
- Sydney Smith expressed that she was glad the Board is conducting the book study, mentioned the lack of keys for paraprofessionals, addressed certain alleged inaccuracies in public comments, addressed middle aged women reading books, her belief that sex in the Bible is not explicit, and encouraged Board members to grow up and take a stand.
- Darryl Ansel, a former officer in Monroe, expressed concern related to certain books in the library.
- Mike Charter expressed that the Board meetings are a democracy in action.
- Ashley St. Clair expressed concern regarding who is actually exposing children to books they find objectionable, the Board's new policies allowing parental consent, and her belief that kids are now reading these books because they are being read at Board meetings.
- Eric Rice expressed his belief that kids are now checking out certain books because individuals are reading them at Board meetings.
- Michael Orr read excerpts from a book he finds objectionable.
- Kurt DeMars spoke in favor of the Bible.

Student Board Member Comments:

- Faro provided information on upcoming High School events and congratulated DECA students on their recent success.
- Powell provided information on Mama Mia and other upcoming school events.

Superintendent's Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Welcome Back to Students and Staff
- Reminder - No School on Monday, January 16th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Resignation of Early Childhood Director
- Welcomed Sara Meray and Betty Rosen-Leacher to the Board
- Sex Education Advisory Board Update

Assistant Superintendent Comments were heard on the following topics:

- Reimbursement Grant for Board Trainings
- Title III Grant Amendment for Carry Over Funds

Board Member Comments:

- Cislo reminded Board members to provide their preferred committee assignments, discussed building sponsors from the Board, addressed questions regarding the Superintendent's annual evaluation, reminded the community about the upcoming Big

Red Board Chat, provided the Board Policy addressing Board Conflicts of Interest, and provided the Board Policy addressing Community Complaints/Book Challenges.

- Meray thanked the community for the opportunity to serve and thanked the Board for the warm welcome.
- Rosen-Leacher thanked the community for the opportunity to serve and indicated that she and Ms. Meray would attend MASB training related to the Superintendent's evaluation.
 - Mr. Cislo clarified that Ms. Meray would attend the MASB training as soon as possible.
- Heikka read death and rape threats received by Board members against them, their spouses, and their children as a result of the hyperbolic language used to describe them and encouraged the community to come together to solve issues facing the District.
- Moccio spoke of the death and rape threats made against her children and the steps she had to take to notify her employer to keep her fellow teachers and students safe while at work.

Time of Adjournment: 9:23 p.m.

**MILAN AREA SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
General Fund
2022-2023 Budget Amendment**

		FY 22-23 Adopted Budget	Dec. Amended Budget	Increase/ Decrease
<u>REVENUE:</u>				
100	Local	\$ 4,671,575	\$ 4,719,563	\$ 47,988
300	State	18,755,567	19,550,561	794,994
400	Federal	2,186,815	2,860,702	673,887
500/600	Incoming Transfers	2,794,822	3,381,210	586,388
Total Revenues		\$28,408,779	\$ 30,512,036	\$ 2,103,257
<u>EXPENDITURES:</u>				
110	Basic Programs	\$ 12,579,542	\$ 12,556,173	(23,369)
120	Added Needs	2,614,023	3,456,021	841,998
130	Adult/Cont. Ed.	226,840	238,103	11,263
Total Instruction		\$15,420,405	\$16,250,297	\$829,892
210	Pupil Support Services	\$4,173,751	\$3,787,054	(386,697)
220	Instructional Support	1,118,416	1,139,545	21,129
230	General Administration	570,845	598,646	27,801
240	School Administration	1,537,625	1,594,417	56,792
250	Business Support	441,885	451,930	10,045
260	Operation/Maintenance	3,427,959	3,902,223	474,264
270	Transportation	1,473,608	1,432,181	(41,427)
280	Central Support	855,557	865,659	10,102
290	Support Service Other	610,591	710,831	100,240
300	Community Services	846,015	1,039,169	193,154
400	Site Improvement Services			-
600	Transfers			-
Total Supporting Services		\$15,056,252	\$ 15,521,655	\$ 465,403
Total Expenditures		\$30,476,657	\$ 31,771,952	\$ 1,295,295
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures		(\$2,067,878)	\$ (1,259,916)	\$ 807,962
Audited Fund Balance @ 7/1/22		\$4,931,946	\$4,931,946	\$5,924,740
Beginning Fund Balance as % of Expenditures		16.18%	15.52%	#DIV/0!
Est. Ending Fund Balance @ 6/30/23		\$2,864,068	\$3,672,030	\$6,732,702
Ending Fund Balance Assignments				
	Assigned Harkness Estate	(50,000)	(50,000)	-
	Assigned Curriculum	(90,000)	(90,000)	-
	Assigned PECC	(341,600)	(341,600)	-
	Assigned Athletics	(20,965)	(20,965)	-
	Assigned Technology	(75,000)	(75,000)	-
	Assigned Building & Grounds	(75,000)	(75,000)	-
	Assigned Buses	(90,000)	(90,000)	-
Unassigned		2,121,503	2,929,465	
Total Ending Fund Balance as % of Expenditures		9.40%	11.56%	
Unassigned Ending Fund Balance as % of Expenditures		6.96%	9.22%	

