



PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

MARY C. GORMLEY
Superintendent of Schools
617-696-4808/09

JOHN P. PHELAN
Assistant Superintendent
For Curriculum & Personnel
617-696-4811/12

PAUL C. HILTON
Assistant Superintendent
For Business
617-696-5041

To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians & Staff
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools
Re: E-Update, January 6, 2009

From the Office of the Superintendent

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff:

I want to wish each of you and your families a healthy and happy New Year. I also want to thank each of you for the contributions you make to enhance the educational experiences of the students of the Milton Public Schools.

Our staff, parents and guardians as well as the citizens in our community go far beyond what is expected in the way of supporting and giving to our schools. I would like all of you to know about a few of the most recent examples that demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement among our staff, parents and guardians.

Recently, the Boston Globe wrote an article summarizing the success of this season's Globe Santa Program. The article listed the final Globe Santa donations, including the following entry: "Pierce Guidance Staff Donates." I know that there are several Pierce Schools in Massachusetts, but I immediately knew that the Pierce Guidance Staff referred to was our own, because each of them -- Erica Benjamin, Lisa Veldran, Karen Cahill and Lisa Spinelli -- are exactly the type of people who would quietly give to such a cause to honor their school, not themselves.

I am sure that several of you have read articles in The Milton Times and Globe South about the need for further fundraising to support Milton High School's Athletic Program as well as Clubs and Activities for both Pierce Middle School and Milton High School. In this difficult budget year, we have relied on extensive fundraising to provide these essential parts of a middle and high school student's experience. We appreciate the Boosters, FAME and FAVA who have always supported our programs, but this year's fundraising needs require extraordinary efforts beyond their usual heroics. Dr. John Drottar is holding an informational meeting for parents on Thursday night, January 8th at 7pm in the Milton High School library to discuss the fundraising situation.

Kate Sumner, a Milton High School graduate and mother of two of our student athletes, Morgan and McKenzie, works in the world of advertising and marketing. Kate responded to my request to develop a plan to have individuals, businesses and companies become sponsors and purchase banners that will hang prominently until June of 2010 in the Copeland Family Field House. The banners are a great way to provide businesses or organizations a tremendous amount of visibility in our community. The Field House is used by high school teams as well as a great variety of private leagues, camps and sports organizations throughout New England. Kate and a talented group of volunteers listed below immediately responded and have been meeting on Saturday mornings and working hard to get these banners sold. Shortly, you will see the banners flying in the Copeland Field House with the names of individuals and companies who have yet again pulled the proverbial

25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

“rabbit out of the hat” to help the students of the Milton Public Schools achieve their goals. With much gratitude, we thank these wonderful volunteers:

***Ted & Robin Curley, Bill Curran, Joe DeBesse, Kathi Flaherty, Jo Grant, Joe Indelicato
Carole Kavey, Gary Kelly, Mary McCarthy, Keith McDermott, Peter Muse, Ann O'Connor,
John Phelan, Janet Potts, Stephen Rice, Kate Sumner and Mark Ware.***

If you would like to purchase a banner, or can help to arrange a corporate sponsor, please visit our website at www.miltonps.org for more information.

*Another Milton parent working on the fundraising situation has been Laura Kessler, mother of two MHS students, Katie and John Krauss, who also immediately came forward when she heard about the need. Laura has been organizing a Walk-A-Thon for Spring Sports and Clubs. The event is for high school students and will be held at the Copeland Field House on **Saturday, January 31 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.** Parents from FAME, FAVA, Boosters and Athletics will be working with Laura, who along with our Athletic Director, Steve Traister and MHS Principal, Dr. John Drottar, will make this event a reality.*

The final effort which will make Athletics, Clubs and Activities at Pierce Middle School and Milton High School a reality came from Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett, our talented music director. Dr. Burdett is planning a Milton High School and Pierce Middle School Faculty Talent Show in March. This will be an exciting fundraiser that will feature faculty performances. This event is sure to create spirit and build morale while raising the needed funds.

