PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Milton Public Schools Parents, Guardians, Faculty & Staff
From: Mary C. Gormley, Superintendent of Schools
Re: E-Update, Thursday, March 18, 2010

As many of you know, March is "Music in Our Schools Month" (MIOSM). Here in the Milton Public Schools, we strive to give our students a well-rounded education. Exposure to music and the arts are critical components of our educational program.

Our music department is widely recognized as one of the best in the area. Thanks to the residents of this town, along with the generosity of the Copeland Family Foundation, our music classrooms are well equipped. The Copeland donations include two music labs, one at Milton High and one at Pierce. These labs have digital pianos with computers attached so students can use software that lets them write music, practice theory, learn to play the piano, etc. In addition, the Copeland Foundation donated musical instruments for the strings and band. They have also donated a digital piano at Tucker, Glover, Pierce and MHS for music class, along with acoustic pianos at Tucker, Glover, and MHS for chorus and music class. The Copeland Family Foundation refurbished the original grand piano at MHS in the auditorium, financed the acoustical shell for the MHS auditorium and donated Orff instruments for Glover and Tucker music classes.

Despite such generosity, the music department – along with our other school departments – has struggled to maintain its high standards during budget cutbacks. For example, in the past few years, we have eliminated our 4th and 5th grade weekly chorus class. We have also reduced music to a half-year course for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders and eliminated band class for the elementary school bands, who now must practice during lunch and recess.

However, many of our students continue to thrive in our programs and there is no better example of this success than our March concerts. Please review the list below and make a point to come and support our wonderful music students.

As educators, we are well aware of the correlation between arts education and improved academic success. There are many studies which show that music education enhances the same higher brain function required for mathematics, chess, science and engineering. In addition, participation in musical groups such as concert, band or chorus teaches students how to work cooperatively, solve problems and realize the link between effort and quality of result. For these reasons and many others, we strive to support music education in our schools.

I would also like to publicly recognize and thank our music teachers:
***Gary Good** teaches Electronic Keyboard Lab I and II, Concert Band; and teaches the elementary bands at all four schools. **Rebecca Damiani** teaches General Music Classes at MHS, as well as Concert Band, and Jazz Ensemble. Patricia Ostrem teaches grades 4-12 string ensemble. **Lauren Kapalka** teaches General Music, Concert Band, and Jazz Ensemble at Pierce Middle School. **Dawn Sykes** teaches General Music and all choruses at Pierce. **April Allegrezza** teaches at the four elementary schools -- half the year at Glover/Tucker and half the year at Collicot/Cunningham. **Rebecca Cherry** teaches at the four elementary schools - half the year at Glover/Tucker and half the year at Collicot/Cunningham.*

*Finally, I would like to recognize **Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett**, Director of Fine and Applied Arts, who teaches Mixed Chorus, Girls Chorus and AP Theory at Milton High and directs the four after-school vocal*

ensembles at Milton High. Dr. Burdett has been responsible for building a dynasty in our music department, which is admired by other school districts across the state.

Kudos to our hard-working music teachers and students, who consistently qualify for state and regional music competitions, as well as perform in countless concerts, parades and community events. – Mary C. Gormley

School Committee Update

The last SC meeting was held on Tuesday, March 9th. Below is a summary of this meeting. In addition to its regular meetings the School Committee held an Open Budget Hearing on March 16th.

The meeting began with recognition of the Milton High School Boys' Basketball team and their coach, Sean LoPresti. The team won the Bay State League Championship and competed in the Division 2 South Sectional Finals. School Committee members congratulated the team on their season.