Milan Area Schools
2022-2023 Budget Amendment - December 2022

Proposed revenue increase/(decrease) for the amendment: **2,103,257**

Revenue

Grants w/offsetting expenses	878,159
Additional Act 18 Dec. 2022 payment	586,388
Foundation Allowance Adjustment: Assumed an increase of \$400 per pupil, actual increase was \$450 per pupil and adjusted special education funding formula	255,333
MPERS UAAL contribution adjustments	319,202
State Aid adjustments	16,893
Miscellaneous adjustments	47,282

Total Revenue Change	2,103,257
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Proposed expense increase/(decrease) for the amendment: **1,295,295**

Expenses

Grants w/offsetting revenues	878,159
MPERS UAAL contribution adjustments	319,202
Back-up lighting repairs at Symons	13,300
HVAC repairs at Milan High School	20,000
New light poles through out the district	21,000
Elevator repair/maintenance at Milan High School	15,188
Consortium tuition reduction based on consortium enrollment	(70,673)
Interpreter for hearing impaired students	76,000
30% increase for electricity based on MISEC recommendation	165,000
New diving boards	31,000
Elimination of one high school teaching position	(79,571)
Elimination of one elementary teaching position	(97,649)
Elimination of one bus run/driver	(36,551)
Miscellaneous adjustments	40,890

Total Expense Change	1,295,295
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Resulting in an increased/(lower) use of fund balance of: **(807,962)**

Fund Balance as of July 1, 2022	4,931,946
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Revenues over Expenditures based on amendment	(1,259,916)
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Estimated Fund Balance as of June 30, 2023	3,672,030
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washtenaw area

council for children

safe kids, sound community

B1

3075 W. Clark Rd., Suite 110

Ypsilanti, MI 48197

(734) 434-4215

www.washtenawchildren.org

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BODY SAFETY TRAINING: Personal Safety Lessons for Young Children

As a parent you do your best to keep your child safe, but know that you cannot keep them with you every second of the day. While parents understand the importance of teaching safety to their children in regards to the dangers of fire, traffic, etc., they may have a difficult time discussing *personal safety*, or sexual abuse, or may feel it is not something that would be a concern in their children's lives. The sexual abuse of children is a subject that no one likes to talk about, but unfortunately it is a reality in society, and in our community. Statistics indicate that as many as *1 in 10* children may either experience sexual abuse or be approached for abuse by the time they are 18. Young children are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse for the following reasons: 1.) They lack a vocabulary to describe the abuse. 2.) Their lack of experience may lead them to believe this behavior is normal. 3.) Society places value on obedience by children. 4.) Children are, unfortunately, not always believed. 5.) Children, themselves, place great value on their ability to "keep a secret." This is especially true of very young children. *The American Academy of Pediatrics* recommends that parents begin a prevention plan to safeguard children from sexual abuse as early as eighteen months old by teaching them about the privacy of body parts and what to do if someone tries to touch them inappropriately.

The Body Safety Training program was developed to educate young children how to recognize, react and respond to child sexual abuse and is presented as just part of a larger spectrum of personal safety, such as from the dangers of fire, traffic, etc., all presented in a manner that young children can grasp. The children receive this information in a very concise, concrete and matter-of-fact manner which is not frightening for them. Although adults understand the ramifications surrounding sexual abuse, children do not understand it in that way and learn simply that some behaviors are "okay" and some are "not okay." Just as they learn how to "Stop, Drop and Roll" if their clothing should happen to catch on fire, to "stop, look and listen" before crossing a street or not to play with fire, they learn how to recognize inappropriate behavior and what to do about it. The emphasis is on developing prevention skills in young children with information and techniques such as modeling, rehearse social reinforcement, shaping and feedback. **The Washtenaw Area Council for Children**, the child abuse prevention agency for our community, provides **Body Safety Training** as a way to help empower children with the knowledge that they have the right to make decisions concerning their own bodies and to object and/or tell someone when they feel their rights are being violated; that people who abuse them are not always strangers; and most importantly, that sexual abuse is never the fault of the child and that children are not responsible for inappropriate acts of adults.

