

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
January 19, 2010**

Committee Present: Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Chair, Glenn Pavlicek, Vice Chair, Beirne Lovely, Chris Huban, Mary Kelly, and Kristan Bagley-Jones

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent, John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel, Matthew Gillis, School Business Administrator

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Prior to proceeding with the agenda, Mrs. Sheridan asked that a moment of silence be given in remembrance of all those who have lost family members and friends in Haiti. Mrs. Sheridan also extended the Committee's heartfelt sympathy to former Superintendent, Dr. Frank Guiliano, whose mother passed away this week.

2. **Approval of January 19, 2010 Agenda**

With the Committee's consent, Mrs. Sheridan approved the agenda of January 19, 2010.

3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)**

Jeff Cruikshank attended tonight's meeting to voice his support for Chris Huban. Mr. Cruikshank believes Mr. Huban made a mistake and immediately owned up to that mistake. He asked that people keep in mind the experience Mr. Huban brings to the School Committee table and the work he has done.

Bob Hiss attended tonight's meeting to speak on behalf of Chris Huban. Mr. Hiss stated that there is a process within the court system to deal with such matters and Mr. Huban has complied with that process. He hopes the town is able to show some charity and forgiveness to Mr. Huban.

Murray Regan stated that Mr. Huban has been a stalwart member of the community for many years and has contributed mightily to the community. Mr. Regan believes that everyone is capable of making mistakes. Forgiveness and giving someone a second chance is the Christian way to look at this situation.

Natalie Monroe came tonight to ask that Mr. Huban remain on the School Committee. Ms. Monroe stated that when looking for a School Committee member you want someone who can be a role model to students, faculty and parents. You look for someone who is level-headed, takes responsibility and who can make tough decisions and stand by them. Ms. Monroe feels that Mr. Huban has demonstrated these qualities and has served the School Committee with distinction for ten years. Ms. Monroe agrees that this is a teachable moment; however, the lesson to be taught should be that everyone is capable of making mistakes. If you do make a mistake, you should admit it, learn from it, and continue to serve your community.

Dr. John Knight, founder and director of the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children's Hospital, congratulated Mr. Huban for his honesty in pleading guilty to the charges against him. Dr. Knight voiced his concern that Mr. Huban does not believe these events will impact his role as a School Committee member and that he does not plan to resign. Dr. Knight agrees that this is a teachable moment but the exact lesson has not yet been determined. Dr. Knight feels Mr. Huban has two options: 1) take the politician's "as usual" approach or 2) take the leadership approach and

voluntarily step down from the School Committee. Dr. Knight hopes that Mr. Huban has the courage and strength of character to submit his resignation.

4. Approval of Minutes

The School Committee approved several Finance Subcommittee Meeting minutes. The minutes of 9/30/09, 10/2/09, 10/19/09, 11/2/09, 11/9/09, 11/23/09, 11/30/09, 12/7/09 and 1/4/10 were approved.

5. Superintendent's Report

Certificate of Academic Excellence

Ms. Gormley stated that each year the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents recognizes students who are at the top of their graduating class. This year two Milton High School seniors tied for this honor. Ms. Gormley invited Samuel Shepard and David Corbett along with their parents up to the table to be recognized for this tremendous achievement. Ms. Gormley stated that according to guidance personnel and teachers at Milton High School, David Corbett is a self-motivated student with a clear sense of his priorities. He is a solid "A" student ranking #1 out of 270 students. David is a member of the Century Club and the National Honor Society. He is a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program and was the recipient of the Harvard University Book Award this year at Honors Night. In addition to the Advance Placement classes David participates in this year, he took four Advanced Placement exams in his junior year and received qualifying scores in all. David is involved in several community service projects and recently received the Milton Foundation for Education Community Builder Award for his work with the Milton Community Food Panty. On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, Ms. Gormley proudly presented Mr. Corbett with the Certificate of Academic Excellence from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Mrs. Sheridan extended the School Committee's congratulations to David and his family for this wonderful accomplishment.

