



## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02186

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To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians & Staff  
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools  
Re: E-Update, April 17, 2009

*From the Office of the Superintendent*

*As educators, communication is part of our mission. Healthy, productive communication between teacher and student is of primary importance, but it is also critical for the Milton Public Schools to have clear lines of communication among teacher, parent, administrator and the community. One more tool in that quest for communication has been made available to us. On Monday, April 13, our new Milton web site went on-line.*

*Sean Walsh, our human resources specialist, worked diligently with Jackrabbit Design of East Milton to develop this new site. Our technology director, Bob Pattison was a critical link in getting the site launched.*

*We recognize how powerful a tool an effective web site can be – both for those already in the Milton Public Schools and for those who are considering enrollment. We think our new site provides the maximum amount of information with the minimal amount of effort in navigation. We hope you will agree.*

*We welcome feedback on our new site, so after trying it out, let us know what you think. Please send comments to [swalsh@miltonps.org](mailto:swalsh@miltonps.org).*

*It is part of my administration's goals to improve communications overall. This new web site is another step towards achieving that goal. – Mary Gormley*

[www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org)

### **Curriculum Information**

Every spring the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education releases a set of No Child Left Behind report cards for every public school district and public school in the Commonwealth. These report cards contain information on student and teacher demographics, as well as MCAS score summaries. The 2008-09 NCLB Report Cards have been posted on the Milton Public Schools web site ([www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org)) in the "About" section. Hard copies are also available in every school's main office.

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As many of you know, the Milton Public Schools are facing some very difficult decisions with regard to next year's budget. One of the options we had been exploring was the potential closing of an elementary school. We recently received a letter from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which advised us as to the prudence of this plan. As a result, we must -- in the words of School Committee Chairman Beirne Lovely -- "go back to the drawing board," and revamp our 2009-2010 budget. Please see details of our Open Budget Meeting in the Upcoming Events section below.

The letter from Katherine Craven, executive director of the MSBA, has been posted on-line and we encourage you to read it.

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MSBALetter4-14-09.pdf>

**25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186**

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Milton High School recently hosted La Journee de la Francophonie. This is an annual celebration, dedicated to the French language. French-speaking people around the world celebrate the day by expressing their shared language along with their diverse cultures.

At Milton High, we hosted students from more than a dozen high schools, who participated in a day of activities with our own Milton High students. We were honored to welcome Francois Gauthier, Consul General of France, as well as Neil LeBlanc, Consul General of Canada, along with several other dignitaries and school officials from the participating high schools. A variety of skits, musical performances and activities were coordinated, thanks to Gracie Burke, Milton's world language director.

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A group of sixth-graders in Jeff Stoodt's class at Pierce Middle School recently participated in the Water Challenge, which aims to fund and build water wells in Africa. Students pledged to drink no beverages other than water for two weeks, setting aside the money that they would normally have spent on juice, soda or bottled water during this time. For their efforts, the students raised \$800, which was donated to The Water Project, a non profit group who helps supply water to villages in Africa who do not have access to clean water.

Mr. Stoodt organized this project and reported that nearly 75 people participated. In class, students discussed the difficulties of providing clean drinking water in other parts of the world, and analyzed data from The Water Project.

At the conclusion of the project, students were invited to attend a World Water Day celebration, which was sponsored by the Jane Goodall Institute and held on the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor of 60 State Street. They were able to see their project displayed along with other water-themed projects from schools throughout New England.

This is yet another example of how our Milton teachers create innovative ways to present material; and our students embrace these challenges. Great job!

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A group of Milton fourth-graders recently traveled to Boston for a performance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. By all accounts, the trip was a smashing success.

The theme of this year's concert was "Dance...March!" where students were treated to a world-class presentation featuring favorites including Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever", John William's "Imperial March" from Star Wars and "Aunt Marge's Waltz" from the Harry Potter movies, among others.

The concert was narrated by Dr. Sandra Nicolucci, a music education specialist from Boston University, who provided students with interesting background information on the composers and the musical selections.

According to Milton Public Schools music teacher April Allegrezza, Ms. Nicolucci was very helpful in creating a child-centered atmosphere at Symphony Hall where children could make close connections with the music and build upon previously- learned knowledge from music class.

The trip was sponsored by M-PACE, Milton's "excise tax group," which provides artistic and cultural enrichment for students in the Milton Public Schools.

