



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, Friday, November 20, 2009

From the Office of the Superintendent

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” -- Margaret Mead

Next week, many of our students and their families will be celebrating Thanksgiving. For those who are traveling to visit family, we wish you a safe journey. For those who are staying home or hosting family members, we wish you a warm and wonderful holiday.

As we all know, this is a season for gratitude and giving thanks. But for many members of the Milton Public Schools community, it is also a time for generosity and compassion. I am so proud of the recent efforts by our staff and students to help our local Food Pantry with their Thanksgiving food drive.

One of our high school teachers, Brian Macinaw and his students will be spending several hours loading and unloading deliveries for the Food Pantry. Jeanne Mattaliano, who works in our business office, contacted her brother-in-law George Lambert of Lambert's Rainbow Fruit in Westwood and Dorchester, who donated enough squash and carrots for 170 families.

Another teacher, Mary Ann Donnelly, who is the advisor for the Key Club, sent an appeal to her fellow teachers to help with her goal to organize food donation boxes at Milton High School. More than 40 teachers offered to keep a box in their classroom and encourage their students to donate, which resulted in a massive collection of food items from our high school.

In addition, our elementary school PTO's and the Pierce student council representatives have also been hard at work collecting hundreds of items for Thanksgiving Day meals for needy families.

This program is one of many community service projects in which our schools participate. Every one of our schools involves its students in some type of service project during the school year, from local charities such as Cradles to Crayons, to international causes, such as Pennies for Peace. Additionally, each Milton High School student is required to complete 140 hours of Community Service in order to graduate.

The combined efforts of our Milton Public Schools staff and students, along with the generosity of our community, will surely make a difference for many families over Thanksgiving. We are grateful to all those who contributed to these projects. Please enjoy your holiday weekend. – Mary C. Gormley

School Committee Update

Tuesday, November 17th

Members of the Collicot Site Council were on-hand to discuss recent news from Collicot, including MCAS scores and the AYP results. As a result of the latest MCAS results, they have implemented a “response intervention” and student-study teams to assess individual performance in class. The Site Council also discussed class size, the early learning classrooms and the success of the NECC program at Collicot.

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A report on the Consolidated Facilities committee was next, which dealt with the proposal to consolidate the maintenance of many of the Town of Milton's buildings under the direction of one department. A preliminary list of recommendations was discussed and the full report will be released in the next several weeks.

Information about the H1N1 virus was shared, including the news that the Milton Public Schools has been tracking attendance rates in cooperation with the town Board of Health and so far, there has only been a slight spike in absenteeism at the Cunningham School, which has since returned to normal levels. There has been discussion of setting up an evening or Saturday flu vaccine clinic in our middle and/or high school, dependent on the availability of the vaccine.

Ms. Sheridan then discussed the School Committee goals for the 2009-2010 school year, which include:

- Maintain the high level of communication with parents initiated in the past year
- Maintain a high level of communication with inter-town committees
- Explore the possibility of consolidating evening activities
- Review student achievement
- Design yearly fundraising goals by the end of the previous year
- Engage school site councils with school committee efforts
- Reactivate academic review teams
- Review programs that might be moved to club status
- Review world language program
- Review sustainability on a number of programs offered by MPS

School Committee members took a moment to thank the cast and crew of the recent production, *Music Man*, held at Milton High School. This was another wonderful example of the talent of our staff and students.

Next was a discussion of the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Collicot School, as well as their efforts towards becoming a "green school."

The meeting concluded with the news that recently-announced state cuts may result in more than \$500,000 fewer dollars to the Milton Public Schools. This news will be discussed in more detail by members of the Finance Subcommittee at the next school committee meeting, which is scheduled for December 8th at 7pm in the MHS Library.

Tuesday, November 3rd.

Citizen Speak: Several parents advocated to the committee to hire primary grade Reading Specialists in the future.

Next, we recognized a group of Milton High School students who were named Commended Students by the National Merit College Plans reporting service. These students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who took the 2008 PSAT and represent some of the most academically talented students in the country. Congratulations to David Corbett, Charlie Rosmarin, Samuel Shepard, John Shields and Graham Strang. Another MHS student, Jacqueline James, was honored by the National Achievement Scholarship Program for academic success. We are proud of these students for their hard work and accomplishments.

Representatives from the Milton Foundation for Education discussed the success of the recent Monster Dash and promoted their upcoming event, the annual Celebration for Education. See below for more information on this year's Celebration.

Members of the Cunningham Site Council spoke to the school committee about their work so far this year at Cunningham. Among the topics was a school wide assessment program which matches reading materials more closely to students' abilities.

Curriculum Info

The MCAS testing schedule for 2009-2010 has been released. In order to minimize the number of students taking make-up exams, we ask parents to please review this schedule before making any travel plans

outside of scheduled school vacation periods. The MCAS scheduled can be found on the calendar page of the MPS website: <http://www.miltonps.org/calendar.php>.

