



PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

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To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians, Faculty & Staff
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools
Re: E-Update, Tuesday, January 19, 2010

I would like to take a moment to offer my support and condolences to all members of the Milton community who have been affected by the terrible events in Haiti.

Our district has many students, teachers and staff members who have friends and loved ones in the areas affected by the earthquake. As we watch these heartbreaking events unfold, we can only offer our hopes that the rescue efforts succeed in bringing health, comfort and stability to the survivors. To that end, the Milton Public Schools will be sponsoring a variety of different fundraising efforts for the people of Haiti. Please contact your child's principal to ask about these different opportunities. We would appreciate your support as we try to lend a hand to our Haitian neighbors.

One of our parents forwarded the following information to my office, which deals with how to explain difficult news events to your children. It was written by Paula K. Rauch, MD, of the MGH Psychiatry Department. The complete article can be viewed at

http://www.massgeneral.org/News/assets/pdf/Davis-Rauch_1-13.pdf

For Elementary School Students:

- TV and radio news exposure should be in the presence of an adult.
- Give children plenty of opportunities to talk about what they think is going on and clear up misconceptions.
- Encourage children to share their feelings and concerns with you.
- Let them know it's all right to be afraid and that you will do everything you can to keep them safe.
- Be available, as this age group may be more interested than younger children in the events but less capable than older children of coping and communicating.
- Reassure kids that many people are keeping them safe and that your family is safe.
- Offer special activities or games to them.

For Middle and High School Students:

- Listen, listen, listen.
- Watch TV news with them.
- Engage your adolescent in healthy conversation. "What do you think about the events that are taking place in our world today?" "How did you feel when you first heard about this?"
- Share your feelings with them honestly.
- Encourage them to express feelings of anger, and brainstorm with them about how they can deal with those feelings.

Our State Senator, Brian Joyce, sent me the following helpful information:

If you are currently searching for a family member or loved one who is a U.S. Citizen, contact the State Department at 1-888-407-4747.

Also, the Boston Public Health Commission has set up a help line at 617-635-4500. If you would like any further information, please contact (617) 284-1199 or visit http://www.bphc.org/Documents/haiti_support.pdf for a copy of the flyer. Note that the information in the flyer is available in English and Haitian Creole.

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For those interested in making donations, contact the American Red Cross at: http://american.redcross.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ntld_main&s_subsrc=RCO_ResponseStateSection or text "HAITI" to 90999 to have a \$10 donation added to your cell phone bill.

To reach Senator Joyce, call his office (617-722-1643), his home (617-696-0200) or email him at brian.a.joyce@state.ma.us.

School Committee Update

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 5th was rescheduled to Tuesday, January 12th. Below is a summary:

Marcia Uretsky, Principal of the Tucker Elementary School, attended the meeting to present with Grade 3 teacher Jen Yoon of the Tucker Site Council. They spoke about the School Improvement Plan, the Tufts/ELA curriculum, Readers' Workshop and the introduction of the Data Team, which is performing a school wide assessment. Also, Tucker has increased the amount of time spent on math instruction and has implemented a "Morning Masters" program before school to work on Everyday Math. Ms. Uretsky also described the "Saturday Slam Dunk," program, which is designed to help fourth- and fifth-graders with math by combining basketball with math instruction.

Next, Tony Cichello came to the meeting to discuss the work of the Consolidated Facilities Committee. The topic of whether or not to consolidate facilities of several town departments into one department may be voted on during Town Meeting in May and Mr. Cichello was looking for comments and input from school committee members.

Residency issues continue to be investigated, with a total of 31 students removed from the schools for non-compliance with residency requirements.

An explanation of the Race to the Top grant status was given. Milton did not submit a proposal for this federal grant.

The World Language Review Committee has been meeting twice a month and is expected to report to the school committee by the end of February.

We announced the upcoming retirements of Dr. Dore Korschun, Principal of the Glover Elementary School; Jeff Rubin, Administrator of Pupil Personnel Services; and Paul Ajemian, Math Department Head at Milton High School.

Next, we played a video presentation created by Milton parent and features television photographer Tom Fahey. Mr. Fahey produced a video for the Milton Foundation for Education's fundraiser in November.

A report on Full Day Kindergarten was given. This program anticipates a 10 percent reduction in grants, which resulted in a motion to increase tuition for the full day option. Members voted to raise tuition \$200 per student.