Key program concepts include:

- the child as the boss of his/her own body
- identifying "private parts" and the proper terminology for these parts
- distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate situations in which an older person (stranger, relative, acquaintance) looks at or touches their private parts
- how to respond to inappropriate touch
- it is never a child's fault when they are abused.

The program is offered in a series of ten lessons which are presented as *one 15 minute lesson a day for about two weeks*. At the end of each week, you will be given a letter detailing what has been covered so that you may practice the learned concepts with your child.

This program will be taught to your children beginning [Date inserted here]
Please contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Kourtnee J. Swafford-Bynum

Child Abuse Prevention Coordinator

Washtenaw Area Council for Children



3075 W. Clark Rd., Suite 110
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(734)434-4215
www.washtenawchildren.org

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

This letter is to tell you a little bit about what we have been learning as part of the Body Safety Program being taught at your child's school. The students are all bright and eager to learn. They have been learning lots of important rules and practices about how to keep their bodies safe and we would like to share some of those with you so that you can practice them at home with your children. Part of helping children stay safe is for them to learn their names, first and last, their street address and phone number. You may want to practice this also with your children. That way if they are ever lost they will be able to tell someone how to contact you.

Summary of The Body Safety Training – Week 1

- **I'm the BOSS of my Body.**

We learned that the teachers are the Bosses at the school and mom, dad and other adult caregivers are the Bosses at home, but that we are the Bosses of our Bodies. This helps empower the children and helps them to understand that they can help keep their own bodies safe from dangers.

- **Poison, Fire and Gun Safety.**

We learned about poisons in such things as cleaners that adults use for washing clothes, dishes, cleaning windows, etc. and how we must never drink, eat, taste, or play with these things. We learned that we must never pick up, touch, or play with matches and lighters. We also learned that if a fire happened at our home that we must get out of the house as quickly as possible, and that we shouldn't try and hide from a fire. We learned how to "Stop, Drop, and Roll" if our clothes catch on fire. We learned that we must never pick up, touch or play with a gun. If we find a gun, we must leave it where it is and go tell an adult about it. (** Gun Safety – as we have had several incidents in our community and surrounding communities involving children shooting other children with guns not kept safely in homes, as well as suicides of young people who've had access to guns, we advise you to visit this U-M Hospital website for more information about gun safety and children: <http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/guns.htm>*)

- **Home Alone/Getting Lost.**

We learned that if the adult that takes care of us must leave the house for awhile, leaving us by ourselves, that we must make sure that the doors and windows are shut and locked (Note to parents and caregivers: you may want to remember to take your keys with you from now on if you need to step outside of your home for a minute or two.) We also learned not to answer the door or phone if we are by ourselves, that we should keep quiet and not announce to anyone that we are in the house by ourselves. We also learned that even if the adult is home when someone comes to the door, in order to stay safe we should let the adult answer the door.

We learned that if we become separated from an adult while out somewhere, such as at the store, we should “stay in one spot” and let our grown-up come and find us instead of moving around and looking for the grown-up. We do not advise children to tell strange people in stores and elsewhere that they are lost and to go with them to find their parent. While most adults would probably try to help a child, it also opens them up to becoming victim to a predator. We teach them in the “stranger” lesson not to go anywhere with someone they don’t know, so don’t want to give mixed messaging.

- **Car and Street Safety.**

We learned that every time we are in the car we must be buckled in and not ever take the seat belt off until we reach our destination. We learned that we need to sit in our car seat or booster seat until we are of the size not to need them any more. We learned to keep our arms and heads inside the car and to not move around or make lots of noise when in the car, so we don’t distract the driver. We learned that the only safe place to cross a street is at a corner, at a crosswalk and only after we stopped, looked, and listened for cars and made sure there weren’t any before crossing. We talked about how streets are made only for cars and we must not play or ride or bikes in them. If a ball or other toy rolls out into the street, we must wait for an adult to get it for us.

- **Strangers.**

We learned some rules about what to do when encountering strangers. We learned never to accept gifts or rides from strangers. We learned that big people should not ask children for help (such as trying to find a lost dog) so we must get away from someone asking for help and tell our caregiver about it. We also learned that it is not safe to play or be by ourselves at parks and other places, and that police officers are our friends if we need help.

Next students will begin to learn about personal safety and how certain parts of the body are private and the correct terminology for those parts. Students will also learn the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior directed towards them, and what to do and how to report if someone tries to touch their body inappropriately or another person wants the student to touch them in an inappropriate way.

