



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, February 12, 2010

As educators, we spend the largest portion of our time focused on teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum issues. Recently, I received a report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which details the link between recess and academic achievement. This first-of-its-kind Gallup Poll surveyed more than 2,000 principals nationwide and revealed that recess provides a significant opportunity to boost learning. The study concluded that play is essential to the physical, social and emotional development of students. Other highlights of the report include:

- *Four out of five principals report that recess has a positive impact on academic achievement.*
- *Two-thirds of principals report that students listen better after recess and are more focused in class.*
- *Virtually all believe that recess has a positive impact on children's social development (96 percent) and general well-being (97 percent).*
- *Children who have more recess time behave better in the classroom and are more likely to learn.*

“This research sends a clear message to anyone interested in improving education or the overall well-being of America's children: it's time to take recess seriously,” said Jane Lowe, a director at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Recess should no longer be treated as an afterthought but as a core part of any strategy for promoting learning and improving health.”

In Milton, as in many other communities nationwide, the time allocated for recess and physical education classes has been steadily eroding. A 2005 study found that the average American student participates in only 22 minutes of recess a day. And according to the Gallup poll, one in five principals has reported cutting recess minutes to meet testing requirements.

In addition to academic improvement, students can also enjoy health benefits from recess and physical education. First Lady Michelle Obama recently spoke about how parents and schools can work together to provide more opportunities for physical activity during the day.

We will be reviewing this research study with our administrative team and the school committee over the next several weeks to see what improvements can be made to our recess policies. – Mary C. Gormley

Please send your comments or questions about recess policies in the Milton Public Schools to our Athletic Director, Steve Traister at straister@miltonps.org.

To read the full text of the report, visit: www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=55249

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School Committee Update

The most recent School Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, February 9th. Here is a summary from that meeting:

The Milton Foundation for Education presented information about how the recent teacher grants are being used at the Pierce Middle School. MFE representative Leslie Collins joined Pierce Assistant Principal Dr. Karen Spaulding, Science teachers Jennifer Gilbert and Kathleen Bertrand to discuss the purchase of lighting and watering systems, along with planting supplies. The new equipment will allow students to study genetics, plant biology, and natural selection using Wisconsin Fast Plants which have a 40 day life cycle.

Next, Milton Public Schools' Information Technology Director Bob Pattison reported on the school's technology plan. Because of cost-cutting measures, the Milton Public Schools have a lower per-pupil spending rate on technology than is recommended by the State Department of Education.

Mr. Pattison also reported on streamlining methods he has instituted, which have saved both time and money. In particular, he described a new system for the MHS Guidance Department which has been very helpful.

A copy of the 2010-2011 School Year Calendar was approved. To view this calendar, visit this link: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2010-11SchoolCalendar.pdf> Next, the School Committee went over budget figures for next year. Both the administration and the School Committee have been working on the FY 11 budget. In addition to the prospect of a level-funded budget for FY11, the town's Warrant Committee notified the schools to expect a reduction *this year* of \$151,000 as a result of proposed cuts in state aid. The level-funded budget would mean the loss of 24.4 positions and the most recent reduction could mean the loss of three *additional* positions within the schools, for a total of 27.4 FTE (full time equivalent) positions. We strongly feel that this type of reduction will impact student instruction and achievement. For a proposed list of staff positions to be cut, please visit this link: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/RIFImpact12710.pdf>

We also discussed a new enrichment program which will begin in March at the Pierce Middle School. We are proud to offer the first Milton Public Schools Saturday Enrichment Program for students in grades four through seven. This year's pilot program will run March 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th from 8am to 11:45am at the Pierce Middle School.

Students will attend three one-hour sessions and participate in a fun activity period. The cost for the four-week Saturday Program will be \$100 per student. The course offerings and registration instructions have been mailed out and have been posted online at www.miltonps.org under the "News" heading. This very exciting program has been made possible by the generous funds generated by the Milton Foundation for Education's Celebration 2009. Financial help is available by contacting our Central Office at 617-696-4812.

*The next School Committee meeting will be held **March 9th** at 7 pm in the Milton High School Library.*

Curriculum Information

Superintendent Gormley has formed a World Language Committee to analyze the current state of the World Language program and to produce some information that the Superintendent can use when making budgetary decisions for upcoming school years. This committee is represented by the school committee, the school administration, the World Language Director, Elementary School teachers, and Elementary School parents.

