



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

To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians & Staff
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools
Re: E-Update, June 18, 2009

From the Office of the Superintendent

As our school year winds to an end, we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person who worked on the override campaign. We realize what difficult economic challenges we are facing – as a town, as a state and as a nation – and how extraordinary it was for our town to approve this level of funding. We are proud of this community's commitment to its public schools. Though we will still face cuts in next year's budget, the successful passage of this override was absolutely critical for our school system and we are very grateful.

Please encourage your children to continue to read during the summer months (see below for our guidelines for each grade level.) As parents, we ask that you strive to set a good example and help to foster a love of reading that is a cornerstone for future academic success. Be sure to visit the beautiful new Milton Public Library for reading materials. They are running a Summer Reading Club for ages 3-12, with online enrollment at: <http://www.miltonlibrary.org>

Please note: Schools will reopen on Wednesday, September 2nd for grades 1-12 and September 8th for Kindergarten.

At the close of every school year, it is a painful necessity that we say goodbye to some of our staff and faculty who are retiring and this year is no exception. Please read below to learn more about some of our veteran teachers who will be leaving the Milton Public Schools.

As we say goodbye to some of our staff members and Principal Drew Echelson, we also say welcome to our incoming kindergarteners – 340 of whom will be starting full day sessions in the fall!

To all of our students – past, present and future, we wish you and your families a safe, enjoyable and relaxing summer.

Curriculum Information

READING PROGRAMS: Below is a summary of the summer reading expectations for elementary, middle and high school students:

Elementary Summer Reading Program

The Milton Public Schools Elementary Summer Reading Program is an extension of our commitment to a challenging education for all. Reading is a powerful tool to help students maintain skills and gain a better understanding of the world around them. Each year kindergarten through grade four students receive a Summer Reading Packet which contains a suggested booklist, a letter that details the program requirements and a book log to record the books that they have read or have had read to them. These materials were distributed on June 11th via backpacks. (Students entering grade six receive their program materials from the Pierce Middle School)

25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

We require that all students entering grades one through five read a minimum of 5 books and record these titles, and hopefully more, on their reading logs. These logs should be returned to their classroom teacher in the Fall. Additionally a student entering grades four or five is required to complete a simple project on TWO of their summer reading books. These projects should be student created and are not meant to be an extensive activity. Students will be asked to present their projects in the Fall. Possible projects would include: a diorama representing a favorite scene, a small poster depicting a character, a letter to the teacher describing a favorite character or telling why you liked the book, or a book review to convince other to read the book. These are just a few suggestions; your child may have other ideas for a creative project.

The book list is only a list of suggestions. Consider visiting the library and helping your child to find books that interest them and to select a variety of reading materials. The Milton Public Schools Elementary Summer Reading List is available online at www.miltonps.org as well as on each elementary school's *EDLINE* pages under Elementary Language Arts Coordinator. The Milton Public Library will also have a copy.

We ask all families to encourage their children to read and participate. We look forward to having 100% participation. We hope your summer is filled with lots of books and lots of fun.

Pierce Middle School & Milton High School Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Programs for the Pierce Middle School and Milton High School are part of the school system's ongoing effort to challenge all students and to guide students to read for pleasure and enjoyment. Continuous reading ensures an enhanced academic transition to the next school year. Students have received summer reading handouts in their English classes that outline the summer reading program. All handouts are also posted on the Milton Public School website and hardcopies can be picked up in the main office of both schools.

Pierce Middle School

- ✓ Each student is required to read at least FOUR books.
- ✓ Although we provide suggestions of titles, all books are "free choice."
- ✓ Parents and/or guardians must sign the "Summer Reading List" that indicates the author and title of all books completed.
- ✓ Students are expected to complete an assessment for one title read. Students can choose from a written essay, postcard, or collage. All three assignments are described in detail in the summer reading packet. All assignments are due during the first week of school.

Milton High School

- ✓ All Milton students must read **THREE** books: Each student will read **one free choice book as well as one title each from:**
 - English Department list (grade specific)
 - Social Studies Department list (grade specific)
- ✓ Honors students must read an **ADDITIONAL FOURTH** book. See book lists for specific titles.
- ✓ AP assignments have also been distributed by AP teachers.
- ✓ Students will be assigned written assessments during the first week of school.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

This summer we are pleased to offer a variety of programs for all ages. Please visit our website for information about Friday Night Program for Grades K-5; Future Stars Program for Grades K-5. There are also still some courses with openings in our Summer Enrichment Program for all grade levels.

<http://www.miltonps.org/departments-summer.php> Please also check the Milton Community Schools website for information about Camp Cunningham and Karate Camp: www.miltoncommunityschools.org.

NEW STUDENT INFO

Parents of current and incoming kindergarteners: Teacher assignments for the 2009-2010 school year for incoming kindergarten students will be sent out next week. Assignments for incoming first-graders will be given on the last day of school. Please be aware that all assignments are subject to change due to space and budgetary restraints.

