



## 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, Tuesday, September 1, 2009

### From the Office of the Superintendent

*Every summer, we all marvel at how quickly the time flies by, and this summer has been no exception. I hope you and your families have been able to relax and enjoy the season.*

*I wanted to take this opportunity as part of my monthly "E-blast" newsletter, to welcome all of our new students, families and teachers to the Milton Public Schools. I would also like to welcome back those of you who are returning to school after what we hope has been an enjoyable summer.*

*In preparation for the opening of our schools, I visited each of our buildings to meet with administrators, staff and some of the new parents and students attending orientation tours. I was struck, once again, by the beauty of our buildings and by the incredible support we receive from our fellow citizens of Milton.*

*These beautiful buildings are in tip-top shape for "Opening Day," thanks to the efforts of our custodial staff, a group who goes largely unrecognized. I would like to publicly thank these men and women for all that they do to keep our schools clean and healthy. They are:*

*Facilities Director Bill Ritchie; Custodians Steven Barry, Mary Barone, Delroy Butler, Michael Buzzell, James Connelly, Jesse Connelly, Ryan Connelly, Patrick Crowe, Mark Goonan, Barbara Leuer, Victor Levine, Thomas Malloy, Brian Mearn, John Mirotta, Patrick Moynihan, John Riley, Jason Scherer, Stephen Scherer, Peter Shibley, John Studley, Charles Tacey, Nelson Taylor, Richard Walker, Judith Whalen, Robert Willett, Loren Williams and Janice Wilson. Also, thanks to Filipe Depina in Maintenance, James Egan in HVAC and our seasonal helper, William Fitzpatrick.*

*Thanks also to our administrative assistant staff at the schools. Many of them worked through the summer, and all of them have worked tirelessly to get our schools ready to receive the children tomorrow. They are:*

*Lisa Huban, Denise Kelly, Grace Marinilli, Susan Higgins, Sandy Wyse, Joanne Barker, Annie Dutton, Susan Doyle, Pat McDonald, Pam Dorsey, Judy Ebbs, Laurie Dunn, and Jody Shannon.*

*These are the people behind the scenes that make our schools run so well. Please join in me in thanking them personally when you see them at school. – Mary Gormley*

### Health Update

As we start our new school year it is important to also start preparing for the flu season. Our leadership team, along with Head Nurse Margaret Gibbons is reviewing the latest Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines for the upcoming flu season. More information will be coming over the next few weeks to help the district make a substantial and appropriate plan. Ms. Gibbons has prepared the following information for parents, which we would like to share with you:

Parents can actively take steps now to prepare for their families by following a few simple guidelines:

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

- Have your primary care provider give your children the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as your provider has them available
- Get yourself vaccinated for seasonal flu
- Update your **EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST AT SCHOOL**
- Have a plan in place to care for a sick child or if your child is dismissed from school

Everyone should practice good hand-washing hygiene and parents should demonstrate how good hand washing is done. Explain how important hand washing is especially after coughing or sneezing. Parents may want to include an alcohol based hand cleaner for use at school but proper use should also be taught at home. Parents may want to check with the teacher to see if the classroom needs tissue boxes. Parents can practice respiratory etiquette with their children and the importance of covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

The most important point we want to emphasize is to ***keep your child home if they are sick***. This not only will help your child get better sooner but will keep other students and staff from being exposed and possibly prevent further illness.

The Milton Public Schools want to provide you with the most up-to-date information and guidelines that continue to be refined from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and our local Milton Board of Health. We will share these updates district wide and in a timely manner so that each family can make decisions based on accurate information. Your school nurse will be a great resource if you have any questions.

### **Curriculum Info**

I am delighted to report that the Special Education Department will be opening a Partner Program Classroom, to be located in the Collicot School, with the New England Center for Children (NECC) to serve students with autism spectrum disabilities.

The NECC Partnership Classroom will provide advanced, intensive intervention for children who have been diagnosed with autism disabilities and at the same time allow each child to attend school close to home with their peers and neighbors.

The New England Center for Children, located in Southborough, is recognized as a leader in the curriculum development and complex teaching methods necessary to meet the complex needs of the autism population. NECC is highly respected for its outstanding programs and research and has earned national and international recognition for excellence in the field.

The addition of this program allows the district to provide services comparable to those available to students enrolled in the New England Center's program in Southborough. We are grateful to our Special Education Director Jeff Rubin for all his hard work on paving the way for this partnership.

