

**Milton School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Milton High School Library  
September 18, 2007**

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

**Committee Present:** Beirne Lovely, Chair, Lynda Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair, Chris Huban, Laurie Stillman and Glenn Pavlicek

**Staff Present:** Dr. Magdalene Giffune, Superintendent; Mary Gormley, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Paul Hilton, Assistant Superintendent for Business

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

Gayle Carvalho discussed the inequity of students in grades 2-5 English losing recess once a week to accommodate gym. In a memo from the principals this was explained as a contractual issue having to do with planning time for teachers. Ms. Carvalho feels that dealing with contract issues is the responsibility of Administration and the School Committee. One group of student should not be affected.

Steven Riley also feels having recess in unequal proportions does not make sense. He asked why one group would have less than the other. Was this a budget issue or a personnel matter?

Earl Fay thanked the School Committee for reconsidering their decision regarding the placement of students in co-taught classrooms. Mr. Fay stated that special education is not only an educational issue but a civil rights issue. Mr. Fay pointed out that Tucker is extremely civil rights motivated and has been very welcoming and supportive of the co-taught classrooms. He believes this is the model we should be following.

Catherine Reddington inquired how the nursing situation at the Collicot/Cunningham building was working. She also inquired about the amount of liability insurance coverage the schools have and asked if a child attending KEDS were to be injured, would they be covered. Ms. Reddington also felt it was unnecessary for Mr. Lovely to speak at length against freedom of the press for the Milton Times at the 8/7/07 meeting. She believes it is the job of the press to report on such topics. Ms. Reddington also felt parents should have been informed before school began regarding the recess situation.

\*Mr. Lovely stated some of these issues will be addressed tonight. Regarding the liability insurance, Ms. Stillman pointed out that KEDS would be covered under our liability insurance.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**Minutes of 6/20/06 were approved as amended.**

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 4-0-1

**Minutes of 8/7/07 were approved.**

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

**Minutes of 9/4/07 were approved.**

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

3. **AYP Report** – Dr. Giffune explained the results of the Department of Education’s report regarding AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act. The goal is to have “no status” which means target goals have been met in both the aggregate and for all subgroups in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Collicot, Cunningham and Glover all have no status in both groups for ELA and Math. Subgroups include: Limited English Proficient, Special Education, Low Income, African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic and Native American, and White. In order to get a rating there must be 40 students in a particular subgroup. Tucker has made AYP in both the aggregate and for subgroups for the first time in two years. They have no status for math and are in the Improvement 1 year status for subgroups for ELA. This is a wonderful accomplishment for Tucker. Pierce Middle School did not meet AYP in subgroups for either ELA or Math. For ELA Pierce is in the Improvement Year 2 status for subgroups. For four consecutive years Pierce has not made AYP for Math in the subgroup section and is therefore in corrective action status. Milton High School has no status for ELA and Math; however, failed to meet their target goal for Math for the African American subgroup. Dr. Giffune pointed out that since 2003 there has only been one student who did not pass MCAS. The district as a whole has no status.

Dr. Giffune referred to a letter from the DOE and explained that AYP is based on: a) participation – there are at least 95% of students taking part in the MCAS; b) performance – has the school met the state’s target Composite Performance Index (CPI) for the current review period?; c) improvement – is the rate of improvement such that all students will reach proficiency by 2014?; d) attendance/graduation – for K-8 schools does the attendance meet the state targets or represent a one percentage point of improvement over 2006? For High Schools did the 2006 cohort meet the state’s graduation rate target? If a “yes” can be answered to all of these in terms of meeting target goals both in the aggregate and in the subgroup section, then AYP is made. According to the letter from the DOE schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years face the following consequences: “After two years schools are identified for improvement and are required to offer the parents the option of sending their child to another school in the district that has made AYP if space in one is available. After three consecutive years schools must offer choice and supplemental services to the students most in need. After four consecutive years schools move into corrective action and are required to make significant changes that could include staffing, curriculum governance or instruction. After five consecutive years schools move into restructuring and may be put under state oversight.” Dr. Giffune referred to the handouts she had provided which showed the 86 school districts removed from the improvement list, Milton being one of them. There were 88 school districts in the Commonwealth identified for corrective action for subgroups. Out of the 88 schools in corrective action, 39 are middle schools. Out of the 39 middle schools, 26 have improved to make AYP. If they make AYP again next year, they will be removed from the list. Thirteen of the middle schools did not make AYP for four consecutive years. These schools

have to improve enough to make AYP for all subgroups for two consecutive years. The earliest they could be removed from the list would be 2009. Failure to make AYP for the fifth consecutive year puts the schools into restructuring. The Pierce Middle School is in that group. Dr. Giffune wanted everyone to understand the severity of this situation. For ELA Pierce Middle School has not made AYP in subgroups for three consecutive years. If that happens again, we will be in corrective action for ELA. For Math Pierce has not made AYP in subgroups for four consecutive years. Dr. Giffune stated we must find out why our subgroups are failing to meet the benchmarks. Although we can say it is the new students coming into the district, the state does not take that into consideration. Dr. Giffune informed the Committee that the Administrative team has met regarding this and everyone is willing to work to improve this situation. A team has been put together which will include Ms. Gormley and Mr. Rubin (Director of Pupil Personnel Services) and others to make significant changes beginning in grade 6.