Next, as part of the Superintendent's Report, Bill Ritchie, Facilities Director, gave a report to the school committee. Mr. Ritchie discussed the success of the MHS solar panels and reported that a 210-panel array will be installed on the Cunningham/Collicot roof. He also went over his efforts to use "green" cleaning products in our schools, his preventative maintenance schedule, staffing needs, field maintenance, and energy conservation efforts. Click here to view his presentation:
http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MicrosoftPowerPoint-MiltonFacilitiesDepartmentSchoolCommitee.pdf

Jackie Morgan, Food Services Director, reported on the Milton Food Services program. She talked about our school's participation in the "Better Breakfast Initiative" and lunch menus, potential price increases and eligibility for free and/or reduced lunch. She also discussed several new policies to assist those with food allergies and talked about new menu items. For more information about Food Services, click here:
http://www.edline.net/pages/Milton_Public_Schools/Food_Services

It was also announced at this meeting that Beverly Quinn, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, will be retiring in June. Bev Quinn has been the administrative assistant to Superintendents Dr. Mary Grassa O'Neill, Dr. Magdalene Giffune and me. Before joining the Milton Public Schools, Bev worked in the Boston Public Schools.

Bev has two sons, Joseph and Michael and three very special grandchildren Sean, Fiona, and Brady. Hers is the first voice you hear when you contact the Milton Public Schools. She is always positive and treats the public, parents, teachers, staff and students with a special gentleness, respect and dignity. She knows and understands every aspect of the Milton Public Schools. Everyone who has ever worked with Bev Quinn understands and appreciates her unique talents, abilities and dedication to our students and school system. My family reminds me all the time that I am so fortunate to be able to work with Bev. I value her judgment and guidance and have the utmost respect for her both personally and professionally.

Finally, the School Committee concluded with a discussion about the FY 11 school budget and the proposed reductions. To access the relevant documents, please visit the following link:
http://www.miltonps.org/committee-budget.php

To view the presentation from the March 16th Open Budget Meeting please visit the following link:
http://www.miltonps.org/documents/FY11BudgetPresentationwithFAQ.pdf

*The next meeting will be held **March 30th** at 7pm in the MHS library.*

Curriculum Information

Reminder! There will be no school for students on **Friday, March 19th**, as this is a Professional Development Day for our teaching staff.

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As many of you know, the MCAS exams will begin during the next few weeks. Students in grades three through eight and grade ten will participate in the English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science, Technology & Engineering sessions at some point during testing windows in March, April, May, and June. High school students will take the science MCAS the first week of June. Please check your school's website for exact dates. Please try to avoid scheduling any out-of-town trips, doctor's appointments or other planned absences during these exams. Here are some other notes on MCAS:

- The English Language Arts MCAS test sessions will take place some time during the March 22nd - April 12th, 2010 testing window, depending on the school and grade level. This exam consists of a series of reading passages followed by multiple choice questions and open response questions. Open response questions require the students to generate a written response in the form of a paragraph or a chart or table as appropriate.
- Students in Grades 4, 7, & 10 are also requires to participate in the English Language Arts Composition Test. This requires students to respond to a prompt by creating a written composition.
- New to the Grade 3 exam is short-answer questions, which require the students to generate a brief response or statement.
- The Math portion and Science portions of the MCAS will take place during the month of May and early June. We will explain more about the math and science testing procedures in the next E-blast.

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I am very pleased to announce that our Future Problem Solving team from the Tucker Elementary School won the regional competition and will be advancing to the State Bowl. This team, which includes Andrew Duro, Liam Chase, Allegra Giddings and Madison Lipson, will be phenomenal representatives from Milton, along with their coach, Lori Henry. The State Bowl is **Saturday, March 20th** at 7:45 am at Marlborough High School and the topic will be Food Distribution. Congratulations to these hard-workers and best of luck in their upcoming competition.

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There is an exciting opportunity for some of our middle school students to attend summer camp. The Exxon/Mobil Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp is organized to provide activities, experiments, projects, and field experiences for students entering 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

The camp promotes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and supports historically underserved and underrepresented students with limited opportunities. Students attend the camp free of charge.

All students currently in grades 5, 6, or 7 who have an interest in science and mathematics and at least a B average in science and mathematics are eligible. Download the application for more information:

www.theharrisfoundation.org/programs/summersciencecamp/applications2010/NEUSAF2010.pdf

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The Milton High School SAT Prep courses are off to a great start. Over 115 Milton High School Juniors are attending verbal and mathematics classes in preparation for the May SAT Test. The courses are taught by current and former MHS teachers: Paul Ajemian, Nancy Mikels, Laura Andrade, Michelle Kreuzer, Maggie Clark, Karen Coughlin, Jason Coady, and Ellen Ahearn. Thanks go out to MHS Guidance Secretary Mary Colleary who helped with registration and the distribution of the Prep Booklets. Good luck on the test!