The following survey is optional and anonymous. The results will be a part of the report that is presented to the Superintendent and the School Committee. We appreciate your time and efforts.

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB22A8P3Q4PD6>

The survey consists of 11 questions and should take no more than 10 minutes. This survey should only be filled out once per family. The deadline to complete the survey is Wednesday, February 24th - 12:00pm. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

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In our last E-blast we mistakenly left off two very deserving students from the Pierce Middle School who have been accepted to Junior District. We offer our apologies and congratulations to Monika Cormack for Chorus and Anna Folcarelli for Orchestra.

In other music news, the Milton Public Schools had another stupendous showing at the Jr. and Sr. SEMSBA auditions in Sharon. We had 52 Milton High students and twelve Pierce students audition! And the results are in:

Thirty- nine Milton High students were accepted to the Senior SEMSBA Festival and five Milton High students were accepted to the Junior SEMSBA Festival. In addition, six Pierce students were accepted to the Junior SEMSBA Festival.

Senior SEMSBA: Chorus: Isabella Carter, Liana Gineitis, Leah Hainline, Kathleen Hill, Regine Jean-Michel, Rebecca Liberman, Kelli Neville, Teresa Ruscito, Emily Whipple, Malcolm Carvalho, Garith Christopher, Andrew Mowe, David Alexis, Braedy Taugher and Conor Walsh. **Orchestra:** Emily Anderson, Emily Bowes, Amelie Carpenter, Peter Dylan Crapps, Dana Hankard, Jackie James, Caeleigh MacNeil, Olivia McGrath, Julie Mitchell, Carolyn Ward, Vivian Chu, Catherine Dambruch, Blake Daniel, Abigail Greenwood, Brendan Hayward, Samuel Taugher, Joseph Cruikshank, Emily Jo McKnight. **Band:** Ashley Comer, Alison McIntyre, Shade Olukoga, Ellen Chow, Katherine Sargent, Rebecca Simms.

Junior SEMSBA: Chorus: Emily Driscoll, David Cleckley. **Orchestra:** Morgan Kelley, Bethany Knight, Olivia Done, Camille Carpenter, Anna Folcarelli, Kali Guise, Emma Pred-Sosa. **Band:** Ian Kelly, William Hess.

Representing Milton on the "work force" for the day were Dawn Sykes, Gary Good, Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett, Patricia Ostrem and Rebecca Damiani.

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PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Due to the scheduled inclement weather on February 10th we will be rescheduling the parent/teacher conferences for some of our schools. Parents will receive the details directly from their school's principal.

Fundraising/Grant News

Many of you have read in the newspapers about Norwood hockey player Matt Brown, who was severely injured during a hockey game this season. Matt played in the Bay State League in which our Milton teams also compete.

On Sunday, **February 21st** at 3:30pm a fundraiser will be held to help Matt and his family at the Chase Ice Rink in Natick. A silent auction and 50/50 raffle will also be held at this event. Tickets are \$10. If you would like to donate a raffle item or purchase an ad in the program, visit www.mattbrownnumber3.org

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All six of our schools are participating in the Daffodils Days fundraiser. This annual event raises money for the American Cancer Society.

Daffodil Days is one of the American Cancer Society's oldest and most beloved fundraising programs. The ACS offers daffodils to donors in appreciation for a contribution. For more than 35 years, the Daffodil Days program has empowered people to make a difference in the fight against cancer. Your support of the American Cancer Society Daffodil Days program helps give strength and hope to the millions of Americans facing cancer.

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If you did not receive a form and would like to participate in this fundraiser, visit this link: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/DaffodilDays.pdf>. **March 5th** is the deadline to order these daffodils which will be delivered on March 22nd.

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An Irish-themed fundraiser will be held next month at the Common Market. The Milton Swing Into Spring Fundraiser will be held on **Friday, March 12th** from 7pm to midnight. Tickets are \$20 and are available at Corcoran Brokerage offices.

This event will feature a cash bar, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment by Old Bridgade, a performance by Clifden Academy of Irish Dancers and a special appearance by singer Pauline Wells.