School Committee Update

Our final School Committee Meeting of the 2008-2009 school year was held on Tuesday, June 16th. The following is a summary of this meeting:

Superintendent's Report: We began by recognizing Kassi Stein, valedictorian of this year's graduating class. She was presented with a certificate by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents for her accomplishments at Milton High School.

The School Committee voted to eliminate public speaking at Milton High School as a requirement for graduation. The committee was told that oratory and speech are incorporated into the curriculum of many required courses.

A final PTO meeting was held with the administration. Because of class size issues, it was necessary to reassign approximately 20 students outside their neighborhood school area. The method used to make these changes was discussed with the PTO leaders and can be viewed by clicking this link:

http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Elementary_Student_Assignment_Policy.pdf

Students who will be starting their Freshman year at Milton High this Fall may attend an orientation session to be during the last week of summer, which will be held on Monday, August 31st. Please check our website (www.miltonps.org) later this summer for the time and room number.

As was stated during the past several months, several cuts were necessary for the 2010 budget, despite the override passage. These cuts include: reduction of MHS librarian to part-time; elimination of guidance secretary; reductions in auto, wood, family & consumer studies and physical education at MHS; reduction of PMS librarian to part-time; reduction of PMS physical education teacher to part-time; reduction of PMS art teacher to part-time (the ACE program remains intact); elimination of four instructional aides; elimination of facilities coordinator; elimination of inclusion specialist; and elimination of three SPED positions.

In addition, user fees for preschool programs, full-day kindergarten, music lessons, middle school programs, high school sports, clubs and activities have all increased for next year.

Our final school committee meeting concluded with a report from the Communication Sub-Committee; a look ahead to September and the scheduling of the school committee retreat during the summer months.

Accolades

On behalf of the Milton Public Schools, I would like to thank and congratulate Tucker Principal Drew Echelson, who will be leaving the Milton Public Schools. Drew earned admission into one of the most competitive doctoral programs in the country, Harvard University's Urban Superintendency. Thank you to Drew for the extraordinary three years he served as the Principal of the Tucker Elementary School.

Drew created a shared vision of excellence for every student, teacher and staff member of the Tucker Elementary School. He worked collaboratively with Tucker's parents, teachers, and staff to bring the Tucker Elementary School to a new level of achievement. Drew served as a strong contributing member of our Leadership Team. He gave of himself to the Tucker, the Milton Public Schools and the town of Milton. I will personally and professionally miss Drew Echelson and I know that the world will hear of his accomplishments and achievements in the years to come.

* * *

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our PTO presidents who will be leaving their posts at the conclusion of this year. **Collicot:** Laura Conway and Susanna Ryan; **Glover:** Carolyn Newman; **Tucker:** Elaine Davis and Karen Horan; **Pierce Middle School:** Carol Rosner and Kara Russo.

Also, welcome to our new (or remaining) presidents: **Collicot:** Julio & Sheila Varela and Jim & Amy Delaney; **Cunningham:** Denise Queally, Amanda O'Reilly, Joanie Analetto and Linda Farwell; **Glover:** Becky Padera and Reedy Kream; **Tucker:** Debra May Hughes; Elizabeth Thomas and Annemarie Johnson; **Pierce Middle School:** Beth Greenawalt and Ray Czwakiel; **Milton High School:** AnneMarie Johnson and Cheryl McDermott. Thanks to all who serve on our PTOs.

We are also pleased to welcome the newest members of the Milton Foundation for Education Board of Directors, Karin Froom and Patti Elliott and Phil Stanley. At the same time, we must thank the following outgoing board members: Lois Sandiford Thornhill, Julio Varela, Don Jones, Pete Hoy. Best wishes to all!

News Around Town

The results from the town wide Planning Board survey which took place during the month of March are now available for viewing. To view results or read a summary, go to:

http://www.townofmilton.org/Public_Documents/MiltonMA_BComm/planning

The Planning Board expects to hold a meeting to discuss these results in October. Paper copies will be available at the library and the senior center during the summer.

“There is plenty of interesting data on how residents feel about our town services, including our schools,” said Emily Keys Innes, chairperson of the Planning Board. “Anybody who is interested in how Milton could evolve in the next 10 to 20 years should take a look at this.” For more information, email Ms. Innes at ekimilton@gmail.com

* * *

Our last day of school coincides with the first day of the Milton Farmer's Market. Located in Lower Mills near the Town Landing. The market features fresh local produce, bakery, local cheeses, seasonal pies, organic and conventional farmers, jellies, honey, annuals and perennials. The Farmer's Market will take place from 1 to 6 p.m. each Thursday during the summer. For more info, please check this website:

http://www.farmfresh.org/food/farmersmarkets_details.php?market=112

* * *

Best wishes to Milton Fire Department chief Malcolm Larson, who will be retiring on June 30th after 32 years with the department. And a warm welcome to our new fire chief, John Grant, who will be taking over on July 1st. It is worth noting that both of these dedicated public servants are Milton High School graduates. A retirement party for Chief Larson will be held on Friday, June 19 at F1 Boston on Wood Road in Braintree. Tickets are \$40 and available by calling the fire department.