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We are very pleased with how our new Saturday Program is progressing. More than 100 children are enrolled in this new offering at the Pierce Middle School.

A total of 13 enrichment courses, along with several academic courses are being offered on Saturday mornings, with a total of 16 teachers involved.

The mission is to provide an engaging, fun, enriching experience for our students. Everything from fantasy basketball, sewing, cooking, computer courses and CATZ training is being offered.

"The teacher course offerings are incredible, the teachers have worked so hard putting together a great program for the children and everyone is excited to begin," said program director Erin Power.

This is a pilot program for the Milton Public Schools, sponsored by the Milton Foundation for Education. For more information about the Saturday program, please visit www.miltonps.org/documents/MicrosoftWord-MPSFINALSaturdayProgram_001.pdf

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The Milton Public Schools are currently in the process of hiring two new administrators. Parents and community members should be aware that screening committees have been formed as part of this process.

The screening committee for the position of Administrator of Pupil/Personnel Services, currently held by Jeff Rubin, is made up of 13 individuals. Assistant Superintendent John Phelan and I serve on this committee, along with Kristan Bagley Jones, School Committee Member, Dr. John Drottar, MHS Principal, Gerard Schultz, Collicot School Principal, Patricia Delval, Consultant, Margaret Gibbons, MEA President, Marcia Goodless, PMS Teacher, Sally Rush, MHS Teacher, Meaghan Ohrenberger, Tucker School Teacher, Nicque Bradshaw, Parent, Gerry Vitti, Parent and Kevin Lenane, Parent.

A second screening committee was formed to assist with the hiring of a new Glover School Principal, a position currently held by Dr. Dore Korschun. Assistant Superintendent John Phelan and I will also serve on this committee, which includes Lynda-Lee Sheridan, School Committee Chairperson, James Jette, PMS Principal, Christine Gerber, Cunningham School Principal, Martha Sherman, Elementary Language Arts Coordinator, Catherine Maliel, Glover Teacher, Carolyn O'Connor, Glover Teacher, Margaret Turner, Glover Teacher, Becky Padera, Parent, Kimberly Zieselman, Parent, Julie Freking, Parent, and Toya Farrar, Parent.

Music in Our Schools Month

As I mentioned in my introduction, March is "Music in Our Schools Month." Please make an effort to attend one of our extraordinary musical events scheduled for this month, including:

- March 12-13 Senior SEMSBA Festival, Rockland High School
- March 18-20 Massachusetts All State Music Festival and Conference at World Trade Center and Symphony Hall, Boston.
- March 25-26 MHS Faculty Talent Show at MHS auditorium
- March 30 MIOSM Jazz Concert at 6 p.m. in MHS cafeteria

"The Pierce Middle School and Milton High School Music Department calendar for MIOSM is full because we have so many students who have chosen music to be their expression, identity, and road to success," said Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett. "The dedicated and talented faculty at Pierce and MHS enjoy the opportunity to have their students perform and love the MIOSM spirit."

In addition to listing the musical events, the music department would like to recognize the following students, who recently were inducted into the Tri-M International Music Honor Society. The 2010 Inductees are: Willie Archibald, Isabella Carter, Vivian Chu, Catherine Dambruch, Elizabeth Devine, Melissa Donovan, Clara Heiden, Kathleen Hill, Erika Hodlin, Olivia McGrath, Cosmo Mills, Nicole Pizzi, Catherine Spino, Steven Staffa, Braedy Taugher, Nicole Teczar, Liam Walsh and Carolyn Ward. Congratulations to all.

Fundraising/Grant News

Is your garage overflowing with old equipment? Are you tired of tripping over hockey and lacrosse sticks? Please consider donating your gently used sporting goods to a wonderful cause.