*On behalf of the students who are playing on Milton High School sports teams and members of clubs that range from the Drama Club or Best Buddies, to the school newspaper to the Art Club, thank you, thank you, thank you. – **Mary Gormley***

Grant News:

- **Grant Writer Hired:** I am very pleased and proud to announce that we have hired Christopher Masalsky to be Milton Public School System’s first grant writer. Our Grant Writer Screening Committee reviewed 21 applications before choosing Mr. Masalsky, an experienced, talented and highly motivated grant writer.

On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, I want to thank and recognize the Milton Foundation for Education for making this wonderful and exciting new resource a reality for our schools, students, teachers and staff. This half-time grant writer position is being totally funded by the Milton Foundation for Education.

- **M-PACE Grants Announced:** Did you ever wonder where the money goes after you check the donation box on your excise tax form to benefit the Milton Public Schools? There is a group in town which monitors these donations and awards grants to help offset the cost of many cultural and artistic activities for students at all grade levels.

This group, M-PACE (Milton Partnership for Arts and Cultural Enrichment) recently announced the grant recipients for the 2008-09 school year. They include Riverside Theatre Works Poetry and Music workshops for students in Grade 3; a trip to the Boston Symphony for students in Grade 4; a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts for students in Grade 8; and a performance of Macbeth at the MHS auditorium to be presented by Shakespeare Now Theater Company. A total of 12 grants were awarded, which cover each grade level and offer a variety of experiences. Thank you to Kevin Sorgi, John Michael Shields, Roxanne Musto and Meredith Hall, who along with myself and John Phelan, comprise the M-PACE board.

- **Milton Foundation for Education:** The recipients of the fall grants have been announced and the winners are....our students! A staggering assortment of innovative and creative grant proposals was submitted by teachers and administrators. The MFE has generously funded 17 grants to benefit all six of our schools. The total funded this cycle was \$14,767.66. The proposals ranged from “tremor tables,” to help middle school students engineer earthquake-proof structures, to the purchase of theatrical lights for a drama classroom, to a set of multimedia classroom materials for fourth-graders to learn about Canada. More than 20 teachers and other faculty members applied for these competitive grants, all of which will directly benefit students. Thanks to the following staff members who wrote grant applications: Jeanne Roulleau, Robin Lee, Kathleen Bertrand, Elizabeth MacElhaney, Maryellen McDermott, Stephen Collyer, Barbara Plonski, John O’Leary, Caitlin Doering, Katherine Sullivan, Ava Casper, Patricia Ostrem, Jenny Detterman, April Allegrezza, Emma Segall, Dore Korschun, Mary Ellen Burke, William Deschenes, Martha Sherman, Adina O’Neill, Rebecca Warner, Patty Andresino and Claire Givens.

Curriculum Information:

- **Pierce & Tucker Saturday Programs:** Beginning Saturday, January 10, 2009, students at Tucker Elementary School will be attending optional Saturday sessions. One hour of English Language Arts instruction and one hour of Math instruction will be offered. The program is scheduled to run through April 4th and will be held from 9 to 11 a.m., with an optional third hour for physical activity. This program is being funded through Title One funds. The Tucker Elementary School is our only Title 1 School.
- **Pierce Middle School** will offer a nine-week Saturday Academic Enrichment program to middle school students who are most at risk for poor performance on the MCAS. The program, which begins Saturday, January 24th, has been made available from a grant, which was written by PMS assistant principal Karen Spaulding and funded by the Copeland Family Foundation. The sessions will focus on critical areas in Math and English Language Arts.
- **Independent & Collaborative Projects:** All teachers in the Milton Public Schools are observed and evaluated within the Supervision & Evaluation program of the Milton Public Schools. As part of this process, a new program is being implemented to encourage new and exciting ideas from our faculty. In addition to regularly scheduled, formal evaluations, our professional status teachers (those with more than three full years of experience) will participate in either an independent or collaborative research project.

