

# **Madison Public Schools Facilities Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 6:30 PM

Town Campus Hammonasset Room, 10 Campus Drive, Madison, CT 06443

I. **Presentation - Reinstatement of Paper Towels in Student Bathrooms**

II. **Polson HVAC Update**

III. **Other Facilities Updates**

IV. **Public Comment**

V. **The Town of Madison does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and the meeting facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals who need assistance are invited to make their needs known by contacting the Town ADA/Human Resources Director, Debra Ferrante, at 203-245-6310 or by email at [ferranted@madisonct.org](mailto:ferranted@madisonct.org) at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.**

# Petition for the Reinstatement of Paper Towel Dispensers

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Jacqueline Vyce

# The Issue

- ❖ Paper towels have been removed from all DHHS bathrooms
- ❖ Currently, our only option is to use the jet hand dryers, which are ineffective, disruptive, inconvenient in regards to time, and unhygienic
- ❖ It would make everyone's day a little easier if we were to be afforded the option of using paper towels

# Disruptiveness

- ❖ Loud startup noise of hand dryers disrupts both the hallway and nearby classrooms, even when classroom doors are shut
- ❖ Interrupts class



# Functionality

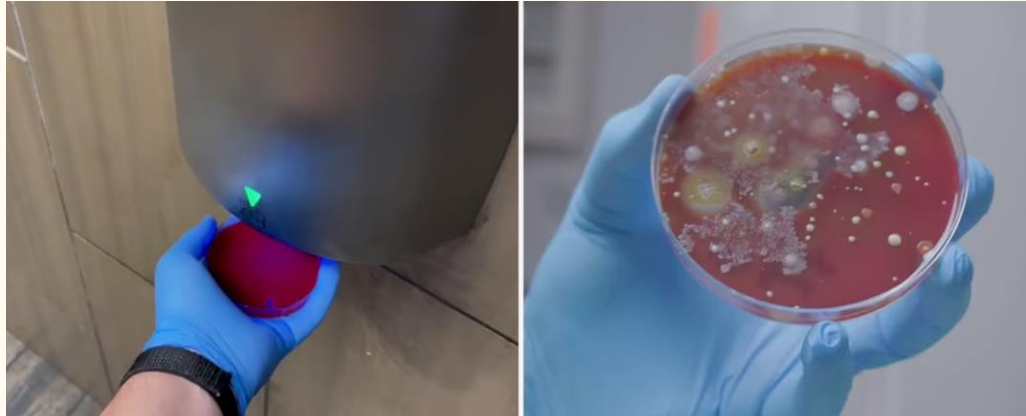
- ❖ Hand dryers take a lot longer than paper towels
  - Causes students to be out of class for longer
- ❖ In order for the dryer to stay on, one's hands have to be positioned in a very precise location
  - The startup noise of the unit is the loudest part, so if one has to turn the unit on again, it is even more disruptive
- ❖ The units don't dry hands well
- ❖ **Hand dryer units in some of our bathrooms don't even turn on**

# Hygiene

- ❖ Many students opt to leave the bathroom with wet hands
  - Increases the amount of germs on one's skin, as moisture breeds bacteria (Medaris)&(Howard)
  - Effectively undoes the benefits of hand washing
- ❖ Drying with paper towels makes it easier to fully dry one's hands and is far more hygienic
- ❖ “Drying with paper towels or cloth towels removes even more germs than washing alone, as the friction of drying reduces the germ count even further” - Miryam Wahrman, biology professor at William Paterson University (Medaris)

# Dispersion of Germs Around The Bathroom

- ❖ An independent Connecticut study from 2018 found that “plates exposed to hand dryer air for 30s averaged 18-60 [bacteria] colonies/plate” (Huesca-Espitia *et al*)
- ❖ A 2016 London study found that jet hand dryers disperse 190 times more viral particles than use of a paper towel would (Kimmitt & Redway)



# Environment

- ❖ Paper towels are typically a mix of recycled materials and new wood pulp, but most commercial paper towels are made with “high levels” of post consumer recycled content (Howard)
- ❖ This includes “mixed paper waste” for recycled brown paper towels (Howard)
  - Cereal boxes, magazines, etc that would not decompose quickly
  - Recycling these materials keeps them out of landfills
- ❖ Paper towels decompose quickly due to composition of thin fibers
- ❖ Paper towels (unless used to clean oil or grease) are compostable, so this is a potential option as well (*Conserve Energy Future*)

# Student Comments

*“The most...awful decision”*

*“They don’t work”*

“The hand dryers are disgusting”

“Why didn’t they say anything? It’s like oh we’re gonna take away the paper towels...and we’re just gonna surprise everyone”

“I spilled my water bottle the other day, and I couldn’t clean it up because there are no paper towels”

“Some of the hand dryers are broken”

“It’s ridiculous”

*“What is it actually doing?  
The paper towels are just gonna get used somewhere else”*

# Works Cited

Howard, Julie. "Brown Towels: Where Hand Hygiene Meets Sustainability." *Cleaning & Maintenance Management*, 23 June 2020, <https://cmmonline.com/articles/brown-towels-where-hand-hygiene-meets-sustainability>.

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Huesca-Espitia LDC;Aslanzadeh J;Feinn R;Joseph G;Murray TS;Setlow P; "Deposition of Bacteria and Bacterial Spores by Bathroom Hot-Air Hand Dryers." *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Apr. 2018, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29439992/>.

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Team, Family Health. "The Dirty Truth about Hand Dryers." *Cleveland Clinic*, Cleveland Clinic, 23 Sept. 2022, <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/the-dirty-truth-about-hand-dryers/>.

Kimmitt PT; Redway KF. "Evaluation of the Potential for Virus Dispersal during Hand Drying: A Comparison of Three Methods." *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26618932/>.