The Milton High Boosters are sponsoring "Instant Replay," – a Used Sporting Goods Sale on **Saturday, March 20th** from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm in the MHS Cafeteria. This is a great opportunity to purchase slightly used sporting goods at a great discount! All proceeds will directly benefit Milton High School Athletics. To make donations, please drop off equipment at the MHS Office during the following times:

March 18th from 8:00 am - 7:00 pm
March 19th from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

If you would like your donations picked up, email mhsboosters@gmail.com

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We recently concluded The Daffodil Days, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. We would like to thank Mary Ann Donnelly, MHS Teacher, for spearheading the effort and also thank each of our school secretaries for helping to coordinate their schools. We are very proud to announce that the fundraising total for the Milton Public Schools is $8,370, all of which will be to be sent to the American Cancer Society. Breakdown by school: Collicot - $3,195, Glover - $1,590, Pierce – $1,395, Milton High - $790, Cunningham - $785, Tucker - $615. Congratulations and thanks to all who participated.

Upcoming Events

At this time I would like to update you on the time line for the Grade 1 Language Program choice process for the 2010-11 school year. At the Grade 1 Information Night on February 4, 2010, we outlined the curriculum of the Grade 1 programs in the Milton Public Schools. At that time we described the World Language Committee, their objectives, and their timeline.

Currently the World Language Committee is scheduled to present their findings at the School Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 30, 2010. We will be holding a second Grade 1 Information Night on **Wednesday, April 14, 2010 at 7pm in the Charles C. Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School.** At this meeting we will present the structure of the Grade 1 Language Programs for the 2010-11 school year.

This meeting will communicate the final piece of information for making the Language Program choice for grade 1 students. A document will be sent out after the meeting which will ask parents to make a decision on a program. The deadline to make a program choice will be April 30, 2010.

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The Milton High School Guidance Department will present Higher Education Night for junior students and their parents on **Wednesday, March 24th** at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Milton High School. The Milton High School counselors will provide a brief overview of the college admission process along with important dates and deadlines. Mr. Brian Murphy, Dean of Admissions and Enrollment at Stonehill College, will be the featured speaker. Parents of younger students are also invited to attend. Please mark you calendars and plan to attend this important evening.

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Save The Date!! The faculty of Milton High School and Pierce Middle School will present the second annual Faculty Talent Show on **March 25th and 26th** at 7 p.m. This was one of the highlights of last year and is sure to sell out again this year. Tickets are $10 and are available in the MHS Main Office.

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After a few starts and stops, a Milton High Alumni Group has begun forming and is looking for more members.

This group aims to enrich the lives of MHS alumni and friends by helping them establish a lifelong, meaningful and valued relationship with Milton High and with each other. The mission is to connect and reconnect alumni, students, parents and friends to the MHS Alumni Association through experiences and communications for the purpose of generating multifaceted support for MHS and the Alumni Association.

An interest group meeting is planned for those who would like to get involved in helping getting an Alumni Association activated. The Association is planning membership drives, elections for officers, newsletters and social networking opportunities.

The interest group meeting will be at the Keyes Room of the Milton Public Library on Monday, **March 29th** at 7 p.m.

All Milton High graduates are encouraged to join the Alumni Association in its planning stages. Please send an email to miltonhighalumni@gmail.com for more information.

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Parents of students in grades 8-12 should mark their calendars for an extremely important event. The Milton Public Schools are pleased to welcome Dr. Linda Grant, Medical Director of the Boston Public Schools, who will make a presentation at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday, March 31st** in the Charles C. Winchester Auditorium at Milton High School. Dr. Grant will be presenting *Adolescents: What Are They Thinking? Decision Making, Risk Taking, Impulse Behavior, Alcohol and Substance Abuse/Use,* an informative discussion on teen behavior.

We encourage parents to come to this event and take advantage of an opportunity to open (or continue to keep open) lines of communication with your child. This evening is for both student and parents.

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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 x 5510 to obtain the necessary paperwork for registration. For information is posted on our website at www.miltonps.org.

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The Milton Summer Enrichment brochure is now out. Completed registration forms are due by **Friday, April 23rd** and a walk-in registration for remaining slots will be held Thursday, May 20th. New courses this year include Glee Club, Youth Wrestling and Summer Cinema. Please note, this very popular program will be held at the Pierce Middle School this summer. To download a brochure, please visit http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MSE2010Brochure.pdf

Special Education - PAC Update

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and the Milton Public Schools are hosting a first-ever "Integrated Preschool Roundtable" on **Thursday March 18th** at the Collicot/Cunningham School Library at 7 p.m.