Below are just a few of the creative projects that our teachers have proposed and are working on as part of this initiative:

- Design a unit on the genre of biography for language based class - grades 4 and 5.
- Create a series of open response questions along with a rubric to help score them and share with all fourth grades.
- Hold a Math Night at Pierce for parents. Target those whose children scored in the Warning or Needs Improvement categories on MCAS.
- Explore and recommend non-fiction titles to be used in Milton High School Humanities curriculum.
- Integrate science and technology within the human body curriculum. Complete a heart rate lab with students.

“These professional status teachers are looking for ways to be more involved in creating and maintaining curriculum,” said Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel John Phelan.

“These research projects will create a wealth of data and information for our schools.”

School Committee Updates

Here is a summary of the past two school committee meetings. The next two meetings will take place on January 6th and January 20th and another meeting on the FY 10 budget will be scheduled.

December 2nd:

- **Budget:** The Milton School Committee approved a figure to submit to the Warrant Committee for next year's number. The committee authorized the request for \$34,215,591. This amount is the required figure to maintain essential services in our schools. Future newsletters from our principals and my office will be highlighting information and updates on the progress of this important topic.
- **Milton Community Schools:** Director Pam Dorsey updated the school committee on the programs run by MCS, including Camp Cunningham, the before- and after-school programs and school vacation camps. For more information on any of these programs, including tuition, dates and registration information, please visit www.miltonps.org and click on "School Committee Presentations."
- **AYP Initiatives:** Jeff Rubin, Administrator of Pupil Personnel Services, updated the committee on initiatives taking place in the Milton Public Schools with the goal of helping students within the special education sub-groups make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Among those initiatives are the current full-day kindergarten program; the integrated preschool program; a Pierce Middle School program which restructured the Language Based Model for special education students; additional PD for middle school math teachers; a teacher/student mentoring program at Pierce. Mr. Rubin also discussed other initiatives, such as the language-based classrooms at Collicot; co-taught classrooms at Glover and Tucker; summer services which enrolled more than 200 students; and a transition program at MHS for a small group of high school students not fitting in to the current programs offered at MHS. Mr. Rubin also talked about implementing an Open Response Initiative at the elementary schools, to familiarize students with that portion of the MCAS.
- **Facilities Subcommittee Report:** Lynda-Lee Sheridan introduced members of this committee: Ms. Sheridan, Paul Hilton, Rick Malstrom, Bill Ritchie, Barbara Plonski and Lynn O'Sullivan. The committee has been working towards the goal of reducing energy and saving money in the Milton Public Schools. The group plans to do this with three steps: buying energy more cheaply; upgrading or changing equipment; and conserving energy. The group went on to explain how to complete these steps to reach the goal.

December 16th:

- **Cunningham Elementary School Site Council:** Principal Christine Gerber along with Jeanne Conley and Andrew Flanagan, members of the Cunningham School Site Council, discussed the Improvement Plan for Cunningham. The council reviewed 2007 MCAS data, did an item analysis by grade and content area. They developed four goals as a result of their findings, targeting math instruction, literacy instruction, targeting of diverse learners and parental involvement.
- **Tucker Elementary School Site Council:** Principal Drew Echelson updated the committee on the work of the Tucker School Site Council. He discussed the school's mission/vision statement, focus on academic rigor and the high attendance at family book clubs. Mr. Echelson also reiterated his wish for a reading coach and an assistant principal.
- **Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee:** Tony Cichello, who chairs this committee, discussed a proposal to consider a consolidated model for all town buildings. The cleaning, maintenance and repair costs for schools, as well as other town buildings including libraries and the senior center, could be lowered if those costs were consolidated under a general Facilities Department. This change would require the approval of both the school committee and town meeting.

