

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
May 18, 2010**

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

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

1. Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m.

Before beginning the agenda items, Mrs. Sheridan asked that a moment of silence be given in memory of Mr. David Jefferies who recently passed away. Mr. Jefferies was a life long Milton resident and had been a previous member of the Warrant Committee, School Committee and Solar Energy Committee. Mr. Jefferies was also a Town Meeting member for over 40 years.

2. Approval of May 18, 2010 Agenda

Mrs. Sheridan noted that #11 on the agenda (School Choice vote) was previously handled at the public hearing held prior to this meeting. With the Committee's consent, Mrs. Sheridan approved the agenda for May 18, 2010.

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

Mrs. Sheridan reminded the audience that Citizen Speak is an opportunity for community members to voice their opinion; the School Committee does not respond.

Several parents voiced their concerns regarding the World Language program and the revised student assignment plan. Parents discussed alternate solutions for French Immersion auxiliary classes, class size, the student assignment plan and the transparency of the lottery system. Speakers included Michael Renaud, Jessica Sueiro, Will Sueiro, Ali Rogerson, Jed Leach, John Leeman, Julie Creamer, Jessica Gillooly, Steve Grande and Kama Wien.

Moira Connolly referred to the article posted on Boston.com regarding the discontent of some residents that 1st graders may have to attend Tucker Elementary for French Immersion. Ms. Connolly feels that Tucker is a wonderful community and does not want to see 1st grade classes of 28 just because people do not want to attend Tucker.

Before continuing with the agenda, Ms. Gormley reviewed the history of the French Immersion program and the charge of the World Language Review Team in response to last year's budget concerns. Ms. Gormley explained that over the past several years a reverse GPS system was used to determine what students would have to be moved from their neighborhood school to attend French Immersion once class sizes in the neighborhood schools had reached 26. It has since been determined that the GPS system is no longer working since certain neighborhoods were continually being impacted. Once the decision was made to implement a lottery system, the leadership team looked at available space at every school and Tucker had space. The criterion from the student assignment plan was used for the lottery (consideration was given to students who had siblings, current Milton Public School Kindergarten students without siblings, and students new to the district). It was determined that after the English and French Immersion

classes were filled at each neighborhood school the remaining students choosing French Immersion would be moved to two auxiliary classes at Tucker. A meeting was held with parents to address their concern regarding so many children from the Cunningham/Collicot district having to move to take French Immersion. As a result of this meeting, Ms. Gormley reported that a third French Immersion class was added at Cunningham. It was also decided at this meeting that if students were sent to the auxiliary class at Tucker, siblings would have the option to either follow their sibling to Tucker or attend their neighborhood school. Families have the opportunity to stay in their neighborhood school and participate in the English program if they do not wish to move to the French Immersion auxiliary class. There are currently 15 students from Collicot; 6 from Cunningham; 4 from Glover; 3 from Tucker and 7 new students to the district who will have to make this decision. With regard to the transparency of the lottery mentioned at Citizen Speak, Ms. Gormley stated that she will post each student's initials next to the lottery number he or she was assigned. It was her decision not to separate triplets or twins in the lottery. Ms. Gormley informed the audience that she is more than willing to answer any questions parents may have regarding the lottery.

Mr. Phelan stated that the overall goal is to provide everyone with their program choice in their neighborhood school; however, it was clearly explained to parents that there would be a tiered lottery and some families would have to make the choice of staying in their neighborhood school or attending French Immersion at an auxiliary class. This choice currently impacts 7% of the population.

Ms. Bagley-Jones asked what the procedure would be if an opening became available at a particular school in the event a student moves or leaves the French Immersion program. Could a previously displaced student return to his/her neighborhood school to fill this space? Ms. Gormley responded that going forward this type of situation will be considered; the changes to the student assignment plan have not been etched in stone. Ms. Kelly feels that having to make a language program choice in 1st grade is not the way it should be handled. Ms. Kelly would prefer to have families wait until after 2nd grade to make this choice.

Mrs. Sheridan thanked the Administration for reaching out to parents and answering their questions. Mrs. Sheridan stated that the Milton Public School system is proud of all the elementary schools and what they offer our children.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made to approve the School Committee minutes from the following meetings: April 6, 2010; April 13, 2010; April 28, 2010 (Reorganizational Meeting and Regular Meeting); and May 4, 2010.

Move: C. Huban

Second: K. Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

5. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Gormley proudly introduced Stephanie Nephew as the new Principal of Glover School. Ms. Gormley reviewed Ms. Nephew's educational background along with the many accomplishments she has already achieved during her career in the Milton Public Schools. After receiving over forty applications and interviewing eleven candidates for this position, Ms. Gormley stated that the screening committee enthusiastically appointed

Ms. Nephew. Ms. Nephew stated that she is thrilled and honored to join the Glover community. On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, the Administration and the School Committee congratulated Ms. Nephew and wished her continued success in her new position.