Ms. Gormley stated that Samuel Shepard shares this #1 ranking out of 270 students. According to guidance personnel and teachers at Milton High School, Sam is an outstanding student and even a better individual. He sets a standard of excellence for himself and for his class. Throughout his high school career, Sam has received nothing less than an A-. In addition to his rigorous Advanced Placement classes, this year Sam is taking part in an independent study program through John Hopkins. Sam is involved in many activities outside the school day as well. He is involved in the peer counseling group at Milton High and is a member of the Diversity Committee. Sam is an active member in his church community and participated in the volunteer relief effort in Mississippi for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, Ms. Gormley proudly presented Mr. Shepard with the Certificate of Academic Excellence from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Mrs. Sheridan extended the School Committee's congratulations to Sam and his family for this accomplishment.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – Kimberly Zieselmann, Sharon Bacci and Jeff Rubin, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Ms. Zieselmann stated that Jerry Vitti, Vice-Chair of the PAC was unable to attend tonight. Ms. Zieselmann reported that the Milton PAC Board has submitted a letter to the School Committee detailing many of its concerns and recommendations. This letter praised the administration and staff for the positive changes made to special education over the past several years. These positive changes include the co-taught classrooms; the addition of typical developing peers into the summer program classrooms; the increase in inclusion for language-based students at Collicot; the addition of the New England Center for Children (NECC) program at Collicot; the addition of the gross motor room at Collicot; and the Superintendent's effort to improve communication. The letter also addresses several concerns the

PAC has and offers some recommendations. Ms. Zieselman reviewed the following concerns and recommendations:

- The PAC fears an overall chipping away of special education programs that seems to be driven too much by financial concerns.
- The description of eligibility requirements for the co-taught program does not meet the current classroom model.
- Increasing complaints from families regarding the integrated pre-school program. Families feel their requests for assessments are being denied. The PAC fears the district is trying to limit the number of IEPs coming up through the school system.
- The PAC is interested in learning more about grant funding opportunities for special education initiatives.
- There is a substantial achievement gap in the special education subgroup in many of the schools. The PAC requested involvement in the Administration's discussions as to how special education services are currently being delivered to student on IEPs and how services can be improved.
- The PAC would like to keep inclusion moving forward. The PAC discussed the need to fully fund the co-taught 4th and 5th grade classrooms with two full-time teachers and the need for inclusion/continuation of co-taught classrooms at Pierce. The PAC inquired about the work being done by the Inclusion Consultant and stated that it would like to be involved in this process.
- The PAC feels there is still room for improvement in communication. Clear, concise and open communication goes a long way in easing parents' minds.
- The PAC would like to have a Special Education Guide developed. This guide would outline the special education process, the programs offered and the criteria for these programs.
- The PAC would like the School Committee to establish a Special Education Site Council made up of administration, staff and parents.
- The PAC discussed the need for better coverage of therapists when they go out on unexpected leave.
- The PAC voiced its disappointment in not being invited to be part of the World Language Review Team. Mrs. Sheridan stated that members of that team were chosen by picking names out of a hat. The PAC asked that the School Committee verify that there is special education representation on that team.
- The PAC would like to be involved in the screening process for the Director of Special Education position as well as the Glover principal position.

Ms. Zieselman asked that School Committee members contact the PAC if they have any questions regarding this letter. The PAC looks forward to working collaboratively with the School Committee and the Administration. Some questions and/or comments made by the School Committee included:

- Are there examples of other towns that have a Special Education Guide? Ms. Zieselman replied that Quincy and Westborough have developed such guides. Quincy's guide can be found on their website.
- PAC members may want to get involved in the current Site Councils that are in place at every school in the district. Is there a need for a separate Site Council? Ms. Zieselman replied that the PAC would be open to this possibility; however, she feels that there will be have to be some type of separate committee formed to work on the Special Education Guide.

- Can you give more details regarding your concern over the eligibility requirements for the co-taught program? Ms. Zieselman stated that the PAC had discussed this document (Milton Public Schools Co-Taught Programs) with Jeff Rubin and he explained the original intent of this document and informed the PAC that he would be open to re-drafting ideas. With Mr. Rubin's retirement, the PAC is concerned that this document exists and could be used by the person coming into this position as the actual criteria for the co-taught program.
- Does the PAC feel that special education is being disproportionately adversely impacted by budget cuts? With regard to the perception that the school system is trying to cut back on the number of students on IEPs, does the PAC feel people are being ignored or intentionally delayed? If anyone feels that way, they should immediately get in touch with members of the Administration. Ms. Zieselman replied that the PAC does not feel this is a matter of the school system not caring enough nor does it feel special education is being disproportionately impacted by budget cuts. Many of the concerns addressed in the letter are not financial issues but are suggested ways to improve communication and foster collaborative ideas.

