

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
June 17, 2008**

Committee Present: Beirne Lovely, Chair, Lynda Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair, C. Huban, M. Kelly, G. Pavlicek and K. Bagley-Jones

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Prior to addressing agenda items, Mr. Lovely thanked Kristan Bagley Jones, Bev Quinn, and all other staff members who helped to organize the Thank You Reception held prior to tonight's meeting. He also thanked the members of the High School Band for providing entertainment. Band members included Rory MacNeil, Gabe Stillman, Tim Marchetta-Wood, Peter Chinman, and Charlie Rosmarin. Mr. Lovely explained tonight's reception was held to give thanks to the many volunteer groups who offer their support to the Milton Public Schools. Among the groups acknowledged were the Milton PAC; Citizens for a Diverse Milton; Milton's Partnership for Arts and Cultural Enrichment; Milton Foundation for Education; Milton Boosters; Friends and Advocates of Music Education; Milton Early Childhood Alliance; Friends and Advocates of Visual Education; the High School Drama Association; the Outdoor Classroom; KEDS; School Site Councils and all PTOs.

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

Karen Friedman-Hanna thanked the School Committee for the recognition given tonight to the various volunteer groups. Ms. Friedman-Hanna stated the entertainment provided this evening by student musicians stresses the importance of providing a K-12 music program. She urged the Committee to maintain K-12 Music and all Performing Arts programs in order to allow our children to accomplish this level of proficiency. When discussing an override for next year, she urged the Committee to consider pushing hard for an override that will be enough to restore what has been lost in these programs over the last couple of years.

Helene Haddad, outgoing President of Milton Foundation for Education (MFE) and Erika Donahue, incoming President, announced the MFE Board has voted to fund a grant writer for the Milton Public Schools for the next several years. Ms. Haddad thanked Administration and members of the School Committee who helped to make this happen. She also mentioned that next year's annual celebration will be held November 22, 2008.

2. Math and Science Initiative Grant – Dr. John Drottar

Dr. Drottar updated the Committee on the status of the Math and Science Initiative grant. The grant will now allow one lead teacher in each area (Math, Science and English) to stay within the building to prevent the problems we would have faced dealing with teacher release time. They are also looking at a summer program for students in AP classes and AP teachers have encouraged other students who may not have initially planned to take an AP class to participate in the program. Support workshops for those

students will be provided during the summer and during the school year. Questions asked by Committee members included:

- Are we meeting the target number for increased enrollment in AP classes? Dr. Drottar replied we are on target to meet the increased enrollment; the ultimate goal is to meet the target number for qualifying scores.
- Is the summer program for all students enrolled in AP classes? Dr. Drottar replied it is currently only for AP students taking Math, Science, and English.
- Will the change in the lead teacher status hold through the contract or is that something to be reevaluated? Dr. Drottar replied this is a work in progress; they will reevaluate in the second year.

Ms. Kelly believes there is a School Committee policy regarding grants which states that any grant having a financial implication should be brought to the School Committee for a vote. Going forward, she would like to make sure that process is followed.

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of June 3, 2008 School Committee meeting were approved.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 6-0-0

4. School Committee Policy – Field Trips

Motion was made to approve the second reading of the School Committee Field Trip Policy.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 6-0-0

5. Field Trips – 1st Readings

France Exchange –Pierce 8th grade students - Ms. Gormley explained this trip is planned for April, 2009. A formal committee will be set up to assist students with fundraising activities. In an effort to be inclusive, Ms. Kelly feels leaders of such trips should talk about fundraising opportunities first. Ms. Gormley replied that next year she plans to sit down with each teacher proposing a field trip to make sure fundraising expectations are being followed before any proposal is brought to the School Committee. No vote is required for the first reading.

Spain/Morocco – Milton High – Ms. Gormley withdrew the proposal to approve the first reading of this trip until she has had the chance to meet with the proper people planning the trip.

