

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
March 30, 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.
2. **Approval of March 30, 2010 Agenda**
With the Committee's consent, Mrs. Sheridan approved the agenda for March 30, 2010.
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)**
No one came forward to speak.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
The minutes of the March 9, 2010 School Committee meeting were approved.
Move: C. Huban
Second: M. Kelly
Vote: 4-0-0*
*Ms. Bagley-Jones and Mr. Pavlicek were not present for the voting of minutes.
5. **Superintendent's Report**
Ms. Gormley introduced Lori Henry, Tucker Librarian/Coach of the Future Problem Solvers team along with the Tucker students who recently participated in the state finals. The students present were Andrew Duro, Liam Chase, Allegra Giddings and Madison Lipson. Ms. Henry explained that the Future Problem Solving program is an international program that uses a six-step model. The model teaches students to analyze a situation, identify the challenges it contains and recommend a plan of action. The model focuses on research, problem solving and communication and requires students to investigate, create, and use team work. The Tucker team recently advanced to the state bowl which was held on March 20, 2010. Allegra Giddings reviewed the process these students went through and each student gave an overview of the topics that were researched. The topics included invasive species, orphaned children, and food distribution. Ms. Henry added that only eight teams from the entire state participate in the state finals (Junior Division). The Committee and the Administration congratulated these students for their accomplishments and thanked Ms. Henry for the work she does with the Future Problem Solvers program.

Ms. Gormley introduced Pierce Middle School Art teacher Patricia Turner and Milton High School Art teachers Cassandra Derby and Karen Hughes. Also in attendance were several students from both schools whose artwork was recently on display as part of the Boston Globe Art Scholastic Competition. Ms. Turner explained that the Boston Globe Scholastic is highly competitive and students state-wide enter this competition. This year Milton had several winners and the first Gold Key Portfolio was awarded at Milton High School. Mrs. Sheridan presented certificates to the following winners from Pierce Middle School: Emma Greenawalt, Honorable Mention; Shanaz Mahmood, Silver Key; Catherine Pappano, Silver Key; and Elizabeth Magnuson, Gold Key. Ms. Derby stated that Milton High School also had a great showing at this competition. Ms. Hughes commented on what a wonderful

opportunity it is for students to have their work recognized in this competition. Mrs. Sheridan presented certificates to the Milton High School students present and recognized the winners who were unable to attend this evening. The winners at Milton High School include: Rachel Lipton, Gold Key Portfolio; James Quach, Gold Key; Lauren Stafford, Gold Key; Dana Hankard, Honorable Mention; Alexander Jamal, Silver Key; Graham Strang, Honorable Mention; Alexandria Hutchinson, Honorable Mention; Caeleigh MacNeil, Silver Key; and Ardara Berry, Honorable Mention. On behalf of the School Committee, Mrs. Sheridan congratulated all of the winners and their Art teachers. Special recognition was given to Ms. Patricia Turner for all that she has contributed to the Art program in the Milton Public Schools. Ms. Turner will be retiring in June, 2010.

Holly Concannon, Elementary Math/K-8 Technology Coordinator

Ms. Gormley introduced Holly Concannon to the School Committee and the viewing public. Ms. Gormley reviewed Ms. Concannon's employment history and educational background and stated that it is a pleasure to have her as a member of the Milton Public School faculty. In response to questions from School Committee members, Ms. Concannon stated that it is her goal as the Elementary Math/K-8 Technology Coordinator to help all teachers improve instruction in both math and technology and to use technology to improve instruction in math. She informed the Committee that she has spent time in classrooms getting to know teachers and students as well as learning the Everyday Math program. After working in the four elementary schools, Ms. Concannon stated that it is amazing to see how the spiral of the Everyday Math program works. Ms. Concannon added that another goal is to work with the middle school regarding instruction and to share the expertise of middle school teachers with the elementary teachers. Professional development is planned for elementary teachers and it will be provided by middle school teachers. Ms. Concannon has spent time with the middle school staff planning curriculum and development for teachers and she looks forward to providing more professional development to middle school teachers on May 13, 2010. Per Ms. Gormley's request, Ms. Concannon also informed the Committee that she had previously been nominated as Teacher of the Year for the state of Massachusetts and became a semi-finalist. In 2004 she received the Milken Award. The School Committee wished Ms. Concannon success in her career in the Milton Public Schools and welcomed her as a new resident to the town.

