

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
October 20, 2009**

Committee Present: Lynda Lee Sheridan, Chair, Glenn Pavlicek, Vice Chair, Beirne Lovely, Chris Huban, Mary Kelly, and Kristan Bagley-Jones

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent, John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel, Matthew Gillis, School Business Administrator

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Approval of October 20, 2009 Agenda**

With the Committee's consent, Ms. Sheridan approved the agenda of October 20, 2009.

3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)**

No one came forward to speak.

4. **Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Gormley invited Dr. John Drottar to the table to discuss Milton High School's SAT results. Dr. Drottar's presentation showed mean SAT scores in Critical Reading/Math/Writing for the graduating classes of 2001-2009 and broke these scores down by category (Male, Female, White, African American, and Other). Dr. Drottar's presentation also included the national and state SAT results for 2009 and showed how Milton High School compared to these results. The details of this report will be posted on the website, <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/SATpresentation.pdf>. Some comments and/or concerns expressed by School Committee members and members of the Administration included:

- Mr. Lovely noted the difference in the scores of White students as compared to African American students and asked what is being done to address that achievement gap issue and enhance SAT preparation. Dr. Drottar stated that the goal at Milton High School has been to get all students in the most challenging classes possible and provide support. Mr. Lovely stated that he would like to further discuss the AP program at another time and the possibilities of having AP courses available to all students.
- Ms. Gormley explained that the MCAS and AYP results showed that there were issues with subgroups. This is being discussed at every leadership team meeting and will be discussed with Site Councils. Efforts are being made as early as elementary school to assist students who require additional support. Sixth grade students in need of reinforcement are offered two periods of Math and English. In 4th and 5th grade teachers are giving some students additional instruction during FLES time (2-3 times per week). Also, since students have to start considering the level of their courses in grades 6-8, another idea has been to start working with 6th grade teachers in an effort to expose students to what an AP curriculum is like at the High School level. More information will be presented to the School Committee by individual principals when they discuss improvement plans for their school.
- Ms. Gormley reported that state funding will be used to provide before school, after school, summer, and Saturday SAT prep sessions.

- Mr. Pavlicek stated that it is the level of expectation in an AP course that prepares students for college. He asked if A level courses (as compared to Honors) are preparing students to take SATs. Dr. Drottar and Ms. Gormley both stated that this is something being discussed with the leadership team and with the Citizens for a Diverse Milton. The level of parent engagement and teacher engagement at both levels is also being discussed.
- Ms. Kelly noted that there has not been significant progress in SAT scores over the past few years. She asked if this was the time to look at the structure of the system and perhaps explore the impact of having two tracks and to start reviewing the scheduling process.

MCAS Results

Ms. Gormley stated that the MCAS results for the English Language Arts (ELA) will be presented by Martha Sherman and John Phelan will review the Math results. Barbara Plonski will discuss the Science MCAS results at a future meeting. When looking at these results, Ms. Gormley reminded everyone that the goal of No Child Left Behind is to have all students in Advanced or Proficient by the year 2014. Ms. Gormley informed the Committee that the state plans to start using a growth model to report future MCAS results. The growth model gives results based on the cohort model. It will trace individual students, grades, and schools to communicate where progress is being made. Tonight's MCAS presentation showed results in ELA and Math for the years 2007-2009 in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. The details of this MCAS presentation will be posted on the website, <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/MCAS10-20-09.pdf>. Some comments and/or concerns expressed by School Committee members and members of the Administration included:

- Mr. Huban asked what happened between 2008 Grade 3 Math where 32% of students scored Warning/Needs Improvement and 2009 Grade 4 Math where 40% of students scored Warning/Needs Improvement. He asked if there was a significant difference in what was on these tests. Mr. Phelan replied that this type of question is what the leadership team is looking at for every grade level. To his knowledge, the test did not significantly change between these grades. Dr. Drottar added that the problem with these tests is that they are independent each year and there is not a correlation between grades.
- Do you analyze 2009 results to see how closely a student is to the next category? Ms. Sherman replied that will be done. Ms. Gormley added that Principal Jette plans to speak with each Middle School student who failed the MCAS and explain the results to the student. It may be that a student is only one question away from Needs Improvement.
- With regard to the above bullet, Ms. Kelly stated that parent/teacher conferences may provide an opportunity for teachers to review the MCAS results with parents.
- Ms. Bagley-Jones suggested making conferences longer if MCAS results were going to be discussed or perhaps discussing them on a separate night. She feels that MCAS results are only one measure of a student's success.

Before ending her report, Ms. Gormley announced that 74 Milton High School students from the Class of 2010 were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship based upon their academic excellence. This scholarship provides free tuition at any Massachusetts public college or university. Ms Gormley also reminded the public that the Swing for Sports event was rescheduled to October 26, 2009 due to inclement weather. In addition, Ms. Gormley thanked the staff of the Milton Public Library for their recent donation to the Milton Public Schools. Due to the closing of the East Milton Library, Milton Public Library added several books to their collection and donated the remaining books to the Milton Public schools.