The event is sponsored by Corcoran Brokerage and Common Market. All proceeds will benefit Milton High School athletics.

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Thanks to the efforts of Milton parent Katherine Aillon, the Milton Public Schools have received our first employee volunteer grant award. Ms. Aillon applied for the grant through her employer, **Bank of America**, which awards \$250 to charities and educational institutions for every 50 hours of community service performed by their employees.

We're sure there are other Bank of America employees out there who have generously donated their time to the Milton Public Schools. If you're one of them, you can convert that time into money! **State Street Bank** also offers a similar program. So if you work for either institution and volunteer in your child's school, connect with us and we will help you with the application process. Contact: emasalsky@miltonps.org

Upcoming Events

Family Movie Night will be held on **March 5th** at Milton High's Charles C. Winchester Auditorium. The movie will be *Monsters vs Aliens*. Doors open at 6:30pm and the movie starts at 7:00pm. Suggested donation is \$3.00 per person. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Snacks will be for sale, with all proceeds to benefit MHS Clubs and Activities Fund.

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The Milton School Committee and the administrative team of Milton Public Schools will be holding an Open Budget Meeting on **March 16th** at 7pm in the Charles C. Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School. This will give parents, guardians and community members a chance to ask questions and make comments about the proposed cuts and/or changes for the 2010-2011 school budget.

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Save The Date!! Milton High School will present its second annual Faculty Talent Show on **March 25th and 26th**. This was one of the highlights of last year and is sure to sell out again this year. Be sure to mark your calendars and purchase tickets when they become available.

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Kindergarten and Grade One registration is well underway. Registrations are due by **April 30th** in order to be assigned to a school before June. Parents/guardians who have not yet started the process are urged to contact Denise Kelly, Registrar, at 617-696-4470 x5510 to obtain the necessary paperwork for registration. For information is posted on our website at www.miltonps.org.

Special Education – PAC Update

Superintendent Mary Gormley will be at the next Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) on Wed. March 3 at 7pm in the Milton High School library to give an overview of existing programs and proposed changes to special education in Milton. Supt Gormley would also like to hear from parents across the district about their family's experiences and to answer any questions about Milton special education they might have.

Last month the PAC presented their concerns about special education to the School Committee, and Supt. Gormley and her team have been working collaboratively with PAC leadership to bring a new transparency to special education in Milton. This meeting is another step to enhance communication and to get input from families.

Parents of children on IEPs or 504's, and those who think their children might need special education services, are welcomed, along with anyone who has an interest in special education. Light refreshments will be served. If you cannot attend and would like your voice heard, or for further information, please email the PAC at MiltonPAC@yahoo.com or call PAC Chair Kimberly Zieselman at 617-947-3988.– *submitted by Kimberly Zieselman*

News Around Town

A special Town Meeting will be held beginning on Monday, **February 22nd** at 7:30pm in the Charles C. Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School. To view a copy of the warrant for this meeting, click here: (*it may take a few minutes to load*)

http://www.townofmilton.org/Public_Documents/MiltonMA_EmerNews/028BCD3E-000F8513.0/Milton%202-22-10%20Warrant_Milton%20Warrant%20qxd%20final.pdf

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The Milton Public Library is hosting an Oscar Event! In an appearance entitled, “Handicapping the Oscars”, Boston Globe movie critics, Wesley Morris and Ty Burr will discuss this year’s Oscar nominees, giving an insiders look at probable winners, on Thursday evening, **February 25th** at 7:00pm in the Keyes Room at the Milton Public Library, 525 Canton Avenue. The event is the latest in a series featuring notable, local authors and critics sponsored by the Milton Library Foundation.

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On Friday, **February 26th**, A Celtic Crossing “The Journey Continues” will be held at Milton High School. This is an event that brings the spirit of Irish song and dance to Milton. Milton resident Pauline Wells will be performing, along with the band Devri. In addition, the Boston Police Gaelic Column of Pipes and Drums will be on hand and the O’Dwyer School of Irish Dance. Tickets are \$25 and proceeds go to the Jimmy Fund. For tickets, visit www.paulinewells.com/calendar.php

Athletics

BOYS BASKETBALL

The boys’ basketball team is looking to win their fourth consecutive Bay State Conference Herget Division title. Currently the Wildcats have a 13-4 record, are in first place in the Herget and have qualified for the MIAA Division 2 State Tournament. They are led by their Coach Sean Lopresti, and seniors Emanuel Hutcherson and D.J. Santos. They have three games remaining, including the Quincy tournament over February vacation.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

The girls' basketball team has one game remaining and currently has a record of 3-17. Coach Mike Lenane's team is being led by senior captains Devon Reilly and Deirdre Finn.