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The last day of this year's school year will be on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. The 2009-2010 school calendar has been posted to our website. <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2009-10SchoolCalendar.pdf>

School will begin for students in grades 1-12 on September 2, 2009 and for kindergarteners on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

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## School Committee Updates

There have been three school committee meetings since my last E-blast: March 18, April 7 and April 14<sup>th</sup>. Below is a summary of the meetings. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Wednesday, March 18:** School Committee members were deeply touched by an announcement from a Milton Public School parent. Leslie Cheverie, whose two children attend the Milton Public Schools, donated \$10,000 to our Special Education department. She asked that the money be used to improve the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy rooms used by students at Cunningham and Collicot Elementary schools. She also asked that the room be named in honor of her son, Mitchell A. Cheverie, stating that, as a special education parent, she wanted to ensure that students be given the tools they needed. The school committee voted to accept the donation.

Next, the committee took time to honor the Milton High varsity basketball team, along with their coach, Sean LoPresti and assistant coach William Donovan. The team was thanked for their accomplishment as well as for their dedication, attitude and school pride.

A screening committee to fill the position of outgoing assistant superintendent for business Paul Hilton was discussed. Mr. Hilton will be leaving the Milton Public Schools and we are currently hiring for a new position, School Business Administrator. There will be an update at the next meeting as to the progress of the application process.

The first reading of the 2009-2010 school calendar was approved, as were the readings of several upcoming field trips.

Ms. Bagley Jones updated the School Committee on what is being discussed by the Health and Safety Subcommittee. Discussion topics include: air quality; a wellness policy, which would include new areas of concern to the current policy (bullying, safe school climate, increased health education on human reproduction, changing families, and mental health needs of students); counseling services in the schools; offering stress reduction opportunities for all Milton Public School staff; and holding community forums/parent workshops.

Ms. Kelly reported that the Finance Subcommittee has been discussing full day Kindergarten. At this point, the state is reviewing its capacity to support the full day Kindergarten grant. If the state decreases its support of the grant, it is possible that the Milton Public Schools may have to reconsider the tuition fee schedule, with potential increases of \$100-\$150 for full day Kindergarten tuition. Currently, the full day Kindergarten tuition is \$3,000, with a sliding fee based on state income guidelines.

**Tuesday, April 7:** We were pleased to invite a group of students to this School Committee meeting who had recently been recognized by the Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards.

Seven students from the Milton Public Schools won awards in this statewide art competition. Clayton Baker, grade 8, and Luke Pastore, grade 7, from received Silver Key Awards. Honorable mentions were given to Elizabeth Hiss, Ken Lee Mercury and Philip Wikina, all eighth-graders, as well as Linda Ly and Elizabeth O'Connor, both grade 11. The students' artwork was exhibited in the Transportation Building in Boston for the past three weeks.

These students, as well as their teachers, Patricia Turner and Karen Hughes, deserve recognition for all their hard work. Thousands of pieces of student art are judged, and only a small percentage receives the coveted Gold and Silver Key awards.

Next, we were treated to a preview of the new Milton Public Schools website by human resources specialist Sean Walsh. Again, this is a vast improvement for the Milton Public Schools community. Be sure to check it out at [www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org)

The committee was updated as to the status of the hiring process for the School Business Administrator position. More than 25 applications were received for this position, with eight semi-finalists selected for interviews. A potential start date for this position would be July 1. The interview process is ongoing and more information will be presented at the April 14 meeting.

**Tuesday, April 14:** This meeting began with Karen Hughes and Karen Slodden, our art teachers, who came to recognize of several Milton High School AP artists, whose work is being displayed at Wheelock College's Towne Art Gallery in Boston. The students were: Katherine Phelan, Catherine Beatrice, Jonathon Lamour, Elizabeth O'Connor and Linda Ly.

Next, we received a report from the facilities subcommittee on the proposal to consolidate facility maintenance among the town's various departments. Barbara Plonski and Lynda-Lee Sheridan spoke about the feasibility of this plan.

Kristan Bagley Jones reported on the work of the Health and Safety subcommittee, pointing out the need to reinstate our annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In addition, she announced an upcoming forum for high school parents on May 18. Please see Upcoming Events for more information on this.

