

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
April 4, 2006**

**PUBLIC FORUM
HOME SCHOOLING POLICY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

Committee Present: Glen Pavlicek, Chairman, Chris Huban, Vice-Chair, Paul Hogan, Mary Kelly and Laurie Stillman

Staff Present: Dr. Magdalene Giffune, Superintendent

Patricia Negron, a Milton parent, questioned what prompted the Home Schooling Policy change and asked the School Committee what their hopes were when working with home schoolers. Mr. Huban replied that this policy had not been updated since the mid 90's. They decided to update all policies and chose NESDEC people to help with this. To his knowledge there had not been a previous policy regarding home schooling so they had relied on state statutes. The Committee would now like to incorporate this in Milton.

Earl Fay, a Milton parent and Interim Chairperson of the Parent Advisory Council, thanked Glen Pavlicek and Mary Kelly for attending recent PAC meetings. He also publicly wanted to thank Dr. Giffune for providing the PAC with a mailbox at the Special Education office and for the funds to pay MASS PAC dues. Although Mr. Fay believes special education students are encompassed within the Diversity Policy, he is troubled that Milton High School and other new schools are not fully accessible to physically disabled members of the community. He is also troubled that any school district around the nation tolerates any non-compliance with state and federal laws regarding special education and that inclusion is not fully embraced by all schools within the district. Mr. Fay stated that although progress has been made, there is much more to be done.

Rev. George Welles, Pastor at the Church of our Saviour, spoke regarding the Diversity Policy. Rev. Welles, along with members of the Milton Clergy Association and Citizens for Diverse Milton, feels this is not the time to rescind or revise the policy, but agrees that it is the time to reaffirm and rededicate ourselves to work towards the goals and visions it supports. He hopes the School Committee votes this policy forward.

Representatives from the Citizens for a Diverse Milton (CDM) group, Pat Latimore, Cynthia Guise and Claudia Green gave a brief history of the CDM's involvement with regard to the Diversity Policy. In 2001, they did a series of interviews with the six principals and Administration to find out how schools were supporting our changing school population. Although interest was shown by all involved, the CDM found the need for a more comprehensive, systematic approach in the following areas: recruitment, training, curriculum, and a careful attention to student outcomes by race and ethnicity. The CDM wrote a report recommending a policy be written to make schools more inclusive. In November, 2001 the School Committee drafted and passed such a policy. The CDM reported that progress has been

made with the help of the previous Superintendent, Dr. Mary Grassa-O'Neill and Dr. Giffune, but we still need such a policy since our community is more diverse than ever. The CDM also hopes that the School Committee votes this policy forward.

Jeff Stone, Co-Chair of the Milton No Place for Hate Committee, stated it is good to reexamine these policies. He stated since Milton has become so diverse, we need to have such policies which include specific intentions as mentioned in Milton Diversity Policy.

Joanne Fate, a Milton parent, stated it is important to integrate children in all areas. She voiced her concern that the schools do not provide proper facilities to those with disabilities. For example there are no automatic doors and playgrounds are not equipped for disabled children. With regard to the Home Schooling policy, Ms. Fate asked about standardized testing - when would these tests be given and by whom and who would be responsible for paying for these tests?

Dr. Giffune stated there is a provision in the Home Schooling policy that states "a student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he or she has satisfied the Department of Education's competency requirements and has met the district's educational standards for graduation." The standardized test would be the MCAS. If parents want other testing, that would be arranged between the parent and the school system; however, it is encouraged that MCAS tests be given since 10th grade MCAS must be taken and passed for a student to receive a diploma. The school system covers the cost for testing. Mr. Huban mentioned the Town Council would like that sentence to read, "A student, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and with the approval of the School Committee...graduation."

Ms. Kelly also mentioned that the sentence "Prior to removing the child from public school..." should read "Prior to removing the child from school..."

Motion made to approve the Home Schooling Policy (IHBG) as amended April 4, 2006.

Move: C. Huban

Second: P. Hogan

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Kelly would like to add religion and diversity of viewpoint to the first sentence of the Diversity Policy and insert "religion" in the first sentence of the fifth paragraph. Therefore, this would read "The Milton Public Schools reflect and nurture as one of its five core values, a respect for human differences, including race, cultural, or linguistic background, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, learning skills, physical disabilities, diversity of viewpoint, and so on." The first sentence of the fifth paragraph would read, "In implementing this policy, the Committee recognizes that Massachusetts and Federal statutes and regulations prohibit school districts from discriminatory practices in employment or educational opportunity against any person by reason of race, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sex, affectational or sexual orientation, disability or marital status."

