

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
December 2, 2008**

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

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Paul Hilton, Assistant Superintendent for Business

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.**
- 2. Approval of December 2, 2008 Agenda** – Mr. Lovely stated that the Facilities Subcommittee report will follow the discussion on AYP Initiatives. With the Committee’s consent, Mr. Lovely approved the agenda for December 2, 2008 with this change.
- 3. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)** – No one came forward
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
The minutes of the November 5, 2008 School Committee meeting were approved.
Move: L. Sheridan
Second: C. Huban
Vote: 5-0-0
- 5. Superintendent’s Report**
Milton Community Schools, Pamela Dorsey, Director – Ms. Dorsey updated the Committee on the various programs offered by Milton Community Schools.
 - Camp Cunningham 2008 – This year’s program was held from June 30, 2008-August 20, 2008. 131 students participated and there were approximately 61 staff members including certified teachers, para-professionals, and community service students. Staff for this program is hired on a temporary basis for the duration of the program. Activities are planned each week and special events and field trips are also provided for an additional fee. This program offers early arrival (7:30 a.m.) and after camp hours from 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
 - Early Arrival Program – This program is held at all Elementary schools and opens at 7 a.m. Several activities are available to students and students can enroll for 1-5 days per week.
 - CLASP (Children Learning After School Program) – This program offers several activities to students and was put in place to complement the school day. The program is available from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. and is offered at all Elementary schools. Tuition payment schedules are similar to those offered for the Full Day Kindergarten program and assistance is provided for families in need.
 - School Vacation Camps – Milton Community Schools provides camp during December, February, and April school vacations. Early drop off (7:30 a.m.) and after camp hours (3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) are available.
 - A half-day program will be offered on February 11, 2009 to accommodate for the half day of school due to parent/teacher conferences.

The School Committee and members of the Administration thanked Ms. Dorsey for her presentation and for the invaluable assistance she provides the Milton Public School system. All details from this presentation will be posted on the website.

AYP Initiatives, Jeff Rubin, Director of Pupil Personnel Services – In response to the School Committee’s request for an update on the initiatives taking place to help students within the special education sub-group make AYP, Mr. Rubin reviewed the various programs currently in place within the Milton Public School system. In summary, Mr. Rubin reported:

- Full Day Kindergarten has been the largest initiative taken on by the school system.
- Milton’s integrated pre-school program current services 129 children (71 with disabilities and 58 model students) and this year a new half-day integrated pre-school classroom was added.
- A Saturday program will be offered at Tucker School. This program, made possible through Title 1 funding, will run from 1/10/09-4/4/09 for two hour sessions. These sessions will include one hour of English Language Arts instruction and one hour of Math instruction.
- Pierce Middle School Special Education Language Based Model was re-structured for the 2008-2009 school year. Within the new structure, all 6th grade students with language based learning disabilities receive double periods of Literacy/Language Arts and Math. Each double period is taught by a certified special educator and there is an aide in each class. 7th and 8th grade students are fully included in all classes. A special education teacher goes with the students for Math and English and then follows up with them to reinforce the lessons taught in the regular education classes. A qualified para-professional accompanies students to Science and History.
- Additional professional development is being offered to all Math teachers at the Middle School (regular education and special education) to focus on how to make math instruction more accessible to a wide range of students.
- A teacher/student mentoring program is being offered at the Middle School. Twenty-eight teachers have volunteered to serve as mentors and will meet with students once per week to help with test taking skills, study skills, and organization.
- A Saturday Academic Enrichment program will be offered to Middle School students who are most at risk for poor performance on MCAS testing. This program, obtained through a grant written by Assistant Principal Karen Spaulding and received from the Copeland Family Foundation, will focus on the critical areas in Math and English Language Arts.
- The three language based classrooms located at Collicot Elementary (servicing students from across the district) have increased their efforts to include disabled students with their non-disabled peers as much as possible. When attending regular education classes, these students are accompanied by a special education teacher or a classroom aide.
- Open response has been identified as a problem area in the MCAS testing. As a result, all Elementary schools are implementing an Open Response Initiative to improve student performance on written assignments.
- The co-taught classrooms (K-4) are housed at Glover and Tucker. This year the program was extended by two classrooms; one 4th grade classroom at Glover and one 2nd grade classroom at Tucker. There are currently 7 co-taught classrooms, and the hope is to extend this program to the 5th grade next year. Mr. Rubin believes the benefits of providing this type of classroom will be evident as these students reach Middle School.
- Approximately 200 students with disabilities received summer services this year to prevent regression of academic skills acquired during the school year.
- Beginning in September, 2008 a transition program was put in place at Milton High School to meet the needs of a small number of students not fitting in to current programs offered at the High School. These are students with more intellectual or cognitive disabilities who benefit from a smaller program. There is one special educator to teach English/Language Arts, Math and Social Studies. This was done by moving current staff at no cost to the system.