Ms. Gormley proudly introduced Michele Kruezer as the new Math/Business/Technology Department Head at Milton High School. Ms. Gormley reviewed Ms. Kruezer's educational background and the many contributions she has made to the Milton Public Schools since joining Milton High School in 2002. A screening committee for this position presented the Administration with three candidates and Ms. Kruezer was highly recommended. Ms. Kruezer stated that she has had the opportunity to work with Paul Ajemian and is excited to start this new position. On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, the Administration and the School Committee congratulated Ms. Kruezer and wished her continued success in her new position.

Ms. Gormley provided the following updates to the School Committee and the public:

- An athletic update was included in the packets for tonight's meeting. This information will be included in the next Email Blast and a further update will be provided by Mr. Traister at the end of the season.
- The School Building Authority recently sent assessors to every school that was part of the school building project. Ms. Gormley thanked Joe Murphy, Bill Ritchie and all the administrators who participated in this visit. The "report cards" from the School Building Authority will be posted on the website.
- The list of colleges that Milton High School students have been accepted to is included in tonight's packets and will be published in the next Email Blast.
- Tuesday, June 1, 2010 is Awards Night at Milton High School; Wednesday, June 2, 2010 is the Booster's Banquet; Friday, June 4, 2010 is the Senior Prom; and Sunday, June 6, 2010 is the Milton High School graduation. Ms. Gormley encouraged School Committee members to attend as many events as possible.
- The Milton Foundation for Education presented "Outstanding Teacher of the Year" awards to Fatmina Bourass-Elzein, Collicot School; Gary Good, Milton High School; Noa Lai, Pierce Middle School; Thuy Nguyen, Tucker School; Janis Powell, Cunningham Elementary School; and Deborah Sinrich, Glover School. Christine Charbonneau, an 8th grade English teacher at Pierce Middle School received the honor of the Mary Grassa O'Neill Award. An award ceremony will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at Milton High School.
- At the next School Committee meeting Chris Masalsky will provide an update on grants.
- Milton Summer Enrichment brochures have been sent out and a registration will be held on May 20, 2010 at the Milton High School lobby from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Information regarding Summer Enrichment can be found on the website.
- FAVA will be hosting four one-week art programs during the summer at Milton High School. Information regarding these programs can be found on the website.
- The screening committee for the Cunningham Principal has three finalists and the administrative team is conducting interviews and will be making reference checks. Hopefully, an appointment will be announced before the next School Committee meeting.

6. **Facilities Subcommittee Report**

Facilities Director, Bill Ritchie, attended tonight's meeting to give a brief update on the solar panel project at the Cunningham/Collicot site. Mr. Ritchie explained that solar panels were installed at three locations; 90 panels on the cafeteria roof; 90 panels on the library roof; and 70 panels on the Collicot gym roof. The entire array of solar panels is expected to produce approximately 73,000 kWh of electricity per year which could result in a \$15,000 savings per year. A copy of Mr. Ritchie's presentation can be found at <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2010-SolarPanelProject.pdf>. The School Committee and the Administration thanked Mr. Ritchie for this presentation. Some discussion topics included:

- An elementary lesson will be created regarding the solar panels.
- With regard to leaks on the roofs and how they will be repaired, Mr. Ritchie explained that the solar panels are installed on the new portions of the roof and currently there are no leaks. Since it is a ballast system, the solar panels can be removed in the event of a leak.
- Energy from the solar panels can either be sold back to NStar or used as a credit on the NStar bill.
- Mrs. Sheridan thanked prior School Committee member Laurie Stillman for her dedication to this solar panel project.

7. **Policy Subcommittee Report**

Mr. Huban reported that the Policy Subcommittee unanimously recommends two updates for the Policy Book. The first is the Anti-Bullying Policy and the second update includes revisions to School Committee Policy ACG, Complaint Procedure/Resolution of Discrimination Complaints. Mr. Huban invited Milton High School Assistant Principal Alan Cron to the table to discuss these policies.

Mr. Cron explained that at the end of last year a number of committees in place to support students noted higher rates of depression and anxiety in students. When discussing what could be causing this, bullying and cyber-bullying were issues that kept coming up. Mr. Cron then requested the Administration's approval to form a committee regarding bullying. In August, 2009 a district-wide committee was formed which included teachers, administrators and guidance personnel. The first goal of this committee was to present a policy document to the Administration by March 1, 2010. When preparing this policy document, the committee researched other communities with bullying policies in place, considered the Anti-Defamation League's recommendations and consulted with the Attorney General's office. This document was prepared by March 1, 2010; however, legal counsel had recommended waiting until the new bullying law was passed. The bullying law has since passed and the policy has been brought up-to-speed and received final approval by legal counsel. Mr. Cron explained that a survey of faculty members showed the need for a consistent policy regarding bullying/peer aggression and the reporting of such matters. This policy document includes procedural documents for teachers to follow; a report form for teachers to complete when reporting bullying/peer aggression incidents; a discipline rubric; and a "Think About It" form for students to complete. All of this material will be posted on the website and featured in a future Email Blast.