Science Curriculum Review Team Mid-Cycle Report, Barbara Plonski, Elementary Math/High School Science Coordinator and Dr. Karen Spaulding, Pierce Middle School Science/Math Coordinator

Dr. Spaulding explained that since beginning this mid-cycle review the team has assessed various data and has worked to develop a survey which will be given to teachers in April. The team has analyzed the 3-year trends for MCAS scores and reviewed the strengths and weaknesses at each level (elementary, middle and high school). Throughout May and June the team will be conducting classroom observations for grades K-12 and will review the curriculum documents in place and determine what may need to be modified. The team will also be analyzing the results of the teacher survey. In the fall of 2010, the team will make a presentation to the School Committee and will give recommendations regarding the science curriculum. As part of this presentation, Ms. Plonski and Dr. Spaulding reviewed Science MCAS results for 2008/2009 for grade 5 at each elementary school; grade 8 at Pierce Middle School; and the results of the Biology MCAS at Milton High School for grades 9, 10, 11. This included a comparison of Milton's scores to those of the state. Dr. Spaulding stated that preliminary results show the achievement gap still exists in certain subgroups (special education, low income, and race/ethnicity) and the team will continue to investigate this data.

A copy of this presentation can be found at <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Science.pdf>. Some questions and/or comments from School Committee members and members of the Administration included:

- How are teachers prepared to do inquiry-based science teaching and what professional development is provided? Ms. Plonski replied that many teachers may not have been taught this method of teaching. She has been modeling lessons for teachers and co-teaching some science lessons at the elementary level. Dr. Spaulding agreed on the importance of professional development to make teachers comfortable with this method of teaching.
- 8th grade MCAS results show a drop in Proficient and an increase in Needs Improvement. What are we doing to focus on Pierce Middle School? Ms. Plonski explained that over the past three years they have integrated the science curriculum. The 8th grade class whose results appear in this presentation missed out on one or two topics of this integration. The current 8th grade class will be the first class to benefit from the entire integration of the science curriculum; therefore, Ms. Plonski expects to see improvements next year. It was suggested that this explanation be added to the presentation when it is posted on the website so parents can have a better understanding of 8th grade MCAS results.
- How long has the state been giving the 8th grade Science MCAS and has it changed over the years? Ms. Plonski replied that the state began this test in 1999 and it has not significantly changed. The “red herring” in this test is that approximately 20% is dedicated to engineering questions.
- What is being done to bring engineering into our curriculum? Dr. Spaulding replied that until recently most engineering curricula focused on the engineering process and required very little science content. Realizing the importance of teaching science along with engineering, Pierce has been working with the Museum of Science to field test some of their 5-day units. For example, 6th graders are currently designing bio-reactors. For this unit students will test yeast in different conditions (science) and then apply the design process for the bio-reactors (engineering).
- Do we have internal assessments? Dr. Spaulding replied that Pierce is moving towards having three common assessments per grade level since science is divided into earth science, physical science and life science. The 6th grade physical science assessment is complete; 7th grade will be completed in approximately two weeks and 8th grade is in progress. At the elementary level, Ms. Plonski reported that she is putting together common assessments using MCAS questions by topic that teachers could use at the end of a science unit. At the High School level assessments can be done via mid-term testing.
- How much is the Bio Tech lab used at Milton High School? Ms. Plonski replied that approximately 560 students have gone through this lab in the last two months. This was also the first year of the Bio Tech elective at Milton High School. Ms. Plonski stated that Milton High has also benefited from having senior students act as lab/teaching assistants.
- How many minutes are spent in science at the elementary level? Ms. Plonski stated that the time varies by grade. It begins with approximately 45 minutes in Kindergarten up to 190 minutes in the 5th grade. Many science lessons at the elementary level are hands-on and inquiry-based activities.

The School Committee and the Administration thanked Ms. Plonski and Dr. Spaulding for this presentation.

Before ending the Superintendent's Report, Ms. Gormley gave the following updates:

- 117 students participated in the recent four-session Saturday program for grades 3-7. Ms. Gormley thanked everyone involved in this program and thanked the Milton Foundation for Education for providing this opportunity to Milton students.
- Ms. Gormley complimented the teachers and other faculty members from Milton High School and Pierce Middle School who participated in the recent Faculty Talent Show. Funds raised at this event will go towards helping to support clubs, activities and athletics.
- Ms. Gormley acknowledged the Milton Foundation for Education once again for its contributions to the Milton Public Schools. Proceeds from this year's Celebration for Education went towards providing enrichment opportunities and with some of these funds Milton High School was able to organize a Debate Team. Thanks were extended to Nick Fitzgerald and Phil Tedesco for their work with this team and to Milton Academy for providing tutoring. Congratulations were also given to all students who participated in the Debate Club.
- On Wednesday, March 31, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Charles Winchester Auditorium Dr. Linda Grant, Medical Director of the Boston Public Schools will run a parent forum on adolescence. The Milton High School Athletic Department requires that all spring athletes attend this forum with at least one parent.
- Working collaboratively with the PAC, an evening round table discussion for 5th grade and middle school parents regarding the special education program at Pierce Middle School has been scheduled for April 26, 2010. Featured speakers will be Principal James Jette and Assistant Superintendent John Phelan.
- Teacher of the Year nominations are due to the Milton Foundation for Education by April 2, 2010.
- Fox 25 has nominated ten men and women star basketball players from the state and DJ Santos from Milton High School's basketball team is among the nominees. Fox 25 is asking people go to its website by April 1st to place votes for their favorite players. Mr. Santos has the chance to become one of the five all-stars chosen by Fox 25.
- Ms. Gormley announced that Stephanie Nephew, Pierce Middle School Humanities Director, has been appointed to the Glover Principal position.
- Ms. Gormley reported that Cunningham Principal, Christine Gerber, has submitted her resignation effective June 30, 2010. This position will be advertised and a screening committee will be formed.
- The screening committee for the Director of Pupil Personnel Services continues its work and Dr. John Drottar has three finalists who will be interviewed by the Administration for Paul Ajemian's position.