Ms. Zieselman stated that the next meeting of the PAC will be March 3, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Library and Superintendent Gormley will be speaking. Ms. Gormley stated that the district appreciates this report from the PAC. She feels the best way to respond to these concerns is to work with the PAC, Mr. Rubin and the leadership team and report back to the School Committee at a later date. Ms. Gormley stated that Bev Quinn has contacted the PAC regarding the screening process for Mr. Rubin's replacement. The three parent representatives for this screening committee will come from the PAC. For the Glover principal position, the PTO has been contacted and they will be looking for volunteers to join that screening committee. Mr. Pavlicek also invited PAC members to attend upcoming School Committee meetings since they will be discussing the budget. Mrs. Sheridan stated that PAC members do not have to wait to bring any concerns they may have to the attention of the School Committee. School Committee members can be reached via email. Also, both the Administration and Mr. Rubin have an open door policy.

Pierce Middle School Site Council – Principal James Jette, Assistant Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding and parent representative William McCarthy (community member Anne Murphy was unable to attend)

Mr. Jette reviewed Pierce Middle School's AYP status and the percentages of students scoring in the Advanced or Proficient categories on the MCAS tests (ELA and Math). Mr. Jette stated that Pierce did not make AYP in the special education subgroup for Math or English Language Arts (ELA). Last year Pierce was able to add some positions to focus on AYP issues; however, there is still work to be done in special education. The first section of the Pierce Middle School Improvement Plan addresses student achievement and Dr. Spaulding explained that Pierce has a multi-layer approach in its effort to increase student achievement. This approach includes putting in place the necessary structures to help all students reach a higher level of achievement. Some examples of this include identifying enduring understandings and learning objectives in each curriculum area; developing curriculum documents in each curriculum area; designing common assessments in each curriculum area; creating a structure for the collection, scoring, and analysis of common assessments; and the inclusion model for Math and English. Dr. Spaulding stated that there are two sections of co-taught classrooms for grades 7 and 8 for both ELA and Math. The multi-layer approach also includes supporting both teachers and students. One activity that teachers are engaging in across the curriculum areas is looking collaboratively at student work. Teachers will sign up to bring three samples of work from students at varying levels (one from a student who may be struggling, one from an average student, and one from a student who may be excelling). Teachers then get together in small groups to review the work and determine what

steps can be put in place to support students at each level. Other supports for teachers include targeted professional development as well as inclusion support. In order to help support students Math Investigations is offered for students in the Needs Improvement/Warning categories to provide them with a second period of Math; Readers' Workshop classes are available as well as after school support and enrichment activities. Pierce also continues its work in implementing a school-wide writing across the curriculum initiative.

Mr. Jette explained that Pierce also offers many ways to engage both students and teachers. Several Pierce teachers are involved in student mentoring and are available to students before school, at lunch, and after school. Pierce recognizes students with the 280 Club (Pierce had 37 students who achieved a score of 280 in Math or ELA; 2 students received a 280 in both categories), Student of the Month awards and Student of the Quarter awards. The Student Council at Pierce is very active and has been involved in such events as Families Helping Families, toy drives, and food drives. In an effort to give back to the community, Pierce is currently looking at ways to provide help to families in town who have been impacted by the recent earthquake in Haiti. In an effort to engage teachers, Mr. Jette stated that there are weekly grade level administrative meetings, bi-weekly curriculum meetings; bi-weekly "Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down" meetings (meet team by team to discuss students – try to get the word out about students who are doing well in addition to those who may need support); common planning time and professional development is provided; monthly Principal Meetings are held; and a daily bulletin is sent to staff. Mr. McCarthy stated that efforts to engage families and community members include an MCAS Information Night, the letter sent home to families regarding AYP, the successful Family Literacy Night and the upcoming Family Math Night. Mr. Jette ended this presentation by stating that Pierce is a great place and students are thriving. Pierce is committed to the task of improving and Mr. Jette encouraged PAC members to attend Site Council meetings and to call or email him if they have any special education concerns at the Middle School. Some questions and/or comments from School Committee members included:

- There is the 280 Club for those students scoring high on the MCAS. Do you do anything to acknowledge when students move up at any level so it is not just the top group? Mr. Jette replied that he is in the process of discussing pre-MCAS and post-MCAS initiatives with the PTO.
- What is taken out of the schedule in order to provide students with a second class of Math or English (Math Investigations, Readers Workshop)? Dr. Spaulding replied that for grades 7 and 8 it may be in place of a World Language or it may take the place of one exploratory slot. In grade 6 students would have it in either a Day 1 or Day 2 exploratory slot.
- Are both above-level and on-level students taught Algebra in 8th grade? Is the 8th grade MCAS test based upon on-level curriculum standards? Dr. Spaulding replied that on-level students have pre-Algebra and above-level students have Algebra. The 8th grade MCAS is based on on-level curriculum standards. There has been conversation as to how we can continue to give above-level students the ability to practice/re-visit some areas which would be included on the MCAS.