5. Chairman's Report

Superintendent's Evaluation

Ms. Sheridan stated that all School Committee members participated in the Superintendent's Evaluation. Ms. Sheridan read a compilation of the comments made by School Committee members and explained the areas considered when evaluating the Superintendent. The areas considered and some comments made by School Committee members for each area include:

(1) Fostering a constructive relationship with the School Committee – Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley has done an outstanding job in this regard. Ms. Gormley seeks constant input from the School Committee and subcommittees, attends PTO meetings with School Committee members, and always keeps the lines of communication open.

(2) Building strong community relationships and partnerships – Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley has made outreach her mantra. She has developed a new relationship with Milton Hospital, has built a positive relationship with the Town Administrator, and has a wonderful working relationship with members of the Board of Selectmen and the Warrant Committee. Ms. Gormley also sits on several local Boards and has developed partnerships with Tufts University and Bridgewater State College and has strengthened the relationship with Curry College. Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley has long been a respected contributor to bettering the Town and the schools.

(3) Developing effective relationships with and among Milton Public School's personnel – Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley is fair-minded and willing to consider everyone's opinion but also has the strength to exercise what is in the best interest of the Milton Public School students. Ms. Gormley has built a strong Central Office and system-wide leadership team and values and respects all members of the Milton Public School staff.

(4) Providing educational vision and leadership – Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley's number one priority is student achievement and the decisions she makes are reflective of that priority. She consults with her leadership team and includes them in decision making and works diligently to communicate the goals and the needs of the Milton Public Schools to parents and the larger community in order to build consensus and support for the school system.

(5) Ensuring that the school system is run efficiently and effectively – Ms. Sheridan stated that this was a difficult year with regard to fiscal news, however, Ms. Gormley continued to stay positive and was always striving to find creative solutions to our challenges. Ms. Gormley participated in frank budget discussions and worked creatively with the Foundation for Education and other grant resource providers to help meet the needs of the system.

(6) Exhibiting the personal qualities necessary for strong leadership and for the enhancement of Milton and its public schools - Ms. Sheridan mentioned that this year has been an unusual one filled with tragedies. At that time, Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley demonstrated her superior skills. She took charge and considered the needs of all; the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community. Ms. Sheridan also mentioned the Email Blasts instituted by Ms. Gormley as a way of keeping the school community abreast of all that is happening in the schools, with the Town, and with the School Committee.

Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Gormley exhibits outstanding dedication to the Milton Public Schools and the School Committee has the utmost confidence in her leadership. The School Committee's overall observation of job performance in the above-mentioned areas was 9.5 out of 10. The School Committee also offered the following suggestions to the Superintendent: (1) Identify academic achievement goals and consistently prioritize those items as we enter this new school year; (2) Engage more substantially with all School Site Councils and their work; (3) Publish the organizational chart of the Administration and have clear expectations of supervisor's roles; (4) Hold leadership meetings outside of the regular school day when possible; (5) Develop data driven, concrete action plans to address the achievement

issues and assign reporting timelines throughout the year and measurements of success. All obstacles to success must be identified and strategies to eliminate or decrease the obstacles should be established. On behalf of the School Committee, Ms. Sheridan stated that it is a pleasure and privilege to work with Ms. Gormley.

MASC Delegate Appointment

Motion was made to nominate Glenn Pavlicek as the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) delegate for the Milton School Committee.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: K. Bagley-Jones

Mr. Pavlicek was asked if he accepted this nomination, and he replied yes.

Vote: 6-0-0

MASC Resolutions

As the MASC Delegate, Mr. Pavlicek will represent the Milton School Committee at the upcoming annual business meeting; therefore, the School Committee must advise Mr. Pavlicek how they would like him to vote on several resolutions that will be presented. The School Committee's final recommendations to Mr. Pavlicek were that he vote YES in favor of the adequacy study referred to in Resolution 1 (if he has the opportunity to present a split in this resolution); NO on Resolution 2; YES on Resolution 3; YES on Resolution 4; YES on Resolution 5; YES on Resolution 6; NO on Resolution 7; YES on Resolution 8; YES on Resolution 9; YES on Resolution 10; and YES on Resolution 11.

***Details of these votes will be attached as an addendum to these minutes.**

Before moving to the Finance Subcommittee Report, Ms. Sheridan asked that School Committee members submit the names of anyone they would like to nominate for the MASC Community Awards Program.

6. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly read the salaries and expenses for each FY10 line item (Policy and Administration, Instructional Leadership, Instruction, Instructional Services, Special Education, Technology, and Facilities) and made the following motion:

Motion was made for the School Committee to vote the line item budget for FY10 totaling \$32,976,038.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Kelly stated this number reflects the amount reduced at last night's Special Town Meeting. Ms. Kelly also reported that the 1st quarter actual expenses are going along as planned. The Finance Subcommittee is cognizant that the Warrant Committee is anticipating mid year cuts and is trying to address that with regard to the stimulus grant rather than having to hit salary line items. Ms. Kelly further reported that the Warrant Committee has asked the School Department (and all town departments) to present a level dollar budget for FY11 consistent with its FY10 number. Although they understand the request of the Warrant Committee, School Committee members discussed the importance of putting together a budget that reflects what they feel is necessary for the school system and what the Administration recommends is needed to address achievement issues and then work backward if necessary. Ms. Kelly asked that the Administration contact Kevin Mearn to clarify the timeframe for

the level dollar budget request and to clarify what FY10 number the Warrant Committee is referring to (before or after state cuts and cuts at Town Meeting).