The Finance Subcommittee discussed options if the FY10-11 budget would be level-funded or even less than level-funded. One scenario could mean the school department would have a reduction of \$2 million less than its current budget. Though the revenue picture is not clear yet, there are indications that it will be a difficult budget year.

Members voted on both field trip and class size policies.

The next School Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 26th at 7 p.m. in the Milton High School library.

Curriculum Information

We are pleased to report that the Milton Public Schools have hired a new Elementary Math and K-8 Technology Coordinator. Holly Concannon has joined the Milton Public Schools on January 19th.

Ms. Concannon is a Milton resident who has been teaching in the Boston Public Schools, where she taught at a variety of grade levels and in a variety of programs, including participation in an Instructional Leadership Team and mentoring fellow teachers.

Ms. Concannon will be responsible for insuring that each student in the district receives the richest educational experience the district can provide by exhibiting leadership in her development, implementation and

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coordination of the subject area curriculum; the improvement in the quality of instruction; and the availability of appropriate resources in the areas of Mathematics and Technology.

Upcoming Events

Pierce Players present the musical production, “Annie” on **Thursday & Friday January 21st & 22nd at 7pm; and Sat. January 23rd at 2pm**. It will be held at Pierce Middle School. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children. They will available at the door or by calling 617-696-4570.

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Kindergarten Registration. Parents with children who will be five years old before September 1, 2010 are invited to attend an information session on **Thursday, January 28th** at the Charles Winchester auditorium at Milton High School at 7 p.m.

In order to register a child for kindergarten, parents are asked to download a form from our website (www.miltonps.org) or pick up a form at any of the elementary schools. Forms should be completed and returned to the administrative offices as soon as possible.

After submitting a registration form, parents are encouraged to attend the information session on January 28th. At this meeting, parents will meet the kindergarten staff, preview a typical day, learn about payment options for full day kindergarten and receive a New Student Registration Packet. There will also be a question and answer session.

The final step in completing Kindergarten Registration is held in June, when incoming students are asked to attend a screening session. These screenings are by appointment only and can be scheduled either at the information session or anytime thereafter.

For more information, please contact Denise Kelly at dkelly@miltonps.org or call 617-696-4470 x 5510. Additional details are available on the website.

Anyone who is unable to attend the Jan. 28th meeting should pick up information packets at the MPS Central Office anytime during school hours after January 28.

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Also, please save the date for Grade One Information Night. This will be held **Thursday, February 4th at 7 p.m.** in the Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School.

This presentation will center on the curriculum for the Elementary French Immersion and English/FLES programs. Parents of current kindergarten students in both public in private schools are encouraged to attend to help them to begin the process of choosing a program for Grade One.

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Please make an effort to see our students’ artwork, currently on display at the Milton Public Library, as part of the FAVA Art Show.

The art show, which began on Sunday, will remain on display through the end of February and includes nearly 100 pieces of artwork, including photographs, paintings and even a student-produced film.

FAVA (Friends and Advocates of Visual Arts) is presenting the show as a way to highlight the work of students who enroll in FAVA’s after-school art classes. These classes are fee-based art instruction, taught by trained artists to smaller groups of students in the public school classroom spaces.

All proceeds from FAVA courses directly benefit the Milton Public Schools’ visual arts programs. In the past FAVA has funded art-related items for the Milton schools like the ACE bus, installing the kiln at Pierce, and purchasing art materials not covered by the budget.

In addition, FAVA members advocate for increased resources for art instruction for all students in the Milton Public Schools.

The art show will feature creations from the following FAVA classes:

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"Under The Big Top" (Grades K,1) taught by Karen Hainline; "Let's Make A Movie" (Grades 2-5) taught by Janet Gilmore & Karen Hainline; "Lights Camera Action" (Grades 3-5) taught by Janet Gilmore; "Explorations in Art" (Grades 6-8) taught by Patricia Turner; "Create with Clay" (Grades 6-8) taught by Stephanie Sherman; "Photography" (Grades Grades 3-5) taught by Joan Clifford; and "Let's Explore Art!" (Grades K-2) taught by Jessica Gillooly.

FAVA members are grateful to Ray Thill, owner of Boston Sign Company, who donated the banner on the library's front lawn to promote the art show.