6. Chairman's Report

Mrs. Sheridan stated that the dates for the School Committee to attend PTO meetings to present the budget were included in tonight's packet. She asked that Committee members let her know if they have any conflicts with these dates. With regard to the School Committee calendar, Mrs. Sheridan stated that the World Language Review Team will report at the April 6, 2010 meeting. Mr. Huban pointed out that the April 27, 2010 meeting should be deleted from the calendar and the School Committee reorganizational meeting will be held on April 28, 2010.

Mrs. Sheridan stated that she is trying to plan a meeting with the Board of Selectmen regarding the Consolidated Facilities Department. This will be an Executive Session meeting and Mrs. Sheridan asked Committee members to let her know if Wednesday, April 14, 2010 would be a convenient date.

7. Finance Subcommittee Report

Mr. Gillis stated that at the Open Budget Hearing it had been discussed that the Warrant Committee was able to fund the School Department budget \$360,000 above level funding which would allow the School Department to restore 6 of the 7.1 teaching positions that had been on the reduction list. Since then, Mr. Gillis reported that he has received an email from the Warrant Committee stating that it will be able to fund the School Department budget at \$416,000 above level funding (an additional \$56,000). With this additional funding the School Department will be able to restore the 7.1 teaching positions. Ms. Gormley pointed out that at its recent all day Saturday meeting the Warrant Committee had been very interested in knowing how many teaching positions were included in the 24.4 FTE reductions.

8. Health and Wellness Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones reported that this committee has made substance abuse awareness and prevention a top priority. With regard to the parent forum on March 31, 2010, Ms. Bagley-Jones thanked Margaret Gibbons and the Administrative team for their work in organizing this event. At this forum a sports fee will be raffled off since attendance is mandatory for spring athletes. Ms. Bagley-Jones stated that this committee has benefited from consulting with Dr. Jonathan Knight from Children's Hospital regarding adolescent substance abuse.

Ms. Bagley-Jones discussed the CATZ program (Completely Athletic Training Zone) and thanked Todd Ducharme for his work in making this program so successful for the Milton Public Schools. This program involves constructive playground/recess activities and it has been introduced at all elementary schools as well as at the recent Saturday program. Mr. Phelan added that several parents have been trained in the CATZ program and some staff members received training during recent professional development. Ms. Bagley-Jones stated that another long term goal of this committee is to organize an open gym night for high school students.

9. Consolidated Facilities Subcommittee

Mrs. Sheridan reported that this committee is preparing for Town Meeting and has been working on a Memorandum of Agreement (between the town and the School Committee). A public forum regarding a Consolidated Facilities Department is scheduled for April 28, 2010. Mrs. Sheridan explained that at Town Meeting a vote will be taken to approve the town's ability to enter into an agreement with the School Committee in order to consolidate the facilities. The School Committee also has to vote as to whether or not it wants to enter into this agreement. Mrs. Sheridan stated that going forward a person will be hired to head the new Consolidated Facilities Department and the Warrant Committee has set aside funds for this position and for other expenses such as a study of town buildings. Ms. Bagley-Jones asked if the School Committee would take a vote prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Huban replied that if the School Committee did vote before Town Meeting it would only be to move the process forward since the Memorandum of Agreement is not complete. Mrs. Kelly expressed her concerns regarding the legal process for setting up joint departments, the funding associated with this new department and the timetable of this process. She does not feel the School Committee has enough detail regarding the vision for this department. Mrs. Sheridan stated that Tony Cichello, Chair of the Consolidated Facilities Subcommittee, will be attending the April 13, 2010 School Committee meeting to discuss this further. She suggested that School Committee members email her any questions they have regarding the Consolidated Facilities Department and she will prepare a list for the next meeting.

10. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Class size update
- Review Bullying Policy – Mr. Huban reported that the House and Senate have both passed bullying legislation. Once the final Bill is passed and signed by the Governor, Mr. Huban stated that the Policy Subcommittee will make the necessary adjustments to our policy and will present it to the full School Committee. Ms. Bagley-Jones feels it would be beneficial to have the Bullying Committee attend a future School Committee meeting to present the data that was researched.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.