\* \* \*

Jeff Rubin also discussed the opening of a "motor room" at Collicot. Last year, the school committee received a \$10,000 donation from the parents of two Milton students. This generous gift was made by Michael and Leslie Cheverie in the name of their son Mitchell and was to be used to purchase equipment for a physical and occupational therapy motor room. We are pleased to report that all of the equipment has now been delivered, assembled and will be ready for the start of the school year. The addition of this equipment will allow our therapist to enhance and expand their work with students who experience sensory and motor planning difficulties.

\* \* \*

Over the summer the Central Office Leadership Team worked to reshape the administrative structure of Unit B. This reorganization did not result in an increase in our budget because we used funding from existing positions that we did not fill. The goals of this restructuring were as follows:

- To better provide curriculum and instructional leadership at Milton High School in preparation for the school's decennial evaluation visit (2011) by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.
- To provide targeted curriculum and instructional leadership in English, math, science and social studies at the Pierce Middle School in order to continue the progress made in meeting AYP (Annual Yearly Progress).
- To provide curriculum and instructional leadership in elementary math and elementary and middle school technology.
- To provide curriculum and instructional leadership for each of the disciplines taught in the Milton Public Schools.

As a result, I am very pleased and proud to announce the following reorganization structure:

- Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett will be the Director of Art, Music and Family and Consumer Studies in Grades K-12.
- Paul Ajemian will be the Department Head for Math, Business and Technology in Grades 9 -12.
- Barbara Plonski will be the Department Head for Science in Grades 9-12 and Science Coordinator in Grades K-5.
- Stephanie Nephew will be the Humanities Coordinator (English and History) for Grades 6-8.
- Dr. Karen Spaulding will be the Math and Science Coordinator for Grades 6-8 and the Pierce Middle School Assistant Principal.
- There will be a Department Head for the Humanities Department (English and History) in Grades 9-12. This is an open position that has been posted.
- There will be an Elementary Math/K-8 Technology Coordinator position. This is an open position that has been posted.

This new Unit B structure will provide administrative leadership in all areas of the curriculum and positively impact teacher instruction and thus improve and increase student achievement.

### **School Committee Update**

Our first School Committee Meeting for the school year was held on Tuesday, August 25. Below is a summary:

Margaret Gibbons, head nurse for Milton Public Schools, discussed preparedness measures for dealing with a potential outbreak of H1N1, or Swine Flu. Please see her recommendations in the "Health Update" section above. Parental cooperation is essential in helping to keep our schools healthy.

Marcia Uretsky, the new principal of Tucker Elementary School, was introduced at this meeting. She is looking forward to the first day of school and meeting many more Tucker families. Matt Gillis, School Business Administrator, was also officially introduced to the School Committee.

Jeff Rubin, Special Education Director, discussed our newest partnership with the New England Center for Children to School Committee members. He also informed the School Committee that the motor room for physical therapy is now open at Collicot.

In budgetary news, School Committee members discussed potential cuts to the state's circuit breaker funds, the arrival of federal stimulus money, and how these issues will affect the 2010 budget.

This year, NEASC, the organization which accredits New England high schools, has scheduled Milton High School to conduct a self-study in preparation for next year's site visit. This is an extremely detailed process, which involves administrators, teachers, community members and School Committee members.

Full Day Kindergarten has been a huge success. This year, 316 children have signed up for FDK, with 17 opting for the half-day option.

The next School Committee meeting will be held September 8 at 7 p.m. at Milton High School library.

## News Around Town

Last year over 320 Milton families and businesses joined the Milton Solar Challenge by donating to the New England Wind Fund. As a result, Milton qualified for two 2kW solar arrays, each made up of 10 individual solar panels. The first array is now installed on the roof of Milton High School, just to the left of the main entrance. These energy-saving devices will not only save money for the Milton Public Schools, they will provide a clean, renewable energy source for our building. The public will be invited to a ribbon-cutting sometime this month.

## Fundraising News

As many of you may remember, last spring's Walkathon was a huge success. This year, organizers have decided to hold the fundraiser in the fall, in order to fund all our student clubs, activities and athletics.

The date for the Walkathon has been set for Saturday, September 26 from 3 to 5 p.m., rain or shine. Both Laura Kessler, along with Don & Kristan Bagley Jones have agreed to head up this effort once again, but they need parent volunteers. A meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 10 from 7 to 8 p.m. at Milton High School. Please consider donating time to this worthy effort, which allows our sports program and extracurricular activities to continue. For more information, contact [LKessler@ifb.org](mailto:LKessler@ifb.org) or the Jones family at 617-696-7751

## Extracurricular News

High school athletics fees have risen from \$200 to \$250 per sport, with a family cap of \$1,250. The exception to this is hockey, which will be \$500 per player, with a family cap of \$1500.