With regard to the implementation of this policy, Mr. Cron explained that they are working on professional development for the 2010/2011 school year and the policy will be discussed at Principals' meetings and with incoming teachers. The committee is also considering the possibility of having some on-line training. The committee would like to survey faculty members on an annual basis and perhaps extend the survey to students next year in an effort to continue data collection. Mr. Cron thanked the Administration for giving the committee the opportunity to do this work. Some questions and/or comments from School Committee members and members of the Administration included:

- Ms. Gormley stated that this policy will go into the Student Handbook next year. The Administration will begin working with teachers in September regarding professional development and the implementation of this policy.
- Ms. Kelly voiced her concern about the amount of time this may take from teachers on a daily basis. She also questioned if cyber-bullying is under the realm of public schools. Mr. Cron replied that cyber-bullying is considered to be under the realm of the school system under the new law.
- Ms. Bagley-Jones thanked the committee for the comprehensiveness of this policy. She urged parents to pay close attention to the cyber-bullying aspect of this policy.
- Mrs. Sheridan stated that this issue will remain on the School Committee agenda on a regular basis in the upcoming year to see how the policy is working.

With regard to the Grievance Policy, Mr. Huban stated that it is recommended that the policy be adjusted to specify a Grievance Officer. The Assistant Superintendent will act as the Grievance Officer. It is also recommended that we put procedures in place on how to go forward with the grievance process. Ms. Gormley stated that the Milton Public Schools did have a representative from the Office of Civil Rights come to present a two-hour training session on grievance procedures to all principals and guidance personnel.

This was the first reading for both policies; therefore, no vote was necessary.

8. Chairman's Report

School Committee Subcommittees

Mrs. Sheridan reported that the School Committee subcommittees will be as follows:

Finance Subcommittee: Mary Kelly, Glenn Pavlicek and Denis Keohane

Policy Subcommittee: Kristan Bagley-Jones and Chris Huban

Legislative Subcommittee: Mary Kelly

School Building Subcommittee: Glenn Pavlicek and Lynda-Lee Sheridan

Wellness Subcommittee: Kristan Bagley-Jones

Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee: Chris Huban and Lynda-Lee Sheridan

Facilities Subcommittee: Lynda-Lee Sheridan and Denis Keohane

Payroll: Chris Huban

There were remaining openings for the Milton Foundation for Education Representative and the Capital Planning Subcommittee. Ms. Kelly stated that she will verify her

availability to act as the MFE Representative. Mr. Keohane offered to participate in the Capital Planning Subcommittee.

Cameras/Security System Update

Mrs. Sheridan reported that Chris Masalsky wrote a grant for surveillance cameras for both inside and outside of Milton High School. Four possible donors were identified in this grant and they were asked to contribute \$50,000 each to help with the cost of surveillance cameras. Mrs. Sheridan explained that quotes were received from three different vendors and the cost for these cameras is approximately \$175,000-\$200,000. One potential donor (the Warrant Committee) responded that it would be unable to allocate \$50,000 at this time; the School Building Committee responded yes; and the School Department is waiting to hear from the other two potential donors. Mrs. Sheridan encouraged the public to let the Superintendent's office know if they are aware of any other individual or organization that may be willing to contribute towards this endeavor.

9. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the Finance Subcommittee continues to review Full Day Kindergarten in terms of examining finances. A further update will be provided at the next School Committee meeting.

10. Wellness Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones reported that the minutes of the 2/26/10 Wellness Subcommittee meeting have been approved and she will provide copies at the next School Committee meeting. The focus of this subcommittee continues to be raising awareness around teens and substance abuse. There was a recent article in the paper featuring Dr. Drott and Ms. Gormley regarding this issue and an on-line quiz will be provided shortly to raise awareness for parents on teen drinking. A science curriculum for grade 9 students is being developed detailing what happens to your brain if you drink or do drugs. The committee's consultant, Dr. John Knight, encourages parents to ask their children if they have ever been in a car when someone has been drinking. He also encourages students to use the Contract for Life that is provided by Students Against Destructive Decisions.

11. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- A reception for retirees is planned and a volunteer reception will be held on June 15, 2010.

Motion was made to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of approving Executive Session minutes and the discussion of contract negotiations and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

By a roll call voice vote, the School Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of approving Executive Session minutes and the discussion of contract negotiations and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.