Questions and/or comments from School Committee members included:

- Are we looking at ways to bring other children back in-house who may currently be out of district? Mr. Rubin stated that this year a K-1 integrated program was developed for children

coming up from the pre-school who have significant autism disabilities. These are students who would not be able to go to the co-taught program and would have had to have been placed out of district if this program was not available. This year there were four students and we were able to develop this program with existing staff. The K-1 integrated program consists of 1 special education teacher, 2 aides, and 4 students.

- Mr. Lovely referred to a comment made at a previous School Committee meeting regarding the need for a plan to address the problems at Pierce Middle School. Mr. Rubin commented that this is not a Middle School problem in isolation; it starts at the beginning and there has been a plan in place. The language based program was re-designed and there are many other things being done by Principal Jette and the staff of Pierce Middle School that will never be recognized as part of a plan. For example, Principal Jette continually stresses the importance for students to arrive on time to school since Math is held 1st period. Mr. Rubin deferred to Mr. Jette to present the initiatives for the Middle School at a subsequent meeting.
- Have you identified any significant funding sources that are going to be reduced or eliminated? Mr. Rubin replied that the circuit breaker has already been reduced this year by \$46,000. When Governor Patrick made recent cuts, circuit breaker reimbursement was decreased from 75% to 72%. Federal IDEA money that flows to us is by appropriation (\$1.1 million this year) so that is also uncertain. In addition, Mr. Hilton stated that they fully expect that Medicaid reimbursement will be substantially reduced.
- Are MCAS scores showing the benefit of providing a co-taught program? Ms. Gormley replied that Dr. Dore Korschun is examining this information and is finding that these students are making gains.

The School Committee and the Administration thanked Mr. Rubin for his presentation and the wonderful job he is doing for special education. Details from Mr. Rubin's presentation will be posted on the website.

Facilities Subcommittee Report – Ms. Sheridan introduced members of the Facilities Subcommittee. In addition to Ms. Sheridan and Mr. Hilton, members present included Rick Malstrom, Bill Ritchie, and Barbara Plonski. Lynn O'Sullivan was unable to attend this evening. Ms. Sheridan explained that there are three ways of reducing energy and saving money. These are:

1. Buying energy cheaper – The Milton Public Schools do an excellent job at this and Mr. Hilton negotiates all our contracts.
2. Upgrading or changing equipment – The challenge we are facing is that all of the new buildings came on-line at different times and no two pieces of equipment are the same. We are looking at technology to help in this area.
3. Conserving energy – Mr. Hilton has introduced the Facilities Subcommittee to Energy Education, a company with over 23 years of experience working with school districts in several states in an effort to educate them on how to conserve energy. Ms. Sheridan introduced Charles Fasnacht, President/Northeast Division and Lonnie Palmer, a former client of Energy Education and a retired Superintendent. Ms. Sheridan informed the School Committee that reference checks were done on this company and packets have been provided for each member to review.