Upcoming Events

- **Kindergarten Information Night:** Parents/guardians of students who will begin kindergarten in 2009 should begin the registration process. First, download and submit a pre-registration form, available at www.miltonps.org. Next, attend the informational session on **Thursday, January 22nd at 7:00 p.m.** in the MHS Auditorium. Appointment times for screenings will be given out at this event. For more information, call Sean Walsh at 617-696-4811 or email swalsh@miltonps.org. I encourage you to tell your friends or neighbors who have children who will be five years old before Sept. 1, 2009.
- **Grade One Information Night:** Parents/guardians of students who will be entering Grade One in 2009 are invited to attend a Grade One Information Night on **Thursday, January 29th at 7:00 pm** in the Milton High Auditorium. Please download and submit a pre-registration form, available at www.miltonps.org. Descriptions of the curriculum, explanations of co-taught classrooms, as well as information on French Immersion and traditional programs will be available. I encourage parents of current kindergarten students to attend this informational meeting.
- **Walk-a-Thon for Spring Sports & Clubs:** As mentioned above, this event will be held on **Saturday, January 31st from 4:00-6:00 p.m.** in the Copeland Field House, with a snow date of Sunday, February 1st from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Students can pick up pledge sheets in the MHS main office or the Athletic Director's office. Sponsorships will be \$10 per hour and it is hoped that all Milton High students participate. Student, staff and parent helpers are still needed. Contact Laura Kessler at lkessler@ifb.org for more information.
- **Sporting Events:** The MHS Winter Sports schedule is posted online at www.miltonps.org Click on "Milton High School Winter Athletic Schedule." Attending a Milton home game is a not only a great opportunity to see our teams in action, it's also a fun and inexpensive way to support our athletes.
- **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Celebration:** The Milton Interfaith Clergy Association invites all to attend on Monday, January 19th, 5-8:00 p.m. at Temple Shalom, 180 Blue Hill Ave.

Theme of the Day: *The Power of One: Taking Action in a Time of Challenge and Controversy*

5:00 pm – 5:45 pm: A Simple Dairy Supper Will Be Served

5:45 pm – 6:30 pm: Action Drama Dialogue led by MHS students

6:30 pm – 7:00 pm: Community Chorus Rehearsal - *Singers of all ages are welcome to participate.*

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm: The MLK, Jr. Memorial Celebration featuring: A Display Of Milton Student Essays, Poems and Art Work, The Milton High School Gospel Chorus, Glover and Tucker After-School Singers, The St. Agatha Church Puppeteers, MHS Essay Winners!

Milton Public Schools Ambassadors Page

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

Teacher & Volunteer Highlight:

- It is unusual for one person to be recognized as both the Teacher highlight and the Volunteer highlight, but this month, Brian Mackinaw has done just that. A teacher in the alternative program at Milton High School, Mr. Mackinaw also serves as the faculty manager for the athletic department and the assistant football coach for Milton High. Much of his volunteer work has been done quietly and behind the scenes, but recently, his dedication to getting the job done turned a few heads. When the Milton Food

25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

Pantry had trouble finding residents to help unload supplies, they called Milton High School to see if anyone could help. Not only did Mr. Mackinaw arrive with several students to help out, he returned on his own time after school to make sure the job was finished. Described by his colleagues as “the pulse of the school,” and “unbelievable with the kids,” he is also called a “gifted teacher” and “an important team member” by high school administrators. We in Milton are fortunate that this talented educator chose to make a difference in our school system.

Student Highlight:

- Congratulations to Gabe Stillman who was recently announced as the winner of the 2008 Virginia Commonwealth University’s High School Jazz Competition. Gabe is a senior at Milton High School and is a member of the MHS Jazz Combo I, Jazz Band, Concert Band, and Pit Orchestra. He also served as President of the Jazz Combo and Band, Vice President of Concert Band, and performed in the wind ensemble. Gabriel is also a member of the Tri-M Society.

He has received numerous awards for his musicianship while a student at MHS, including: the Judges' Choice Award from the 2008 Berklee College of Music Annual High School Jazz Festival, a Special Citation for Outstanding Musicianship from the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE), the 2008 Most Valuable Contribution Award from the MHS Music Department, the 2007 MHS Music Department Leadership Award, and the 2007 MHS Music Department Spirit Award. We are very proud of Gabe for his success in this national competition. For more information on the award, visit www.vcu jazz.org/composition.

Calendar of Events

Please remember to check the “CALENDAR” section of the Milton Public Schools website at www.miltonps.org for a listing of all upcoming events.