For more information about FAVA or their art classes, visit www.miltonfava.com

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It is time to register for Adult Ed Spring courses. Walk-in Registration Nights will be held **Monday, February 8th** from 6-9 pm; **Tuesday, February 9th** from 6-9 pm; and **Wednesday, February 10th** from 6-9 pm. For more information about registration or to see a course catalogue, visit

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/AdultEdBrochure-Spring2010.pdf>

News Around Town

The Friends of the Milton Public Library are sponsoring the following events:

- Sunday, January 24th, 2pm - House Architecture in New England. Meet the authors of *New Classic American Houses*, and read about the beautiful architecture of homes in our very own backyard.
- Wednesday, February 3rd, 7pm - Buying and Selling on eBay. Workshop leader Ellen Pierce teaches us how to locate and sell treasures on one of America's most popular websites.
- Friends of the Library Book Shop sell gently used books donated by Milton Library patrons. Books for all ages and priced to sell. Book Shop hours: Tuesdays 10am-2pm; Wednesdays 6:30pm-8:30pm; Saturdays 10am-2pm.

Health News

Our school nurses have been working in very close collaboration with the Milton Board of Health since school began in August. The first ever school-based seasonal flu clinic was held on Saturday, December 12th for vaccinating students in grades 6 through 12 and many of their parents. This was a great success!

This school-based option was then used on Saturday, January 9th when the Milton Board of Health held an extremely successful H1N1 flu clinic open to the entire community ages 4 – 18 and their parents / guardians. The Milton school nurses have had a presence at every town wide flu clinic this year.

A second clinic will be held on **Saturday, January 23rd** at the Pierce Middle School from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. This clinic is free and open to all Milton residents ages 4 and up. There are no longer any age or health requirements to receive the vaccine. A parent or legal guardian must be present at the time of vaccination for children under age 18. For ease of vaccination, please wear a short sleeve shirt. [Please Note: Currently, the vaccine available to the Board of Health is only for children age 4 and up. Parents of children under age 4 are advised to contact their pediatrician.]

This is the last scheduled clinic for this winter. The school district is very proud of the expertise and commitment the school nurses make on a daily basis to the students, parents and the community at large.

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The Milton Public Schools will be offering a CPR course this spring, through the Adult Education program. This class will be taught by Milton Hospital Staff and can be completed in one evening. The course will be held **Thursday, February 25th** from 6-9pm. Enrollees will learn emergency procedures for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and response to choking. This course covers adult, child and infant CPR.

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Those who complete the course successfully will earn a two-year CPR certification by the American Heart Association. Cost is \$25. For more information, visit

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/AdultEdBrochure-Spring2010.pdf>

Fundraising/Grant News

Chris Masalsky has been hard at work searching for grant opportunities for the Milton Public Schools. Here is a status report:

December and January are usually fairly slow months for grants, but we are pressing ahead with several proposals and waiting to hear on many more. We are anxiously awaiting the announcement of Nellie Mae's "Catalyst For Change" competition, as we submitted a \$50,000 collaborative proposal with Step Up to Excellence to establish an academic mentoring program at Milton High School. In January, Lowe's will announce their "Toolbox for Education" awards, and we submitted two proposals (one in support of Milton Outdoor Classrooms, and one to support construction of a stage curtain at Glover Elementary). We should also hear from Target shortly on their Field Trip grants.

We are seeking support for several projects, including Milton High's Community Service program, Saturday School at Pierce, Outdoor Classrooms, music and arts enrichment, and multiple school-specific initiatives. Upcoming proposals include the Bank of America Foundation, Clipper Ship Foundation, Target Local Store Grants, Wal-Mart Local Store Grants, the US Airways Foundation, and the Braitmayer Foundation. We are also pursuing competitive grants through the Massachusetts Department of Education, and are closely watching federal ARRA/recovery funds as they come available.

We are looking for supporters of Milton Public Schools who work for **Bank of America, US Airways** and **Wal-Mart** to help give a "boost" to our proposals to these organizations. We will submit requests for funds to BOA and Wal-Mart in January, and we need letters of support from company employees. The more letters we can attach to a proposal, the more likely a company is to fund a project - they want to know that their money will go toward programs that are important to their employees. Please contact me: cmasalsky@miltonps.org - I will be happy to fill you in on the details of our proposals, and help you to write a letter of support. It's an easy, no-cost way to support the Milton Public Schools!