A preliminary fee schedule was explained by Paul Hilton. Next year, we may be faced with potential increases in fees for full day kindergarten, transportation, athletics and clubs. The exact amount of fee increases is one of the topics which will be discussed at the Open Budget Hearing on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

We also discussed the letter from the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the impact on the 2009-2010 budget. Again, that letter can be viewed on our website by clicking this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MSBALetter4-14-09.pdf>

### **News Around Town**

As many of you know by now, the Milton Public Library's main branch on Canton Avenue re-opened after a long and much-needed renovation. Many of our students participated in opening weekend celebrations and still others will be visiting the new library as part of class field trips and research projects. This new library is an amazing educational resource, which will benefit the entire town. If you haven't already done so, please stop by the new library for a visit. You'll be glad you did!

\* \* \*

Another group in town is undergoing changes. Sustainable Milton's founder and chair, Laurie Macintosh, will be stepping down from her post. Laurie has been a great friend to the Milton Public Schools, serving on the board of the Milton Foundation for Education and as former president of the Cunningham PTO.

Sustainable Milton's acting chair is now Sarah Mills, a Cunningham parent. The group is planning several Earth Day activities in conjunction with the Milton Public Schools. Sustainable Milton invites residents to the 6th Annual Earth Day Sustainable Living Festival, sponsored by the 18 towns of Sustainable South Shore. It will be held at Nantasket Beach on **Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** and is free and open to the public. For more information, visit

<http://www.sustainablesouthshore.org/sustainable-living-festival>

### **Upcoming Events**

The Milton Summer Enrichment program registration process is underway. Anyone interested in sending their children to MSE courses this summer should be aware that mail in registration is due on **April 24<sup>th</sup>**. Walk-in registration will be available on May 19 and June 9 at Milton High School on a first-come, first-serve basis. Brochures are available on our website at

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/NewBrochureFinalwithataglance.pdf>

\* \* \*

The public is invited to attend an Open Budget Meeting to discuss the 2009-2010 school budget. The meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>** at 7:30 p.m. in Milton High School auditorium. We will be discussing the impact of the MSBA letter, as well as listening to input on next year's budget. All are invited to attend and participate. If you cannot attend but wish to send a comment, please send it to

[schoolcommittee@miltonps.org](mailto:schoolcommittee@miltonps.org).

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**May 1** is the deadline for returning nomination forms to the Milton High School Athletic Hall of Fame Committee. If you would like to nominate a student athlete from Milton High who graduated at least five years ago, nomination forms are available at the Milton High School office.

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The Milton High Poetry Jam has been rescheduled for **Saturday, May 2 at 3 p.m.** Please come and support our aspiring poets as they read their own work onstage.

The event will be held in the Milton High School auditorium, which will be transformed into a “coffee shop” atmosphere for the performers.

Proceeds from this event will go towards providing a summer camp scholarship for Sarafina Revelus. Additional proceeds will benefit Close to Home, a domestic violence prevention group.

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Mark your calendars for this event, “Parenting Your Teen in these Tough Times.”

On **May 18 at 7 p.m.** in the MHS Library, there will be a parent forum on parenting teens, with a panel presentation. Milton Police Chief Richard Wells will present the current state of teen drinking in Milton. In addition, Milton High principal Dr. John Drottar and athletic director Steve Traister will discuss how these issues affect our students. A pediatrician from Milton Hospital will discuss the impact of alcohol on teenage development. The forum is sponsored by the Milton School Committee’s Health and Safety Subcommittee, Milton Hospital and Milton High School. All residents are welcome to attend and there will be an opportunity for questions and answers. Questions? Contact Kristan Bagley Jones at [bagleyjones@comcast.net](mailto:bagleyjones@comcast.net)

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The spring schedule for Milton High School sports is available on our website at [http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2008-2009SPRINGSCHEДУLES\\_000.pdf](http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2008-2009SPRINGSCHEДУLES_000.pdf)

### **Fundraising News**

We are pleased to report that the recent fundraiser for our high school soccer coach, Mike Madden, was a huge success.

Thanks to an enormous effort by Mike’s friends, family, co-workers and neighbors, more than 800 people attended the benefit held at the IBEW Hall in Dorchester last week. Plenty of Milton Public School parents, teachers and staff members turned out to support Mike. Thanks to those of you who took out ads, sponsored tables and donated items. Donna Bohan, who helped with the fundraiser, said this about the evening:

“I have coordinated over 25 events similar to this one and I can honestly say that I have never seen such a wide variety of people from every aspect of Mike's life as well as his children's school families, friends, etc.”