We congratulate the following students, who achieved a perfect score on the last spring's MCAS tests:

Milton High Math: Madeleine Brown, Jonathan Ingraham, Tucker Kibbee, Mairead Kiernan.

Biology: Caeleigh MacNeil.

Pierce Middle School Math: Liana Masey-Greene, Peter Timmons, Ellen Chow, Peter DeLuca, John Keally, Claire Mahoney, Jack Radley, Katherine Rosner, Andrew Siu, Tansy Massey-Green, Katherine Gioioso, Victoria Hansbury, Shannon MacLeod, William Hess and Emma Pred-Sosa. **English Language Arts:** Emily Lenane, Kimberly Herbert, Elizabeth Magnuson, Jack Radley, Emma Chinman, Kate Stockbridge

Elementary Schools Math: John McGrath, Nolan Carvahlo, Mary Corcoran, Sadie Marcus, Michael O'Hanlon, Zachary Fischer, Edward Callahan and Allison Reed. **English Language Arts:** Danielle Dumais, John Lenane, Julian Miller, Cole O'Flaherty, Alexis Belash, Shannon Fitzgerald, Meaghan McDougall, Julia Neelon, Allegra Denooyer, Parker Hall, Joshua Kery, Sadie Marcus, Sarah Monderer, Joseph Quinn, Tyler Volpe-Knock, Collette Nourie, and Maggie O'Hanlon.

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We'd like to give a big thank you to the CATZ program for initiating a wonderful new recess program at the Glover Elementary School. The program, called "CATZ PLAY" uses parent volunteers who have been trained by CATZ staff to help lead playground activities. Glover parent Todd Ducharme, executive vice president of CATZ in Hingham, has spearheaded the effort to make recess a fun, constructive and active time for students.

More than 25 parents have signed up to help lead the activities, which has gotten a positive response from both students and teachers. The CATZ PLAY program can be expanded to include a classroom component, and can also be used at our other elementary schools. If parents are interested in receiving more information about setting up a CATZ PLAY program, please contact Mr. Ducharme at tducharme@catzsports.com

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Another piece of good news coming out of Milton High School is the formation of a Debate Team. English teacher Nick Fitzgerald and long-term substitute Phil Tedesco are the team's talented advisors. After forming the first team in several years at MHS, these teachers have already taken the group on the road for competitions.

Our students have completed four rounds of two-on-two competition and Milton High had two teams each earn first place. We hope to send six students to compete in December, as part of the Mass Forensics League, which consists of 30 schools across the state. (www.massforensics.org) The Debate Team season runs from October to February and they are still welcoming new members.

We would like to thank our friends at the Council on Aging, who allowed us the use of their van in order to transport our students to the debate competitions. Great job, everyone!

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We are pleased to announce that our World Language Review Committee has been formed. The Committee, convened at the request of the school committee, will make their recommendations in February of 2010.

The members are: Andrew Cantillon and Courtney Affanato from Collicot; Mary Ann Rull and Marietta Surette from Cunningham; Raju Pathak and Margaret Eberhardt from Glover; Rachel Schewe and Rachel Shanor from Tucker. In addition, the following teachers are also on the committee Janice Gordon (FLES teacher), Veronica Watson and Fatima Bourass-Elzein (French teachers) and Erin Power and John Doyle

(English teachers). They have been charged with the task of examining how the Milton Public Schools can more efficiently and effectively use our resources and address the following issues:

- Single Strands in both English and French Immersion at the Elementary Grades
- French Immersion Student Assignment: Partner Schools Strands and/or Continuum Strands (Elementary Grades)
- Special Education Services (French Immersion First and Second Grades)
- Class Size (English and French Immersion all Elementary Grades)
- Class Size Educational Assistants
- Grades 4 and 5 Math and/or Language Arts Integration (English and French Immersion)
- Middle School Foreign Language Offerings
- FLES (Elementary Program and Elementary to Middle School Transition)

Health News

The following is a message from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, passed along by our head nurse, Margaret Gibbons: “Massachusetts is currently experiencing rates of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) that exceed the rates typically seen during the peak of flu season. Many schools are experiencing higher than expected student and faculty absenteeism due to ILI. This guidance provides information to consider during this challenging situation”:

- **All sick students and staff should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever. This fever-free period *must* be without the use of fever-reducing medicines**, like Motrin (ibuprofen) or Tylenol (acetaminophen). They should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever even if they are taking antiviral medicines. Many people can expect to stay home for about 4 days: about 3 days with fever and one more day with no fever and no fever reducing medicines. However, the fever with influenza can last 2-5 days or more, so students and staff must be prepared to stay home as long as it takes to become fever-free for 24 hours.
- **Remind students not to share eating utensils, cups or water bottles.** This is especially important for students on sports teams who may be accustomed to this. Sharing these items can transmit flu viruses.
- **Continue to practice preventative measures.** Hand washing and coughing and sneezing etiquette should be practiced and reinforced both at home and at school.