If you have any questions about this program, please feel free to contact me at the Washtenaw Area Council for Children, (734) 434-4215 or by email: kourtnee@washtenawchildren.org. Thank you so much for allowing WACC to teach your children these important lessons in our effort to keep the children in our community safe.

Sincerely,

Kourtnee J. Swafford-Bynum

Kourtnee Swafford-Bynum, Child Abuse Prevention Coordinator

Washtenaw Area Council for Children



3075 W. Clark Rd., Suite 110
 Ypsilanti, MI 48197
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www.washtenawchildren.org

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

This letter is to tell you about what we have been learning as part of the Body Safety Program during our second week. This week we've learned lots of important things about how to keep our bodies safe and I would like to share some of those with you so that you can practice them at home with your children. Talking to young children about the prevention of sexual abuse is never easy and not something that anyone likes to do. However, at this age they are especially vulnerable and may not understand if sexual abuse happened to them that it is not a normal occurrence. I would like to stress how important it is to continue this dialogue with your children. Having good communication with your child about this subject will give them the message that it is okay for them to talk to you, not only about this, but about other things that may come up in their lives as they get older. Keeping the lines of communication open with your child will help make your job of parenting easier.

Summary of The Body Safety Training – Week 2

- I. **Private Parts.** We learned that we have special parts of our bodies known as private parts and that they are the areas that are covered up by our bathing suits or underwear. We learned that these parts had names: breasts, vagina, penis, buttocks (also butt, behind, or bottom). (Please be aware that when we begin our discussion of private parts we show the children a picture of children without clothing. Like all of the other pictures we show during the course of the program, this is a drawing, not a photo. We use this picture to show exactly what areas we are referring to as private parts so there is no misunderstanding. Once we feel the children have a good grasp of this information we show a picture of the same children in bathing suits.)

Note to Parents – while it is tempting to use “cute” names for these parts, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents teach the actual names for these parts starting as early as 18 months of age. We at WACC also feel it is important that children learn the proper names starting at a very early age. Study has shown that if a child does happen to be victimized by sexual abuse that he/she will need to be able to tell exactly what has happened so that the perpetrator can be brought to justice. Also, some studies have shown that perpetrators may be less likely to approach a child who seems knowledgeable about personal safety and proper names for their body parts.

We also learned the difference between parts of our body that were private and those that are not. We reinforced that we are the *bosses of our bodies*. We learned that there were times when it would be okay for others to look at or touch our private parts such as when we are babies and need our diapers changed, when we need help cleaning ourselves, if we are hurt or sick, or if we touch our own private parts (as long as we keep this private).

- II. **Body Safety Rule.** We learned the Body Safety Rule, that it is “**Not okay for anyone to touch or look at my private parts**” unless we need help cleaning ourselves or are sick or hurt. We also learned that it was not okay to touch someone else’s private parts. We talked

about different ways that the Body Safety Rule could be broken – what was inappropriate and what was appropriate touching.

- III. **What to do if someone breaks our Body Safety Rule.** We learned that if someone tries to break our Body Safety Rule, such as tries to touch or look at our private parts or asks us to look at or touch their private parts that we are to say, “NO!” or “Leave Me Alone” and to get away and tell a grown-up what happened. We talked about who we could tell, such as a parent or a teacher or some other adult that we know and trust. We also learned that “keeping a secret” about this is not okay, that we must tell a grown-up what happened so that they can help us.
- IV. **No, Go, Tell.** We reviewed our No, Go, Tell skills and learned that it is *never our fault* if someone touches or looks at our private parts, or asks us to touch or look at their private parts, *even if it happens*. We learned that when we tell an adult what happens that we must tell WHO did it and WHAT they did. We reinforced who they could tell (parents, relatives, teachers, etc.) and that it is not okay to keep this information secret.
- V. **Review.** We spent our last day reviewing all that we learned this week and practicing our new skills using different stories about different situations. We reinforced the Body Safety Rule and who is the boss of our body.

Thank you so much for allowing us to teach your children these very important lessons. We hope that you will continue to practice them with your child so they will remember them. You may also be interested in this recently published article about child sexual abuse told from a parent’s perspective which highlights the importance of a program such as the one your child just experienced:
<https://medium.com/@anonymousparent/its-mid-morning-and-you-re-a-thousand-miles-away-from-home-when-your-phone-rings-66ffd089e8aa>

If you have any questions about this program, please feel free to contact me at the Washtenaw Area Council for Children, (734) 434-4215 or by email, kourtnee@washtenawchildren.org. Thank you for all your incredible efforts in helping keep the children within our community safe.

Sincerely,

Kourtnee J. Swafford-Bynum

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