This event is for current and future preschool parents and other interested parties to meet with myself and our preschool staff to discuss evaluations, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and special education. This is a good opportunity to ask questions and find out what lies ahead after preschool.

The Integrated Preschool is a treasured program in Milton. The PAC is always hoping to hear from new parents with new experiences -- so please consider attending this event. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please email: MiltonPAC@yahoo.com

MFE Update

It's that time of year! Nomination forms for the MFE Outstanding Teacher will be coming home shortly. If you would like to nominate your child's teacher for this honor, please fill out the forms, which will be available in the school's main offices and online at www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org Applications will be due on April 5, 2010. Teachers who are chosen for this prestigious award will be honored in a ceremony on May 19th. There are many, many dedicated teachers in our schools and the MFE coordinates this wonderful event to honor them.

News Around Town

Milton Public Library events:

- An Afternoon of Classical Music with Boston Symphony Cellist, Luis Leguia. **Tuesday, March 23 at 2 p.m.**
- Is There Value in Your Old & Rare Books? Meet Kenneth Gloss of the Brattle Book Shop, who will be happy to evaluate ONE book per guest. **Thursday, March 25 at 7 p.m.**

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As part of new cable television program hosted by Frank Schroth of www.02186MyTownMattters.com, several students from the Milton Public Schools will be highlighted.

The show, called My Town Matters, will cover local issues. Be sure to tune in to see the MHS Debate and Speech team, who will be on air this Friday (3/19) at 7:30pm and again the following Saturday, and Sunday at 7:30 pm. This is another opportunity for our students to be highlighted in the community and we are grateful to Mr. Schroth and MATV for the opportunity.

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The Milton Parks & Recreation Departments will be holding signups for Summer Programs on **March 23, 24, 30 & 31** at Cunningham Hall from 6:30 to 8 p.m. For more information, please visit http://www.townofmilton.org/Public_Documents/MiltonMA_Recreation/news

Ambassador Page

Volunteer: Although they are not specifically Milton Public School volunteers, I would like to recognize some very important citizens: the Milton Warrant Committee. Most people do not realize the long hours, expertise and effort that they put into recommending the revenue and budget for our town. We truly appreciate the following volunteers: Chairman John (Tom) Hurley, Secretary Maurice Mitchell, Clerk Helen Kiddy; and members Ewan J. Innes, Leroy Walker, John Ahonen, Barbara Martin, Kevin Chase, John Folcarelli, Omar Sanchez, George Mandell, Jean H. Powers, Raj Pathak, Eric Kelley, Henry Bell and Michael Zullas. These hardworking citizens put in countless hours on behalf of our schools and towns and we are very grateful.

Teachers: Congratulations to the following teachers, who have been nominated by the Milton Public Schools for awards:

- Tom Shaw, MHS Physics Teacher, and Jennifer Gilbert, a PMS Science Teacher, have both been nominated for the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence.
- Melissa Webber and Julie Cranmer, both sixth grade Math Teachers, were nominated for Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.
- Meaghan Orhenberger has been nominated for the MEAF (Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation) Inclusion Champion Award. It is a national award that honors "individuals who make significant efforts

to ensure youths with disabilities are fully included in society." Ms. Orhenberger is the Special Education Teacher in the Co-taught Grade One program at Tucker

Student: We would like to honor Anton Libsch, a freshman at Milton High School for his community service. Many people in town may not be aware of our Community Service program at Milton High School, which requires students to complete 140 hours of volunteer work before graduating from MHS. There are hundreds of ways to accrue these hours over 4 years, but one of my favorite programs is coordinated with the Milton Council on Aging. High school students are paired with senior citizens each fall and agree to provide shoveling services to that senior after each snowstorm during the winter months. Anton has been shoveling for Norman Stoller this past winter and, according to Mr. Stoller, the high school freshman has done a fantastic job! Anton Libsch sets a great example for his fellow students.