Please help us to combat the spread of these illnesses by complying with these guidelines.

Upcoming Events

All Aboard! This Friday night is the first of our scheduled Movie Nights at our beautiful Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School. Why leave town to go to the movies? Join us for a screening of the holiday classic, *The Polar Express*. Doors open **Friday, November 20th at 6:30pm**, and the movie starts at 7pm. Suggested donation is \$3 per person and children must be accompanied by a parent or adult. All proceeds will benefit the Milton High School Clubs and Activities Fund.

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Pierce PTO Holiday Craft Fair – Wednesday, **December 2nd** from 6:00-9:00pm in the Pierce cafeteria. In addition to the craft fair, the PTO will be presenting a screening of the movie “Elf” in the auditorium at 7:00 pm. Proceeds to benefit the Pierce PTO.

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Did you know that you can earn money for your school simply by shopping? For those of you preparing for the holiday shopping season, please consider registering your rewards cards from Stop & Shop, Shaw's or Target on their websites in order to earn an additional reward for your school. Pierce Middle School's PTO is encouraging all parents to register their cards (or contact lferrante@verizon.net for assistance). Another great way to earn money for your school would be to visit www.onecause.com site, which will donate a percentage of your online purchases from major merchants (llbean.com, walmart.com, toysrus.com, etc.) to your child's school if you register.

Milton Foundation for Education

Tickets Are Going Fast! Don't miss your chance to be a part of this year's Celebration for Education! "Up and Away: Beyond the Basics" is the theme of the 11th Annual Celebration for Education to be held this **Saturday, November 21st** at Lombardo's in Randolph. Sponsored by the Milton Foundation for Education, this is the town's biggest annual fundraiser for the public schools. Proceeds from this year's event will fund enrichment initiatives in all six of Milton's public schools, things like robotics, master music classes, media production workshops, independent language study and artists-in-residence. Tickets are \$75 each and include Casino Night entertainment, a stand up comedian, food, dancing, live and silent auction, raffles and much more. Tickets can be purchased at www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org or at the door. Please show your support for the Milton public schools AND have a wonderful night out with friends and family!

Athletics

Winter Sport sign ups began November 12th and will run through November 30th. Students interested in participating must achieve academic eligibility, have a current copy of a physical and obtain a clearance card in order to participate in any athletic program. See the Athletic Office with any questions or email straister@miltonps.org

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Congratulations to Sean LoPresti, Milton High's boy's basketball coach, who was recently named Coach of the Year for Division II South Boys for the 2008-2009 year. Mr. LoPresti will be honored by the Massachusetts Basketball Coaches Association on Sunday, November 22nd at their Hall of Fame banquet at Holy Cross in Worcester.

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Congratulations also to Micaela Butlin for being named to the Eastern Mass Division I All Stars Second Team for Girls' Cross-Country competition. Micaela will represent the Bay State in the Senior All Star Game on Sunday, November 22nd at 5:30pm at Woburn High School.

Ambassador Page

As part of our E-Update, we highlight students, teachers, parents, and members of the community whose hard work deserves recognition. Please read about some of their outstanding accomplishments below:

Milton High School: We would like to recognize the recently-elected officers of the National Honor Society. Congratulations to Felicia Iyamu, President; Lauren Peterson, Vice-President; Kate Madigan, Secretary; Daria Turner, Treasurer; Sidney Madden, Public Relations Officer; and Alexandria Hutchinson, Historian. In addition, the NHS welcomed the following new inductees: Kristin Behenna, Steven Manning, Emily Lynch, Lisa Liu, Myron Inglis, Michelle Canniff, Dorian Burke, Madeleine Brown, Haley Wilcox, Alexa Saint-Fort, Robert Orlando, Catherine Mitchell and Emily Anderson.

Pierce Middle School: In addition to the accolades above for our Milton Public Schools students who achieved perfect scores on their MCAS tests, we are proud to announce that one student from Pierce Middle School was able to achieve *two* perfect scores, in both math and English language arts. Please congratulate Jack Radley for this remarkable achievement.

Elementary Schools: There was also one student from our elementary schools who managed *two* perfect scores also. We are doubly proud of Sadie Marcus for her accomplishment.

Volunteer Recognition: Although the weather is getting cooler, one of our Milton Public Schools parents is continuing his efforts for our Walk-To-School campaign. Many of you have probably seen Glover parent Erick Ask walking (or usually biking) to school with his daughters. Mr. Ask has also been hard at work campaigning to get more parents to walk or bike to school throughout Milton. He is also in touch with several state and national organizations that support this cause and is working to secure grants to launch town wide walking and biking initiatives. We appreciate everything Mr. Ask has done for his school, his town and the environment.