High school activities, which were \$100 last year, will be \$50 this year, with a cap of \$100 per student.

Full Day Kindergarten has increased by \$100; Integrated Preschool has increased by \$25 or \$50, dependent on the schedule; High School preschool has increased by \$150; Middle School activities have increased, dependent on activities; bus fees have remained the same; Alternative Evening Program has increased \$25 per course; and registration for Applied Music Program (lessons) has increased \$10 per session.

## Upcoming Events

Please review the letter below, sent from U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan:

*In a recent [interview with student reporter](#), Damon Weaver, **President Obama announced that on September 8 – the first day of school for many children across America – he will deliver a national address directly to students on the importance of education.** The President will challenge students to work hard, set educational goals, and take responsibility for their learning. He will also call for a shared responsibility and commitment on the part of students, parents and educators to ensure that every child in every school receives the best education possible so they can compete in the global economy for good jobs and live rewarding and productive lives as American citizens.*

*Since taking office, the President has repeatedly focused on education, even as the country faces two wars, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and major challenges on issues like energy and health care. The President believes that education is a critical part of building a new foundation for the American economy. Educated people are more active civically and better informed on issues affecting their lives, their families and their futures.*

*This is the first time an American president has spoken directly to the nation's school children about persisting and succeeding in school. We encourage you to use this historic moment to help your students get focused and begin the school year strong. I encourage you, your teachers, and students to join me in watching the President deliver this address on Tuesday, September 8, 2009. It will be broadcast live on the White House website [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) at 1:00 p.m. eastern standard time.*

*In advance of this address, we would like to share the following resources: a menu of classroom activities for students in [grades preK-6](#) and for students in [grades 7-12](#). These are ideas developed by and for teachers to help engage students and stimulate discussion on the importance of education in their lives. We are also staging a student video contest on education. Details of the video contest will be available on our website [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) in the coming weeks.*

*On behalf of all Americans, I want to thank our educators who do society's most important work by preparing our children for work and for life. No other task is more critical to our economic future and our social progress. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead to continue improving the quality of public education we provide all of our children.*

## Technology Update

Last spring, we unveiled a newly redesigned website for the Milton Public Schools. We hope that you will be able to use this to find any information you may need for the first few weeks of school. Please visit [www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org) to learn about:

- Start times for each school
- Street addresses for each school
- Telephone numbers for departments at each school
- Information on Athletic start dates and schedules
- Information on signups for music lessons
- Names and contact info for our school committee members
- School lunch menus
- Financial forms for free and reduced lunch program
- Links to Community Schools programs, including:
  - Before School Program (ESAP)
  - After School Programs (CLASP)
  - Vacation Week programs
- Schedules for Bus Routes

In addition to our website, there are two other methods the Milton Public School system uses to contact parents with pertinent information. First, there is the **ALERTNOW** system, which sends a phone message and an email message to every family in our system. These alerts often contain crucial information on school closures, evacuations, bus route delays, etc. Please be sure to provide your child's school with accurate contact information in order to receive these important alerts. Secondly, there is the **Edline** system, whereby each teacher maintains a website for the classroom. As a parent, you will be given a password to access the site, where information on homework assignments, test dates, etc. will be posted. Please check these sites on a regular basis.

## New Teacher Hiring Update

The School Principals, along with our Department Heads and Coordinators, have hired a diverse and talented group of educators that are new to the Milton Public Schools. To date we have hired 33 new teachers, each of whom bring an impressive educational background, strong work experience, and an array of characteristics that make them one of our most talented groups ever. We have posted a list of short bios on each of our new hires. Please visit the "News" section of the main website at [www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org) to read about the latest additions to our schools.

## Calendar

Please make note of the following important dates:

Wednesday, September 2	First day of school for grades 1-12
Friday, September 4	No School
Monday, September 7	Labor Day, No School
Tuesday September 8	School Committee Meeting 7 p.m. @ MHS
Tuesday, September 8	Kindergarten begins
Saturday, September 26	Walk-a-Thon at MHS 3-5 p.m.
Monday, September 28	Yom Kippur, No School
Saturday, October 3	Celebrate Milton! Event (rain date Oct. 4)