Mr. Lovely has spoken to John Phelan to get his perception on this situation. Per Mr. Lovely's request, Mr. Phelan explained preliminary statistics show substantial numbers of children who join our system who come in at the "Needs Improvement" and/or "Warning" level. Although these students may only have been in the Milton school system for less than one year, they are included when calculating AYP. Mr. Lovely noted the improvement made at Pierce in the Special Education area and would like to hear about some of the success stories. Although not enough improvement has been made to meet AYP (missed by .5%), progress has been made. Mr. Lovely further stated that Pierce Middle School delivers a good education and the community, along with the School Committee has shown confidence in Mr. Phelan's leadership. Mr. Lovely reported Mr. Phelan took full responsibility for the students at Pierce not making AYP in the subgroups, and he will continue to work hard to find ways to improve this. Mr. Lovely looks to Dr. Giffune, the principal and the administrative staff to enlighten the Committee as to what has been being done over the last three years to solve this problem, what success has been made, what tracking has been done to determine how we failed over the last three years and what will be done this year. He would like parents to be involved in this plan also. Although there is a great deal of work to do, Mr. Lovely does not believe we have a failed Middle School. He also hopes the team previously mentioned by Dr. Giffune includes Mr. Phelan. Dr. Giffune replied this is not her team; Mr. Phelan is making up the team. Mr. Pavlicek pointed out that Math in the Special Education subgroup missed making the targeted goal by a very small margin. On the other hand, ELA went down in almost every category. That is what he would like to hear more about. He suggested having the team come to talk about what can be done to correct this situation. Ms. Sheridan agreed that it was Math that put us in corrective action; however it was only a .5% difference. This shows we are working to reach our target and are very close. She congratulated everyone involved for the progress made at Tucker School and suggested that the School Improvement Plans from last year be reviewed to see areas needing improvement. When asked when more information would become available, Dr. Giffune stated that sometime in October is when they report on MCAS scores and achievement in general. Mr. Lovely asked Dr. Giffune to advise the Committee of the team's meeting schedule and to let them know who will comprise the team. He also suggested that a member of the School Committee participate in the team. Ms. Stillman referred to the budget situation of the last several years. In her opinion the High School had been protected both educationally and throughout the budget process until it came off probation. The elementary schools were given resources and the effort was made to keep elementary class size down. At the same time, class sizes at the Middle School kept getting larger. Ms. Stillman feels not enough discussion was devoted to the Middle School. She compared the current situation of the Middle School to where the High School was five years ago. She suggested that as the Committee looks at the budget they look to see what is needed to turn this around for the Middle School.

**Traffic/Safety Issues** – Mr. Hilton reported the traffic pattern was a little confusing at the new buildings and the signs were not up before school opened. Within the next few weeks proper signage will be put up as to where people should be going, parking, etc. Discussion is ongoing with the bus company regarding the one Collicot bus that is having a timing issue. Some Collicot neighbors had inquired about the stone wall behind Collicot. Mr. Lovely explained that wall was necessary to support the road so it would not cave in and was part of the construction planning process.

**Elementary Recess** – Dr. Giffune explained contractual prep time for elementary teachers consists of five 30 minute periods contiguous to the teacher’s lunch hour and 90 minutes in blocks of 30 across the rest of the week. It ends up being 8 prep periods. Up until this year we had 8-9 prep periods per week in French Immersion depending on if they had Library and Future Problem Solving. In the English program there were 12-13 prep periods (same amount of preps plus 4 periods of FLES). Although reductions were made in Art, Music, FLES and Chorus, we still had to meet contractual prep time. It was decided to have Art or Music once a week, Second Step once a week, Physical Education once a week and Library every other week. However, there was still an imbalance - French Immersion had 8 prep periods; English had 9. In order to reduce the prep times beyond 8, we took grades 2-5 (English) and put Physical Education in one of the periods contiguous to lunch. Therefore, English has 4 recess periods and 1 Physical Education period contiguous to lunch. French Immersion has 5 recess periods. While this is not an ideal solution, it is still five periods of physical activity under the supervision of aides and also meets contractual obligations.

4. **School Committee Calendar Topics** – Dr. Giffune provided the Committee with a list of topics which she prioritized using a point system. Mr. Lovely stated that MCAS performance as it relates to AYP should be the highest priority outside the budget. He asked the Committee for their opinion regarding the topics listed. Some topics such as the School Lunch Program will require a report. Mr. Lovely reported that negotiations will begin shortly with the Teachers’ Union and Dr. Giffune has already started talking with the Union and to the Town regarding health insurance and the GIC Health Plan. Ms. Stillman would like to hear about the status of our facilities. She is concerned with the idea of “deferred maintenance” and would like to have annual reports on the condition of the buildings. She would like to see the Facilities Subcommittee go back in effect. Ms. Sheridan agreed with that suggestion. Mr. Lovely asked that any member interested in being part of the Facilities Subcommittee let him know. Mr. Lovely reported that the Finance Subcommittee will be discussing Full Day Kindergarten. A small core group has been working on this and has received notification that grants for implementing Full Day Kindergarten will become available. The Finance Subcommittee will discuss whether or not we should apply for additional grants. Dr. Giffune stated she had assumed Full Day Kindergarten and French Immersion were already listed as important topics so she did not rate them on her list.