Mr. Fasnacht stated that several meetings have taken place with the Facilities Subcommittee in an effort to answer any questions they may have with regard to Energy Education. He explained that this program comes in two major portions. First, they make hundreds of significant energy savings recommendations. Over 1,200 different subject areas will be researched and analyzed on site. On the job training will be provided by several specialists to one staff person so he/she can perform this job before and after school, nights, weekends, and holidays. This person will become the school department's resident expert. The second part of the program is the Transformational Energy Management Process which takes those ideas and makes sure they are implemented. Mr. Fasnacht

explained that savings are measured by reducing consumption. A computer software program, provided by a third party and approved by the Dept. of Energy, will keep score of these savings. Energy Education makes a guarantee that the savings will exceed whatever investments are made so that we will be cash flow positive on an annual basis. The 10-year projected net savings for the Milton Public School system is over \$4.1 million. Questions/comments from School Committee members included:

- What does the energy manager do and is that person an employee of the Milton Public Schools? Mr. Fasnacht replied that the energy manager will be the point person with whom the work list is developed and who receives the training from the Energy Education specialists. The specialists from Energy Education will meet with this person several times per week to perform building audits. There will be approximately 15 building audits per week performed at various times (i.e. 5-7 a.m., 3-5 p.m., 10-11 p.m., 2-3 a.m., weekends, and holidays). This person will be an employee of the Milton Public Schools; however, Energy Education will be involved in the selection process.
- At the end of four years will these specialists still come on site? Mr. Fasnacht stated that they are on site as often as needed during the contract period. Once the contract has ended, they are on site on an as needed basis. For example, if the energy manager were to retire, Energy Education would come back to meet and train a new person.
- When the Facilities Subcommittee members were asked to give their opinion of this program, Mr. Malstrom stated that he is an energy manager at a major medical center and is familiar with the techniques being discussed. He agrees with the potential savings and whole-heartedly supports this program. Mr. Ritchie also believes this is a great program. He has spoken with colleagues from several school systems that have saved a tremendous amount of money using this program. Ms. Plonski stated she sees nothing negative about this endeavor and is looking forward to working with the energy manager and sharing the information discovered with the students of the Milton Public Schools.
- What if we do not make the anticipated savings projected by Energy Education? Mr. Fasnacht replied that Energy Education guarantees that the savings will exceed the investment; there is no risk. If for some reason we do fall short, Energy Education will write a check for that shortfall.
- From a cash flow perspective, we are fronting the cost of the energy manager. If we enter into an agreement and get to the fiscal year-end and find that we have over spent what we had allocated, how do we make ourselves whole? Mr. Hilton explained that Energy Education has reviewed the utility bills for the past 18 months and established a base line. If we fall short, Energy Education has to write us a check; this program has to be budget neutral.
- The Town attorney is reviewing the contract and Mr. Lovely stated that he will also review the wording of the contract to make sure there is a commitment to cover any potential shortfall at the end of the fiscal year.
- Is the energy manager position typically a part-time employee not receiving health benefits? We must be sensitive to the health insurance implications on the Town side. Mr. Fasnacht replied that this person can be an employee of the school system who does this on a part-time basis. Mr. Palmer added that another alternative is to hire a retired employee. Mr. Ritchie estimates that we will need someone for approximately 15-20 hours per week.
- Will closing schools earlier be part of this savings plan? No, that type of decision is not part of Energy Education's plan.

On behalf of the School Committee, Mr. Lovely thanked everyone present and also thanked the Facilities Subcommittee for their hard work.

Fundraising Update – Ms. Gormley reported that \$31,000 was raised from the Golf/Tennis Tournament; \$12,000 has been raised in advertising banners; the Boosters and the Save Athletics group estimate raising \$10,000 at two future events; and Gerry Cahalane has committed to the Boosters raising \$30,000 through their annual appeal, the sale of clothing, and from the proceeds of the concession stand.

There is also a tentative \$10,000 donation from another organization which would leave us with a remaining \$49,000 needed in fundraising. Ms. Gormley stated that a Milton parent, Kate Sumner, has come forward to assist with the selling of banners for the Copeland Field House. Ms. Sumner works for an advertising company and is optimistic about raising the \$49,000. Another update on fundraising will be given in two weeks. Mr. Lovely stated that we still must insure that we have this funding before we can provide spring sports.