6. **Revised 2008-2009 School Calendar** – Dr. Drottar requested having the High School graduation on the first Sunday after Memorial Day rather than the first Sunday in June. When looking at the 2008-2009 school calendar, the first Sunday in June is two weeks after Memorial Day. He feels it may be difficult to get seniors to return.

Motion was made to modify the school calendar to reflect this proposed change.

Move: L. Sheridan
Second: C. Huban
Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Gormley reported a mentoring day for new teachers is being planned during the week of August 18, 2008, in addition to two professional development days. Teachers arrive at school August 26th; school opens for grades 1-12 on August 27th; and there will be no school August 29th. In addition, this year a professional development day will be held on Election Day due to the concern of school principals as to the safety of students on that day. Ms. Kelly had suggested closing the schools for 2 weeks (December 22–January 5); however, the Finance Subcommittee felt that two weeks would be an extreme hardship for parents. Buildings will remain open on December 22nd and December 23rd.

Motion was made to approve the 2008-2009 School Calendar.
Move: C. Huban
Second: G. Pavlicek

Ms. Kelly asked if parent conferences had been shown as half days on a previous version of this calendar. Ms. Gormley explained that previously an afternoon and an evening were scheduled at each school for parent/teacher conferences. Per the recently ratified contract, in addition to the regularly scheduled afternoon and evening conferences, there will be an additional half day offered in November and in February for parent/teacher conferences. This will allow for additional time at conferences. Ms. Kelly also asked if any financial information had been given at the Finance Subcommittee meeting showing what could be saved by closing the buildings for the two additional days in December. Mr. Pavlicek reported this meeting was very informal since a quorum of the Finance Subcommittee was not present nor was there a quorum of the School Committee. They will get a report on what could be saved. The majority of the discussion involved building rental and whether or not any events have already been booked.

Motion was made to table any further consideration of the 2008-2009 School Calendar until the next meeting. It was requested that the cost savings be determined and the Finance Subcommittee will review this information.

Move: B. Lovely
Second: L. Sheridan
Vote: 6-0-0

7. **Employee Contracts**

Mr. Hilton reported that contracts for Units A and B have been ratified. Mr. Lovely added these negotiations were conducted with the full participation of the School Committee and were approved in Executive Session.

Motion was made to reaffirm the motion taken in Executive Session to approve these contracts.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

Before voting, Ms. Gormley responded to Ms. Kelly's questions regarding the Unit A contract. Ms. Kelly will be voting against the above motion as she had done in Executive Session due to salary percentages.

Vote: 4-1-1 (M. Kelly against, K. Bagley-Jones abstain)

Mr. Hilton reported the contract for Unit C has been ratified and there is a tentative agreement with Unit D. The Custodial and Cafeteria Personnel contract has been ratified and needs to be voted by the School Committee. The approval of the Unit C contract will be deferred until the next meeting.

Motion was made to approve the Custodial and Cafeteria Personnel contract.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 4-1-1 (M. Kelly against, K. Bagley Jones abstain)

Ms. Kelly feels it is the School Committee's obligation to review the recommendation of the Superintendent for non-contract employee salaries. Mr. Lovely requested this be addressed at the next Finance Subcommittee meeting.

8. **Full Day Kindergarten Update**

Mr. Hilton reported that at the time the School Committee packets were put together there were 266 students enrolled in FDK; 11 students in ½ day Kindergarten; and 7 students undecided. Since the packet there have been 10 new enrollees and 4 families deciding not to attend public school Kindergarten. As shown in the packet, the highest projected revenue needed for FDK was \$530,950. Mr. Hilton reported we anticipate our revenue from fees collected to be \$589,500. To date we have received \$67,475 with more money to be deposited this week. The balance of approximately \$522,025 will be invoiced on a monthly basis from now until next April with the first invoice going out within the next two weeks. If we receive more than is needed to run FDK, it was discussed earlier by the Committee that they would make a pro-rata return of these funds. With regard to Kindergarten and 1st grade class assignments, Ms. Gormley reported notices will be mailed Friday. In addition to the 10 new enrollees Mr. Hilton referred to earlier, Ms. Gormley reported there are 9 more students who have not been placed yet. The four slots available from the 4 families who decided not to attend public Kindergarten were quickly filled. All classes are at 20; the ½ day session is at 15. All teaching positions have been filled. As previously stated, the School Committee and Administration were committed to hiring KEDS employees if they were certified as Kindergarten teachers. One individual from KEDS