Ms. Gormley stated that Pierce Middle School is an outstanding school with involved parents, wonderful students, amazing administrators and strong teachers. She thanked them all for what they do. The School Committee thanked the Pierce Site Council for this presentation.

Before ending the Superintendent's Report, Ms. Gormley reminded the School Committee and the public of the upcoming Middle School production of Annie Jr. which will take place this Thursday and Friday at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at the Pierce Auditorium. Kindergarten Information Night will be held January 28th at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium and First Grade Information Night

will be held on February 4th at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. Ms. Gormley also reminded the public of the FAVA Art Show taking place at the Milton Public Library through the end of February.

6. Chairman's Report

Mrs. Sheridan stated that she had the pleasure of attending the Martin Luther King event held at Temple Shalom this Monday night. On behalf of the School Committee, Mrs. Sheridan congratulated the many students who had items on display at this event and thanked them for their participation.

7. Health and Safety Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones provided School Committee members with a copy of the December 4, 2009 subcommittee minutes. Through the generosity of Milton Hospital and the Milton Foundation for Education, the Milton Public Schools were able to receive six new defibrillators and Milton Hospital will provide training for staff. Milton Hospital also plans to offer CPR courses for parents and staff in late February. If this is successful, further courses will be offered. Ms. Bagley-Jones discussed the recent presentation that was given to the Health and Safety Subcommittee by representatives of the Community Service Agency (CSA) regarding the new Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). School Adjustment Counselors were invited to this presentation and found it very informative. On behalf of the subcommittee, Ms. Bagley-Jones thanked the school nurses who gave up a few Saturdays this month to participate in the flu vaccine clinics. The subcommittee is also in the process of providing students with an anonymous Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the results of this survey will be brought to the School Committee. Also, thanks to Steve Traister and Milton High School staff there will be some events or programs for students around substance abuse. A pilot program will also be initiated that will allow an open gym night one or two nights in March or April for High School students. Coach Ted Curley has agreed to work with the subcommittee on this initiative. Ms. Gormley added that the Internet Safety Night held earlier this month was very informative. Ms. Bagley-Jones will provide Ms. Gormley with a copy of the handout from this event and information will be put on the website and included in an Email Blast.

8. School Building Committee Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the work at Cunningham/Collicot is almost done. The bid for the solar panels was accepted. Since the bid came in less than anticipated, we put out an additional bid for more solar panels. The final bid to go out is for the duct work at Milton High School. The narratives for the High School and Pierce Middle School auditoria are complete and will hopefully be up soon. The School Building Committee will meet with the town accountant to review the final finances and there is one more sign-off needed by the Conservation Committee for Milton High School.

9. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the work continues putting together the budget documents. The Administration is working on a cut list that will be necessary if we receive a level dollar budget. The Finance Subcommittee meets on Monday and will receive the Administration's final recommendation. This list will then be approved by the full School Committee at the next meeting. Ms. Kelly asked that Administration include a brief description of the impact each cut will have on the Milton Public Schools. Ms. Kelly suggested that the School Committee set up meetings with the various PTOs to explain these reductions and the impact they will have on the Milton Public Schools.

10. Old Business

Mr. Huban addressed the School Committee and the public regarding comments that have been made at recent School Committee meetings. Mr. Huban stated that on January 1, 2010 he was arrested for driving under the influence. On January 4, 2010 he went to court and accepted responsibility for his actions and received punishment. On January 6, 2010 Mr. Huban stated that he met for his first supervised probation visit and at the same time signed up for a weekly group meeting. Although it has been suggested that he was trying to get away with something, Mr. Huban explained that he immediately took responsibility for his bad decision and is truly sorry for his actions. He thanked the people who have supported him during this difficult time and stated that he also appreciates the comments from those who would like him to resign. He will take all of these comments and suggestions and incorporate them into making himself a better person.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: G. Pavlicek

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 6-0-0