Grade 1 and Kindergarten Information Nights - The Kindergarten Information Night will be held Thursday, January 22, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Milton High School Auditorium. The 1st Grade Information Night will be held Thursday, January 29, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Milton High School Auditorium. Prior to this information being distributed, Mr. Huban requested that School Committee members receive a copy of what will be presented to parents. Ms. Gormley replied that she will provide this information at the next meeting. Ms. Gormley also reported that she will present information on school choice at the first School Committee meeting in January.

6. **Finance Subcommittee Report** – Ms. Kelly reported that Administration will give a presentation on the budget. This presentation will also be posted on the website. Mr. Hilton began by reviewing the budget history since FY06. In FY06 the budget was \$28,683,587; the FY07 budget of \$30,877,732 showed an increase due to the override; the FY08 budget was \$31,703,587; and the FY09 budget is \$31,779,140. In addition, we project \$383,000 in Medicaid reimbursement. Ms. Gormley reported that looking ahead to next year we project a base budget of \$33,463,504. This includes the \$31,779,140 plus \$1,684,364 needed to rollover current staff and to take into consideration other mandated costs. In order to have level services for FY10, we need approximately \$33,642,170. This includes the \$33,463,504 plus \$178,666 required to bring us to level service. This \$178,666 is the result of anticipated decreases in revenue due to decreases in the circuit breaker and Medicaid reimbursement. In an effort to provide essential services for FY10, Ms. Gormley explained that we would need \$33,855,553 which includes the \$33,642,170 plus an additional \$213,383 to account for enrollment and performance. This \$213,383 allows us to add 4 teachers at a salary of \$53,346. Two teachers will be added to address enrollment growth and two teachers will address AYP and performance issues. Ms. Gormley further reported that Administration works closely with NESDEC every year with regard to enrollment projections. NESDEC anticipates that there will be 90 additional students to the Milton Public School system next year (NESDEC enrollment packet can be found on the website). Ms. Kelly pointed out that these numbers could increase if more students return to public schools from private school as the result of today's economy. As Mr. Rubin had discussed in his presentation, programming in certain areas has grown and we need to maintain those services in our elementary schools. In order to do this, Mr. Phelan explained that we would need \$34,205,553. This includes the \$33,855,553 plus an additional \$150,000 needed to add three teachers so we can roll the co-taught program to the 5th grade. In addition to what is not shown in the budget, Mr. Phelan discussed the cost of the athletic program and the cost of student activities. Ms. Gormley summarized that level funding would be no additional funding received which would result in significant reductions to the Milton Public school system. Mr. Hilton explained that if we were to have level services, this would be an increase of \$1,863,031 and the system will look basically the same as it does this year. Maintaining essential services will require \$2.23 million in additional funding to address enrollment, performance, and the continuum of certain special education classes. Ms. Gormley pointed out that if we are level funded from FY09 to FY10, this will mean the elimination of 37 staff members. In the level funding scenario, Mr. Pavlicek stated that it is not possible to lay off 37 teachers; therefore, this would mean closing a building and making other substantial changes to the school system. Ms. Kelly stated that the budget must be presented to the Warrant Committee.

A motion was made for the School Committee to request that the Warrant Committee approve a budget of \$34,205,553 for FY10 for the Milton Public School system.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: G. Pavlicek

*Mr. Huban made a friendly amendment to add \$10,038 to the \$150,000 (used on pg. 6 of the presentation as the amount needed to add three teachers) in order to be consistent with the \$53,346 salary figure shown on page 4 of this presentation. Mr. Hilton stated this change will be made to the presentation. The amount the School Committee would request the Warrant Committee to approve for FY10 would be changed to \$34,215,591.

Vote: 4-0-0 (Mr. Lovely had to leave prior to the Finance Subcommittee Report)

Ms. Sheridan stated she recently began attending Finance Subcommittee meetings and she wanted to commend the Finance Subcommittee and members of the Administration for the amount of data presented at every meeting. Mr. Pavlicek stated that the goal is to come up with a presentable budget for each scenario so people will understand what the system may look like.

7. **Old Business** – None

8. **Next meeting Agenda Items** – The Communication Subcommittee Report will be given at the next meeting. If there are any updates on Energy Education, they will also be given at the next meeting.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 4-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.