Stimulus Grant Draft

Ms. Gormley reviewed the stimulus grant (\$1,123,447) and explained how funds have been used to date. Stimulus funds have been used to create a new 3rd grade classroom; to fund the regular education teacher for a new co-taught Kindergarten class; to recover the FY10 shortfall of \$110,000 voted at last night's Town Meeting; and will be used to fund 12 part-time educational assistants. Ms. Kelly explained that the School Committee's class size policy is dependent upon funding. In working with the Finance Subcommittee and discussing the class size issue, the Administration came up with idea of hiring 12 part-time educational assistants to go into elementary classrooms having enrollment of 26 or above. At a meeting held yesterday, the School Committee voted to hire these 12 part-time educational assistants. Ms. Kelly noted that if class size were to go to 25 or below, the part-time educational assistant would be removed. Since not all School Committee members were present at yesterday's meeting, Mr. Lovely requested that the following motion be made:

Motion was made to ratify, confirm, and approve the School Committee vote adopted on October 19, 2009 to hire 12 part-time educational assistants.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Gormley also stated that the Administration has been working with the Finance Subcommittee and has prepared a proposal for the use of remaining stimulus funds. After briefly reviewing this proposal, Ms. Gormley stated that she will continue working with the Finance Subcommittee and will keep the School Committee up-to-date. Mr. Pavlicek briefly updated the Committee and the public as to the results of last night's Special Town Meeting. Cuts were made to several town department budgets (\$110,000 from schools) just to balance the budget. The meal tax was also approved and will take effect April 1st.

7. Health and Safety Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones provided Committee members with a copy of the minutes of the Health and Safety Subcommittee meeting of September 18, 2009. This subcommittee has been focusing on health and wellness and how to incorporate health and wellness into our programs. Some goals of the Health and Wellness Subcommittee for this year include offering stress reduction activities for staff (this was offered at the October professional day); holding a Wellness Fair for staff during the March professional day; addressing risky behavior of students and implementing the Risk Behavior Survey again; discussing the possibility of opening up the Field House to students on Friday nights; holding parent nights regarding chemical awareness; and providing school staff with handouts from Milton Hospital as to what to do in the event of seizures, allergic reactions, etc. Ms. Bagley-Jones acknowledged Milton Hospital for being such a helpful new partner to the Milton Public Schools. Not only did Milton Hospital contribute to the recent Walkathon, but it is also helping out with supplies for the flu clinic, planning CPR classes for parents and staff, and recently donated six defibrillators to the Milton Public Schools and will provide training and maintenance for these machines.

8. School Building Committee Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the School Building Committee had its first meeting under the new leadership of Tony Cichello. The final bids were awarded for the ramp at Collicot/Cunningham and the crawl

space underneath Cunningham. The bid package is out for the solar panels and the School Building Committee hopes to award that bid within two weeks. There is also some ongoing repair work at the Collicot/Cunningham playground area. The School Building Committee is trying to get the final pieces in place at Pierce Middle School and Milton High School and is awaiting a certificate of completion from the Conservation Commission. Some tree work will be done around the Central Avenue side of the parking lot at Pierce in the spring. For Milton High School the Committee is working on some bid documents involving insulation on some duct work on the roof. Ms. Kelly asked about the self-insurance fund and if it is the School Building Committee who oversees this. Mr. Pavlicek stated this fund (approximately \$1 million) is being held in the event of future claims. When it becomes available, Mr. Pavlicek feels that any disposition of these funds will have to be a Town Meeting action.

9. Policy Subcommittee Report

Mr. Huban said there was no report for this subcommittee. Ms. Sheridan requested that the Policy Subcommittee look at the Superintendent Evaluation. One School Committee member suggested that this evaluation might not align with the goals we have established since there was not an area regarding achievement.

10. Consolidated Facilities Report

Mr. Huban said there was no report for this subcommittee.

11. Old Business/Citizen Speak Topic Response

Ms. Sheridan was happy to report that stimulus funds will be used to support the large class size issue discussed at the last Citizen Speak.

12. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Publicly review School Committee goals
- Provide an update on the after school library hours at Pierce Middle School and Milton High School
- Discuss when budget presentations should start
- Discuss School Committee representation at PTO meetings
- Discuss the date for the town-wide Open House for the new schools
- Provide an update on residency at the second School Committee meeting in November
- Ms. Sheridan stated there were some adjustments to the topics for future School Committee meetings. The adjusted calendar will be sent out to School Committee members via email.

Ms. Gormley reminded School Committee members and the public that the annual Monster Dash will be held Sunday, October 25th at Cunningham Park and the Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will take place at Lantana's on Saturday night.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: K. Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.