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Earlier this month, dozens of teachers and staff at the Milton public schools had a very welcome letter in their mail box informing them that their request for a grant from the Milton Foundation for Education had been approved.

Twice a year, in the spring and fall, the MFE accepts grant proposals from anyone in the Milton public school system. A committee comprised of MFE volunteers and MPS teachers and staff review the proposals and determine whether the request falls within the foundation's granting guidelines. This cycle, the MFE approved 24 of the 39 requests, for a total of \$20,025.

Leslie Collins, the chair of the MFE Grants Committee, was delighted at the number of grant requests her committee received last fall, representing all six schools and all disciplines. The committee worked hard to balance the competing requests, and ultimately allocated the grants to the six schools as follows: Milton High School \$3,421; Pierce Middle School \$3,704; Collicot \$2,927; Cunningham \$2,290; Glover \$3,391; and Tucker \$4,290.

Some examples of grants that were approved include: \$1,000 for Robotics kits for the newly formed competitive Robotics Team at Milton High School; \$955 for supplies and equipment at Pierce Middle School so that the science classes can study genetics, plant biology, and natural selection with Wisconsin Fast Plants; \$1,000 for books for Cunningham classroom libraries for the Reader's Workshop Initiative.

The Milton Foundation for Education is a private, non-profit organization established in 1996 with a mission is to enhance the quality of education provided to students in the Milton public schools. The Foundation generates and distributes financial resources for enrichment programs that would not otherwise be available through the regular school budget. Their goal is to supplement, not supplant the regular school

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budget. For more information on Milton Foundation for Education or on the recent teacher grants, please visit www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org

Athletics

For sports fans, there is almost always a game or meet scheduled and Milton supports are always welcome. This winter, we are fielding 10 teams, including girls and boys' basketball; girls' and boys' hockey; a ski team; indoor track and wrestling. To see a full schedule, please visit the MHS Athletics page at: www.miltonps.org/departments-mhs-athletic.php.

Ambassador Page

Students: Congratulations to Glover Fourth grader **Kevin McDonough**, who earned a perfect score in this year's WordMasters Challenge meet. This is a national language art competition for students in Grades 3, 4 and 5. In the entire country, only 39 fourth graders achieved perfect results.

In addition, four students representing Collicot School recently won highest honors in the WordMasters Challenge. Third-graders **Matteo Mastandrea** and **Cianna O'Flaherty**; along with fifth-graders **Julie Mastandrea** and **Noah Scott** all earned perfect scores. In the entire country, only 41 third graders and 84 fifth graders achieved perfect results. Great job!

Staff: Our candidates for the Ambassador Page this week can be seen in all of our schools, though they are usually more "behind the scenes" than some of our other employees. **Joe Thomas and Julius Ramirez** are PC Technicians for the Milton Public Schools.

"They are not only patient, helpful, and professional, they really go above and beyond and out of their way to help everyone, students included," said one Milton Public School teacher.

Their supervisor, Bob Pattison, is equally enthusiastic.

"There are very few people that truly affect every person in the Milton Public Schools," said Mr. Pattison. "Joe and Julius are two of them. Without their tireless efforts to maintain countless pieces of equipment, while still taking the time to answer every question that comes their way, the whole system would come to a screeching halt."

It is so easy to go about your day and not notice little acts of consistent goodness. Thanks to Mr. Thomas and Mr. Ramirez for their hard work.

Volunteer: Without a doubt, some of our most important volunteers in the Milton Public Schools are our PTO members. And among this group, the PTO presidents stand out as individuals who give above and beyond what is asked of most parents.

We are very, very grateful to have such a dedicated and involved set of parents who have volunteered to run our PTOs this year. Please help me to thank the following individuals who give countless hours to improving our schools:

Collicot: Julio and Sheila Varela; Jim and Amy Delaney; **Cunningham:** Denise Queally; Amanda O'Reilly; Joanie Analetto; Linda Farwell and Jen Healy. **Glover:** Becky Padera, Reedy Kream. **Tucker:** Elizabeth Thomas; Annemarie Johnson; Debra May Hughes; **Pierce:** Beth Greenawalt and Ray Czwakiel. **Milton High:** Annemarie Johnson and Cheryl McDermott.