Grant Update

Though the school year is concluding, the work of our grant writer, Chris Masalsky, continues. Mr. Masalsky has been hard at work, helping the Milton Public Schools to secure grants and other means of funding. His salary is being paid by the Milton Foundation for Education, which updated us on Mr. Masalsky's progress:

First, Milton schools were awarded a \$43,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Education to provide students throughout the school system with trauma-sensitive services. The School Emergency Response to

25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

Violence (SERV) grant will cover costs associated with professional services delivered in the three-month period following the Revelus family tragedy. Funding will pay for a short-term adjustment counselor position, and professional development services provided by Maria Trozzi and the staff of Boston Medical Center. We have also submitted a proposal to the Verizon Foundation to cover an additional \$5,000 in costs relating to this initiative.

Last week, we submitted a \$6,000 proposal to the Music Drives Us Foundation to fund new stage curtains and sound equipment for the Glover School (and the Glover After-School Musical Theater Program). We are also working with Milton Outdoor Classrooms to develop a plan and solicit grant funds to expand the outdoor classroom program over the next five years. There are two proposals in process to support an ELT pilot at the Tucker Elementary School (L.G. Balfour Foundation and Jane's Trust). We are still waiting to hear from multiple foundations on our initial SmartBoard acquisition proposals.

We also completed due diligence on this year's Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) and the team's consensus was to not apply for funds. This decision was based on the very narrow parameters of the program (funds were available to teach certain languages that are not currently offered in MPS) and the need to provide 1:1 matching funds.

There are several initiatives that are "projects in search of a prospect," reflecting priority requests from teachers and administrators which we will seek to fulfill when funding comes available. These projects include additional health programming at the Pierce Middle School, coordination of school energy-management systems, various sustainability initiatives, mentoring programs for elementary students, and an administrative database coordination project.

As federal ARRA funding is rolled out, we intend on responding to any competitive solicitations that will enhance our ability to deliver core educational programming. The months of June-September are expected to include solicitations ranging from technology, to after-school programming, to school renovations. Federal competitive grants likely represent the greatest opportunity to obtain major funding (\$100k+) for innovative initiatives.

Upcoming Events

The last day of school is today, Thursday, June 18, 2009. It will be a half-day and no lunches will be served. Please click here to see the 2009-2010 School Calendar: http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2009-10SchoolCalendar_000.pdf

* * *

A planning meeting has been scheduled for next year's fundraising activities for Milton High School Athletics, Sports and Activities.

Any parents who would be interested in signing up to help with any of our planned fundraisers are asked to attend this meeting on Tuesday, June 23rd at 7:30 pm at Milton High School. If you can't attend, but would like to work one of the following projects, please contact Kristan Bagley Jones at bagleyjones@comcast.net

Ambassador Page

Each month, 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 Highlight: Please join me in thanking our most recent group of retirees. The following individuals have collectively served nearly 300 years with the Milton Public Schools and their talents and achievements

25 Gile Road, Milton, Massachusetts 02186

will be greatly missed: **Carol Cove** – Guidance Counselor, Milton High School -- 27 years; **Terry Deutsch** – Librarian, Collicot & Cunningham Elementary Schools – 29 years; **Paula Donohue**, Special Education instructional aide, Milton High School – 19 years; **Anne Murphy**, Math Teacher, Pierce Middle School – 14 years; **Karen Slodden**, Art Director, Milton Public Schools – 35 years; **Anne Fagan**, Physical Education Teacher, Milton High School – 34 years; **Dorothy Kehoe**, Physical Education Teacher, Glover & Tucker Elementary Schools; **Christine Ronan**, Librarian, Milton High School – 13 years; Lyse Stevens, French teacher, Cunningham Elementary School -- 21 years; and **John Lanigan**, Social Studies Teacher, Pierce Middle School – 35 years.

Volunteer Highlights: At our last School Committee Meeting, we recognized the following groups for their efforts on behalf of the Milton Public Schools. I would like to reiterate how grateful we are to all our volunteers, whether they are a formal group or an individual parent or community member.

Representative from the following organizations were invited to the Volunteer Recognition Reception: PTOs from each school; School Site Councils; Parent Advisory Committees, including PACs; MHS Boosters; Citizens For A Diverse Milton; MECA (Milton Early Childhood Alliance); FAME, (Friends And Advocates For Music Education); FAVA (Friends And Advocates For The Visual Arts); M-PACE (Excise Tax Group); Milton Foundation For Education; Milton Hospital; “Invest In Milton” (Override Committee); Driscoll Landscaping; School Committee Facilities Sub Committee; Fundraising Groups For Sports, Clubs & Activities (Banners ,Walk-A-Thon, Irish Raffle, Girls Night Out, Comedy Night, Talent Show, Swing for Sports Tournament).

Student Highlight: In addition to congratulating the Class of 2009 on final time, we would like to welcome our incoming class of kindergarten students. The first day of Kindergarten will be September 8, 2009. More than 340 students have been signed up for full day kindergarten this Fall and 16 have chosen our half-day option. Please keep an eye on the local papers as special events for incoming kindergarteners will take place at the end of this summer.