One of the goals at Madison Elementary (Now James Madison STEAM Academy) during the 2022-2023 school year was to implement Family Principal Chats. The Parent and Family Advocate, Principal, Assistant Principal, School Counselor, Family Center staff, and teachers all worked together to organize the Family Principal Chats. The Parent and Family Advocate helped contact families and get the word out about the chats.

Four chat meetings were held during the school year, with participation and attendance improving after each session. The goal of each session was to welcome all participants, build relationships, make families comfortable, answer questions, and provide information. One of the activities during a chat was "Get to

Know Each Other" (i.e., where you are from? What do you like? How many children you have? Why you are here?). Families and staff both participated in the activity to increase communication and allow for community building. During the chats, staff and families also had small group discussions. This helped ensure all parent and family voices were heard and parents were very open to participating.

The theme of the last chat that parents advocated for was Social Emotional Support. Families discussed and received information on how to support their children's ability to solve conflict and

what it means to be a friend including using tone of voice, empathy, and body language. This chat was full of emotions and self-reflections. Parents also learn ways to maintain an emotional balance between their children and themselves.

The Parent and Family Advocate at Madison highly recommends schools implement these types of meetings. For those who would like to utilize Family Principal Chats, solicit information from parents regarding what topics or themes they would like to talk about. Lastly, encourage all staff to participate. The school community is valuable and building relationships among families and staff is essential.