Before moving on in the agenda Mr. Lovely reported that the Golf/Tennis Tournament held last week raised over \$25,000 and the Boosters have a pledge for another \$25,000. They also have other events planned to help support the Athletic Program. Mr. Lovely thanked the Boosters and all who contributed to the success of this event.

5. **Current Form of FY08 Budget** – Deferred until Finance Subcommittee meets. The intention is to develop a schedule of when we will meet with the Warrant Committee to jump start the budget process.
6. **School Committee Policies** – At a previous meeting it was suggested that the Policy Subcommittee reconsider policies GDA and GDB and review the Alert Now Policy, the Elementary School Assignment Policy and the Community Service Graduation Requirement. The Policy Subcommittee consists of Dr. Giffune, Ms. Stillman and Mr. Huban. Since policies GDA and GDB may pertain to a family member, Mr. Huban recused himself from the discussion of these policies. Ms. Stillman met with Dr. Giffune regarding Policy GDA, Support Staff Positions and Policy GDB, Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans, and some small revisions were made.

**Policy GDA** - It had been suggested by one School Committee member to insert a sentence stating that changes to established job descriptions will be submitted to the School Committee for approval. The Policy Subcommittee did not feel it necessary for the School Committee to go over every job description. Therefore, they suggested adding the sentence: “Significant changes to current job responsibilities will be reported to the School Committee during the Administration Report at the next regularly scheduled School Committee Meeting.” Mr. Lovely stated he would like to defer consideration of these policies until Ms. Kelly is present.

**Policy GDB** - It had been suggested by one School Committee member to add a sentence stating that the rates of pay for personnel not covered under collective bargaining agreements shall be set by the School Committee. The Policy Subcommittee changed “rates of pay” to the “range of pay”. The Policy Subcommittee also changed some wording within this policy to make it read more clearly. Those changes do not change the meaning of the policy.

**Alert Now Policy** - The Policy Subcommittee feels the current policy which limits the use of Alert Now to internal school business is appropriate. Any additional requests to use Alert Now can be brought to the School Committee.

**Elementary School Assignment Policy** – The Policy Subcommittee feels the current policy met the will of the majority of the School Committee. They do not recommend any changes to this policy.

**Community Service Graduation Requirement** – The current community service requirement is 140 hours. The Superintendent would like to see the community service requirement be more of a service learning opportunity. Perhaps this would mean less hours, but a more meaningful experience. Someone had suggested to Dr. Giffune that the hours be cut from 140 to 48; however, both Ms. Stillman and Mr. Huban felt that was too drastic. In the end, Dr. Giffune stated the recommendation will come from Dr. Drottter. The Committee will await Dr. Drottter’s recommendation.

With regard to fundraising for athletics, Mr. Lovely asked Mr. Hilton to create a detailed spreadsheet of the cost of the athletic program which can be made available to the public. He has received some questions as to where the money being contributed is going, what the costs are for programs, etc.

7. **Residency Discussion** – The Superintendent provided the Committee with a copy an article she had written regarding residency. This article has been submitted to the local paper. Mr. Lovely reported that residency issues continue to be focused upon and the Superintendent has consolidated the process by having central registration this year. There is currently one investigating officer and nothing out of the ordinary to report.

8. **MASS/MASC Joint Conference** – Dr. Giffune reported that this conference will be held November 14-17, 2007 at the Four Points Sheraton in Hyannis. Every School Committee is asked to send a delegate. Mr. Pavlicek stated he was planning to attend this conference.

Motion was made to nominate Glen Pavlicek as the Milton School Committee’s representative at the MASS/MASC Joint Conference.

Move: L. Stillman  
Second: L. Sheridan  
Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Stillman mentioned that November 17, 2007 is the Celebration for Education event. She suggested everyone put that on their calendars.

9. **Medicaid Payment Alternatives** – Mr. Lovely explained there will be two articles on the Warrant at the special November Town Meeting which involve Medicaid. One for the normal authorization of payment out of Medicaid monies that were collected during this fiscal but won’t be certified for free cash until next year. This money is used to cover bills that were expected to be paid out those funds. This is a normal article already submitted to the Selectmen. The second is a Home Rule Petition which would allow Medicaid monies to be deposited directly into a revolving account which then can be directly accessed by the School Department to pay bills during the fiscal year in which they occur. This would eliminate the need to have this on the Warrant at the special November Town Meeting. On behalf of the School Committee, Ms. Stillman has written a support letter. The Education Committee of the Legislature is hearing the Mass. Assoc. of School Committee’s view on this issue. It was added that Senator Joyce and Representative Timilty are also supporting this Home Rule Petition.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban  
Second: B. Lovely  
Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.