will serve as a teacher in the Kindergarten program; all others will go to the school of their choice as aides/para-professionals. Ms. Gormley applauded Pam Dorsey and all KEDS employees. They have worked as a team with the Milton Public Schools and are now fully integrated within the school system. When asked if people get to choose how to pay for FDK, Mr. Hilton replied over 90% will pay over 10 months; several others have chosen to pay either bi-annually or quarterly. They are in the process of purchasing an invoicing system to facilitate the collection of all fees and hope to have the capacity to offer on-line or credit card payment at some point during this year.

In terms of professional development, Ada Rosmarin stated Kindergarten teachers who have been with the program this year have been involved in a program with Tufts Center for Applied Child Development looking at language and literacy. All teachers are working on their accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children which is required by this grant. During the summer teachers will come in for 2 days (paid with stipends from the grant) and have a half day with a NAYC accreditation consultant to help them design their classrooms.

9. Elementary Class Distribution

Ms. Gormley reported this year Administration has worked very closely with 1st grade parents. Current projections show all French Immersion 1st grade classrooms are at 26. In French Immersion grades 1 and 2 there are no special education support people who speak French and there are no longer aides in 1st grade. Therefore, keeping with the School Committee policy of providing an aide for class sizes over 25, Administration has made the commitment to provide a half-time instructional aide for those French Immersion classes at 26. English 1st grade classes are currently at 17, 18, and 19. There was a group of students at Glover who were reassigned to either Collicot or Tucker. According to the student assignment plan, we have a reverse return list which basically uses a GPS tracking system to show which student lives closest to the original district school. In the event an opening comes up within their original district, the student living closest will be given the opportunity to return. Central registration will continue over the summer for PreK-12; assignments will be made in mid-August.

Ms. Sheridan has received many questions regarding the number of full day Kindergarten classes. So the public listening could hear, Ms. Sheridan read from the list provided by Ms. Gormley regarding enrollment. There will be 4 FDK classes at Collicot; 3 at Cunningham; 4 at Glover; 2 at Tucker along with one co-taught classroom. The ½ day Kindergarten program will be housed at the Cunningham/Collicot site.

10. Communication Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones reported she has received approximately 100 responses to the email she had sent requesting that people send her their suggestions on how to improve communication. She has met with PTO presidents, the editor of Milton Times, and would like to set up a meeting with Ms. Gormley to go over this data. Some suggestions were:

- The principals should use email blasts once a month to provide everyone with a calendar of events. This blast should include School Committee members and anyone within the community who is interested in receiving such information.
- A district wide calendar should be put in the local paper.
- Use Alert Now to announce what can be expected in upcoming months

- PTO presidents offered to provide a training session for parents on the use of Edline
 - A School Committee representative should go to each school's second PTO meeting
 - Allow more dialogue at Citizen Speak and provide a follow up to what people have suggested
- Ms. Bagley-Jones is in the process of finalizing this report and will email it to all School Committee members.

Mr. Lovely mentioned Executive Session was held after the School Committee Retreat for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and litigation. He also mentioned there is a meeting planned for June 25th with the Warrant Committee to discuss improving budget procedures. He thanked everyone involved with the Milton Public Schools for an outstanding year. Special thanks were given to Bev Quinn and Sean Walsh who work diligently behind the scenes in the Administrative office. When asked if anyone had suggestions for the next meeting's agenda, Ms. Kelly stated she hopes to vote a line item budget for FY09.

A motion was made to reduce the set aside amount granted by the Warrant Committee by \$17,000 and to direct the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to take whatever steps necessary to effectuate this adjustment.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

A motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.