This event was headed up by the IBEW Local 2222 Telephone Worker's Union -- of which Mike is a member – with the assistance of Milton volunteers and Mike’s family. Again, thanks to all who came out to support the Madden family.

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I’d like to give a warm thank you to all those who participated in the recent Irish Raffle fundraiser. Hundreds of people participated in this raffle to benefit Milton High’s spring sports and activities by purchasing tickets, attending the event at Common Market, selling tickets, getting silent auction items or lending a hand in dozens of different ways. More than \$18,000 was raised through this raffle.

Special thanks to: Alan Cron, Jackie Morgan, John Phelan, Paul Hilton, Steve Traister, John Drottar, Tracy Attaya, Sally Rush, Susie Hankard, Robin Curley, Denis and Mary Keohane, Noreen Diamond Burdett and her FAME volunteers, Carole Kavey, Steven Rice, Ann O’Connor, Jo Grant, Eileen Dinn, Marianne Giammarco, Janet Potts, Tricia Chapple, Mary McCarthy, Michael McCarthy, Shannon Dillon, Kate Sumner, Lisa McDonough, Jeannie Mattaliano, Gary and Jean Kelly, Cathy Queally, and Tom Mullen.

We would also like to thank Greg MacDonald of the Common Market; Tim Corcoran and Candy Feeney, both of Corcoran Brokerage; the outstanding music provided by Danny Gill and the Old Brigade, and the fantastic dancers from Clifden Academy of Irish Dancers.

**25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186**

## Ambassador 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:*

**Student Highlight:** Another fantastic speller has emerged from Pierce Middle School. Madeleine Collins, a seventh-grader on the Acadia Team, represented Pierce and the Town of Milton at the Regional Spelling Bee last month. Out of 25 finalists, Madeleine came in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Great work!

We'd also like to recognize Billy O'Carroll from Cunningham Elementary School. In my last E-blast, we mentioned the Cunningham/Collicot Future Problem Solvers Team and their first-place win. This week, we learned that Billy, who competed as an individual at the State Bowl, earned second place in the Junior Division. Another outstanding competitor from Milton!

**Teacher Highlight:** Our talented music director, Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett, was presented with the Visionary Leadership Award at the Massachusetts All State Music Conference on Friday, March 27. This award is given by Administrators in Music Education (AIME), which is an affiliate group with the Massachusetts Music Educators' Association. Dr. Burdett was presented with a plaque which recognizes her for being "a strong advocate of music education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a leader and mentor recognized for her ability to unify her K-12 staff in Milton as well as music educators and administrators across the Commonwealth."

Dr. Burdett has served Massachusetts music educators at the district and state levels, and as President of MMEA. She also has served as co-chair of AIME, where she has brought initiatives in assessment, mentoring, and music advocacy to the public. This award is well deserved. Congratulations.

**Staff Highlight:** We'd like to recognize Debbie Abdon, manager of the Cunningham/Collicot cafeteria, for her dedication and hard work. Ms. Abdon's daily responsibilities are to oversee food purchasing, preparation and serving lunch to 650 children each day. There are many children with mild to severe food allergies and other medical dietary needs, which she is able to accommodate. Parents have built a strong relationship with her and her team of food service employees. Besides providing lunch for students, Ms. Abdon also plans and prepares selections for more than 25 teachers each day. She also takes the time to bring in decorative items from home to liven up the serving line for the children. Jackie Morgan, food service director, calls her "a star," and Denise Queally, a Cunningham parent whose child requires a special diet, has singled Ms. Abdon out for praise.

"You have already made a difference in our lives by supporting her in every way possible," she said. "We appreciate all the love and hard work that goes into all those recipes."

**Volunteer Highlight:** As many of you know, in addition to the hundreds of parents who volunteer in our schools, there are also many people who are not Milton Public School parents who donate their time to our children.

One of these hardworking volunteers is Jason Bouffard. Jason is the public relations manager at Milton Hospital. He volunteers to serve on the Safety and Wellness School Committee Subcommittee since February.

As part of his work on the committee, Mr. Bouffard has introduced a program which deals with sun protection and skin cancer risks. We will be working with him to get this information out to all our students. Now that warmer weather is here and students are spending more time outdoors, it is important to be aware of potential risks. Mr. Bouffard recommends this link: <http://www.skincancer.org/Guidelines/>

## Calendar

Please review our website for upcoming events: <http://www.miltonps.org/calendar.php>