Also a typographical error will be corrected in the first sentence of the last paragraph. The word “school” should read “schools”.

It was also suggested that in the second paragraph, third sentence, the word “multicultural” be replaced with “diverse” when referring to role models.

The last change to this is within the legal references Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (not 1064).

Mr. Huban thanked everyone involved in putting this policy together.

Motion made to re-approve the Diversity Policy (IFC) as amended April 4, 2006.

Move: C. Huban
Second: L. Stillman
Vote: 5-0-0

*Updated policies will be posted on the website

HOME SCHOOLING POLICY

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the Milton Public Schools, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects;
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children;
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents; and
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the Milton Public Schools may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extra-curricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

A student, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he or she has satisfied the Department of Education's competency requirements and has met the district's educational standards for graduation.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles
Care and Protections of Charles – MASS. Supreme Judicial Court
399 Mass. 324 (1987)

CROSS REF: LBC

REC'D: NESDEC

DIVERSITY POLICY

The Milton Public Schools reflect and nurture as one of its five core values a respect for human differences, including race, cultural, or linguistic background, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, learning skills, physical disabilities, diversity of viewpoint, and so on. We seek to build upon those differences as potential strengths for the individual, and for our community. Our schools welcome and respect the ideas, culture and heritage of Milton's residents and of our staff, teachers and students.

The Milton Public Schools recognize that learning thrives in an atmosphere of open debate and a thoughtful exchange of views. We celebrate the diversity within our schools and our community. We believe that our students benefit significantly from contact with teachers and other educators who can serve as diverse role models and thereby further contribute to our students' educational success.

Accordingly, the Milton School Committee reaffirms the policy of the Milton Public Schools to strengthen recognition of the importance of diversity in the Milton Public Schools (i) by recognizing the importance of diversity, and acknowledging that it is an evolving and complex notion; (ii) by promoting a shared, thoughtful and sensitive understanding of diversity priorities among our administrative staff, teachers, students, parents and community; (iii) by seeking to link our diversity objectives to our organizational and educational structure, training and curriculum; (iv) by fostering a shared responsibility for constructive communication concerning diversity within the schools and our community and recognizing that change must often be achieved on multiple levels; (v) by acknowledging that our students (and our school system as a whole) will benefit greatly from contact with teachers and others who will serve as diverse role models; (vi) by confirming that affording our students the widest possible interaction with staff of diverse backgrounds will immeasurably contribute to the success of our educational programs, and (vii) by expressing our intent to strive for the development of a staff which not only reflects the demographic composition of our school population but also reflects our community at large.

The Committee believes that the creation of a constructive dialogue with respect to diversity and education is an important goal, and should assist in identifying challenges in a manner which avoids conflict and encourages mutual understanding.

In implementing this policy, the Committee recognizes that Massachusetts and Federal statutes and regulations prohibit school districts from discriminatory practices in employment or educational opportunity against any person by reason of race, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, sex, affectational or sexual orientation, disability or marital status. As stated elsewhere in its policies, this Committee is committed to equal opportunity for all in its hiring policies and intends to continue to broaden and deepen its commitment to racial, ethnic and other forms of diversity by actively promoting the hiring of candidates of color. Accordingly, the administration of the Milton Public Schools will continue to make every reasonable effort to hire

part-time and full-time staff and teachers who reflect, understand, and are sensitive to this diversity within our schools.

Further, the administration will develop a formal plan to be implemented in all of our schools and within the central administration which has a principal goal of ensuring that our system is a community that celebrates the first of its diversity. The Superintendent will report to the Committee on an annual basis not later than October 15th each year to provide an update on the system's hiring efforts, and the continuing development and implementation of this plan.

ADOPTED: (November) 2001

CROSS REFERENCES: A-3, Educational philosophy and core values
A-12, Nondiscrimination
A-13, Nondiscrimination on the basis of sex
A-14, Nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap

LEGAL REFERENCES: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
The Americans with Disabilities Act
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
The Age Discrimination Act of 1975
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Massachusetts General Laws, c. 151B
Massachusetts General Laws, c. 76, Section 5
Massachusetts General Laws, c. 71B