BOYS ICE HOCKEY

The boys' hockey team has a record of 6-9-1 record with four games remaining and outside shot of qualifying for the MIAA Division 1 State Tournament. Coach Paul Noonan's team is being led senior forwards Brian O'Regan and Matt O'Neill, as well as goaltender Mike Muse.

GIRLS ICE HOCKEY

The girls' hockey team is currently in first place in the Herget Division with a record of 9-2-4, and has qualified for the MIAA Division 2 State Tournament. First year coach Maggie Radley's team is led by senior forward Brianna Kelly and junior goaltender Emma Drew.

BOYS INDOOR TRACK

Coach Chuck Ajemian's boys' indoor track team finished the Herget Division undefeated with a 5-0 record. The boys are led by senior Darner Alton.

GIRLS INDOOR TRACK

Hall of Fame track coach Dale Snyder's girls' indoor track team finished the Herget Division undefeated with a 5-0 record. The top point-getters for the team are senior captains Cheryl Tran and Emily Hughes.

WRESTLING

Second year head coach and Milton High alumnus Ted Carroll's team has become very competitive this year led by seniors Geno Kelly and Luke Solimondo.

BOYS & GIRLS SKI TEAM

Coach Paul Ajemian is back in his second stint as leader of the ski team. His team is led on the boys' side by Kevin and Liam Walsh and Jimmy Goltz. The girls' team is led by Inez Campbell and Hallie Perlick. Four skiers qualified for the states: Chris Zimmer, Hallie and Madison Perlick and Inez Campbell.

WINTER CHEERLEADING

Jessica Parson's cheerleading squad will compete February 27th in the Bay State Conference Cheerleading Competition at Natick High School. The team is led by senior captains Tara Dynan and Alexa MacIsaac.

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:

Student: Congratulations to Channel Connor, an eighth-grader at Pierce Middle School, who recently won the school wide spelling bee. Channel was one of nine finalists who competed in the championship round of the school's spelling bee held in the Pierce library last week. She will advance to the Regional Spelling Bee to be held next month. Congratulations also to the seventh grade runner-up Julianna Chen. Great job!

Teacher: We were pleased to hear recently that one of our teachers at Pierce Middle School was recently published. Jen Gilbert, an eighth-grade science teacher, had conducted research on circadian rhythms as part of her Masters work at Northeastern University. This research was published in a scientific journal last month.

In addition, researchers at other institutions have contacted Ms. Gilbert for more information about her work as it could have potential use in cancer research. This is another example of the high caliber of educators we have here in the Milton Public Schools.

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Volunteer: In this E-blast, we would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of a group of volunteers who receive very little attention. Each and every member of the Milton Foundation for Education puts in countless hours on behalf of our students.

The MFE is an independent, non-profit corporation founded in 1995. Their mission is to enhance the quality of education and expand education opportunities within the Milton Public Schools by generating and distributing financial aid and other resources. The MFE hosts several events throughout the year, including the annual Celebration for Education, the Milton Monster Dash and the Outstanding Teacher Awards ceremony. They raise incredible amounts of money for our students and we are very grateful. Please join me in thanking these wonderful individuals:

The Executive Board includes President Mary McLaughlin, Vice President Ned Corcoran, Vice President Forbes Sargent, Treasurer Rita Taugher, Recording Secretary Lisa Viola and Corresponding Secretary Leslie Collins.

We also thank the following trustees: Barbara Avitabile, Yoshi Belash, Leslie Collins, Anne Comber, Erika Donahue, Margaret Eberhardt, Patti Elliott, Thomas J. Flynn, Karin J. Froom, Richard Fischer, Astrid Hajjar, Gary Kelly, Mary Keohane, Beirne Lovely, Annellen Lydon, Jim May, Roxanne Musto, Denise Queally, Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Philip E. Stanley and Angela Rue-Van Allen.